

Full Council Meeting – 1 October 2013

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. Medium Term Financial Plan Update and Approach to Budget Setting 2014/2015

- 1.1 Corporate Scrutiny had a very stark, but factual, report presented at the meeting on 19 September 2013. It is a report I would encourage all Members to study and understand the future that faces us. It is readily available on our web site.
- 1.2 I have referred to it as being “stark” but I would add it is not a crisis because with a realization “business cannot continue as usual” we can plan our way through this. Changes will have to come and aspirations lowered as to what can be expected of the Council but we can still deliver the essentials that make Taunton a great place to live, work and play.
- 1.3 High Level Principles for budget setting were accepted and an indicative overall programme of savings required to close the budget gap of £4,500,000 over the next three years was included. This is as an insight to the difficult decisions facing us with savings of £1,500,000 needing to be delivered in time to support the 2014/2015 budget and thereafter annually for the next two years.

	Savings Target £
Review Discretionary Policies & Grants (10%)	68,000
Asset Strategy Project (25%)	89,000
Accommodation Project (20%)	68,000
Governance and Democracy (10%)	55,000
Efficiencies and Sharing Services	1,799,000
Savings Targets For Theme Managers	2,419,000
TOTAL	4,498,000

- 1.4 The key point of this is that the final decision will come back to Members to decide the final shape of the budget. So, it has to be clear if some of the savings ultimately proposed are not palatable to Members then it is important to advise alternative savings to meet the targets needed. It is very clear, we have to set a balanced budget by law and the Government has huge savings targets of its own to meet so large additional grants or funding streams are most unlikely!

- 1.5 It was interesting that a member of the public speaking was exhorting Councillors to ignore the Government, and the law, and not set a balanced budget, the quickest way to being taken into “special care” by the Government and so lose all control of directing the Council! At the other end of the scale we had one of our Councillors promoting the removal of elected Members and the Council reverting to delivery of statutory services only without any democratic input!

2. Shared Management and Services with West Somerset Council

- 2.1 This initiative leads neatly on from the previous subject of funding and budget setting.
- 2.2 At the last Full Council we formally agreed to share a Chief Executive to run both Councils and since then officers have been busy preparing a Business Plan. We took the decision to share a Chief Executive because of meaningful savings for both Councils and as the preparation of the Business Case advances we are seeing the possibility of substantially more savings arising.
- 2.3 It is imperative we seek to maximise the savings from shared management and services as this will minimise the need to cut other services to our community. Should these proposals not be accepted by Members then we will have no alternative but to agree cuts to other services that will impact on the community much more than the savings from back office costs proposed.

3. Brewhouse Theatre and Arts Centre

- 3.1 Following the decision of Full Council on 23 July 2013, we are now finalising the terms of the acquisition of The Brewhouse with the administrators. We hope to take full ownership of the venue and contents within the next month, subject to no unforeseen legal obstacles. This is the first step in facilitating a revival of this key town centre venue and community asset.
- 3.2 Meanwhile, through the work of specialist consultants and the Brewhouse Members Steering Group, we are working hard to facilitate a sustainable plan for the future operation of the venue. An initial Business Plan proposal has been received from the Tone Theatre Association and we are working with them to develop this further, for consideration by Scrutiny and Executive in November/December.
- 3.3 I will ensure Members are kept briefed as and when we conclude the legal transfer and progress with the potential future management of the theatre.

4. Taunton Town Centre ‘Re-think’

- 4.1 Work on a 'rethink' of Taunton Town Centre has now started in earnest, under the auspices of the Taunton Economic Advisory Board. Consultants engaged to carry out this work are talking to a wide range of people and groups with an interest in building on our strengths and delivering the best possible future for our Town Centre.
- 4.2 A decade on from the Vision for Taunton proposals, the rethink will review progress and take a fresh look at the ambitions and future direction for the Town Centre, in the context of the current economic climate and the rapidly growing phenomenon of internet shopping. It will also make recommendations on the proposed mix of uses at key regeneration sites within the Town Centre, including Firepool.
- 4.3 As this is an independent rethink with wide consultation to gather views from the private and public sectors, I can assure Members that it will be a challenging process with hopefully some equally challenging and potentially radical proposals. The consultants will complete their work during the Autumn, with outcomes being considered by the Taunton Advisory Board, the Project Taunton Steering Group, Scrutiny and Executive over the Autumn/Winter period.

5. Economic Growth Prospectus for Taunton

- 5.1 The Growth Prospectus for Taunton is a joint project with Somerset County Council, again sponsored by the Taunton Economic Advisory Board. A short document, its purpose will be to establish a clear 'direction of travel' for Taunton's economic growth over the Core Strategy period to 2028.
- 5.2 It will highlight the priority economic sectors where the Council and partners want to focus effort and investment, together with the infrastructure requirements to deliver that growth, such as transport, flood alleviation and employment land. It will inform the wider Somerset Growth Plan and Heart of South West Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Plan and will be an important pre-cursor to securing the local and external funding needed to support our economic growth ambitions. It will help to secure Taunton's status as a key Growth Town in the South West.
- 5.3 Work on the Prospectus will be concluded this Autumn and will be available for formal member consideration over the Autumn/Winter period.

6. Castle Green, Taunton

- 6.1 I am working closely with officers to facilitate the relocation of the bus stops on Castle Way, Taunton to enable the completion of the final phase of development at this important and historic town centre site. Investigations are continuing and I hope to bring a more definitive update to the next Full Council meeting.

- 6.2 On the subject of Castle Green, it was marvellous to see the excellent Shakespeare Festival at Castle Green in August, following on from the earlier Somerfest event earlier in the Summer. I am delighted to see that events in the town centre is a priority for the Town Centre Company and will form a central part of their Business Improvement District (BID) proposal in the New Year. I firmly believe that promoting Castle Green and other town centre spaces for events and activities is a key strand in creating a vibrant and fun town centre that will attract people to Taunton from far and wide.
- 6.3 The initiative by the Town Centre Company in setting up the general and produce market stalls in the High Street on a Friday and Saturday is to be particularly welcomed. They are to be applauded as I am sure it will be a major attraction to draw people into the town centre as referred to above.
- 6.4 There are plans afoot to expand this into Castle Green with a bi-monthly antiques and craft market, another great initiative that has to be welcomed.

7. Quantock House, Taunton

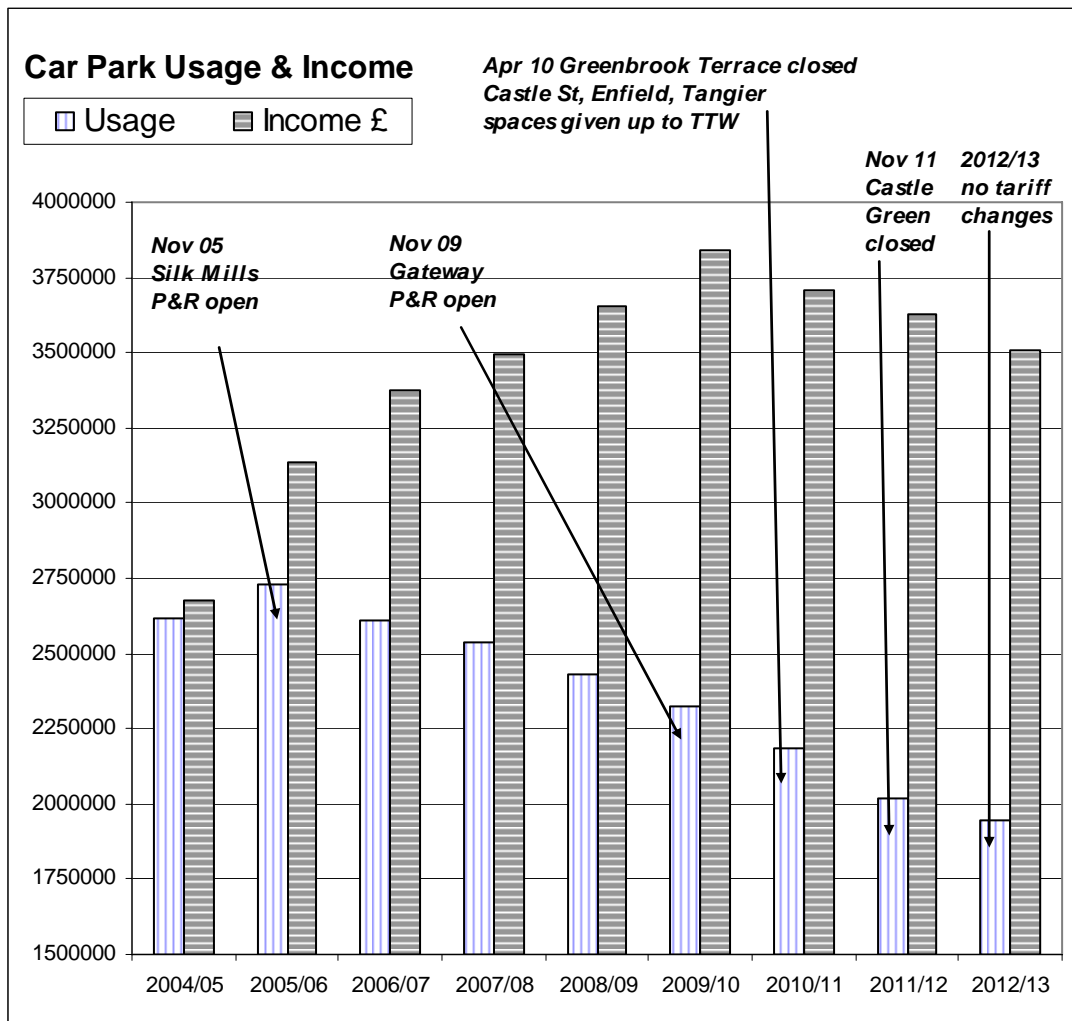
- 7.1 Members will be aware that the Council has previously expressed an interest in purchasing this building at a key town centre location, adjacent to the multi-storey car parks in Taunton.
- 7.2 An arbitration process is currently underway to establish the market value. The arbitrator is expected to report in early October. Subject to this valuation, a Business Case for the potential purchase will be prepared and put to Members for consideration.

8. Car Parking Usage and Income

- 8.1 Can I clarify the situation regarding car parking in Taunton as there seems to be a perpetuation of the belief that actions decided by this Council are losing us income. Please see the graph below showing records from 2004/2005 to date of both usage and income. This clearly indicates a growth in income until the economic recession struck but a consistent drop in usage.
- 8.2 There is no evidence to suggest this drop is related to car park closures but caused partly in the first instance by the two park and rides opening and then the economic recession struck exacerbating the drop in usage and for the first time we see reduced income. Both these situations are set against the environmental policy and anti-congestion agendas.
- 8.3 This reduction in income is clearly brought about by changing habits of motorists caused by the price of fuel, squeeze on incomes and economic recession, not the shortage of parking capacity within

Taunton as our car park stock as exists now does not operate anywhere near capacity except possibly the run up to Christmas.

- 8.4 I hope this helps Members understand what our records show and helps stop the perpetuation of the myth that we have inadequate car parking capacity in Taunton. The reduction in usage recorded is being experienced by all other parking authorities around us and is not unique to us.



9. Former Taunton Youth and Community Centre site, Taunton

- 9.1 Following the agreement to sell this site to Lidl, good progress is being made with the contract for sale now that all the “landowners” consents are in place, and we would expect an exchange of contracts within the next few weeks.
- 9.2 After exchange of contracts, Lidl have five months to submit their planning application. Work is now underway on an “options appraisal”

for the existing Lidl site in the town centre so that a report on a possible land swap can be submitted to committees before Christmas.

10. Thales Site, Taunton

- 10.1 Following the agreement of a Business Case to sell this key employment site to developers, both sets of lawyers have been instructed and draft contracts are being prepared.
- 10.2 As part of this process a draft use clause on the types of employment use to be permitted on the site will be prepared for the approval of the Section 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development.

Councillor John Williams
Leader of the Council

Council Meeting – 1 October 2013

Report of Councillor Mrs Catherine Herbert – Sports, Parks and Leisure

1. Parks

- 1.1 You will be pleased to hear that Taunton in Bloom has again been successful in gathering some awards for their efforts:-
- A Gold Pennant Award - in the Large Town category;
 - An Eligible Garden Award – for the vegetable bed in Vivary Park; and
 - “It’s Your Neighbourhood Awards” for Victoria Park Action Group, Kingston Road Allotments and St Georges School.
- 1.2 It is also great to report that Wellington in Bloom also received five “It’s Your Neighbourhood Awards”.

2. Community Leisure and Play

- 2.1 The refurbishment and extension works to Wellington Playing Field Pavilion have been completed. The official opening with Sport England will have taken place on 25 September 2013. The project was entirely funded by Section 106 Agreement outdoor recreation contributions for Wellington and an Inspired Facilities Grant from Sport England.
- 2.2 The Wellington Skate Park has been extended to provide a concrete half pipe and grind box. This work was carried out after consultation with the young people of Wellington and funded entirely from Section 106 Agreement outdoor recreation contributions for Wellington. The works were completed in time for the start of the school summer holidays.
- 2.3 The Vivary Park summer season of free bandstand concerts ran successfully from June – September with 10 bandstand concerts. This year for the first time local schools and training bands were offered the opportunity to play in the bandstand. Four very successful concerts were held. Only one school (Heathfield Community School) took up the offer to play for us and we are delighted they have intimated they would be willing to do so again next year. We would be pleased if more schools took up the offer as well.
- 2.4 The Deano, Taunton Deane’s What’s On for primary school aged children was published ready for the school summer holidays.
- 2.5 We received a good variety of applications for the Parish Play Area grants fund and have awarded monies to:-

Nynehead for a field bike track and ramps, Corfe for new swings, North Curry for a zipwire and climbing frame and West Bagborough for a skate park and BMX track.

2.6 Capital grants have been awarded to:-

- The Conquest Centre for a sensory room, Milverton Victoria Rooms for a fire alarm;
- Taunton Vale Sports Club for a new hockey pitch, spectator area and LED lights;
- Trident Youth and Community Centre for a Multi Use Games Area, and
- Wiveliscombe Community Centre towards much needed structural works.

Two further grant applications from the scheme are in process.

2.7 Station Road Pool Refurbishment - Work continues to plan on the project for the refurbishment of Station Road Swimming Pool in Taunton. Invitations to tender have been sent to potential contractors for return by Friday, 4 October 2013 and we intend to award the contract on the 11 October to keep us on track for an October Close down. The designs have now been shared with customers and all Councillors have received a newsletter containing the designs.

2.8 Blackbrook Pool and Spa - A solution to the VAT issue has been found and progress is being made with finalising the lease arrangements with Tone Leisure. Tenders have been issued to recruit the Project Board expertise and support. Interviews will take place on the 9 October 2013 with an award of the contract soon after. Once this is in place the Project Board will then progress the next stage of design and costings ready to tender for the contractors in the New Year.

3. Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities

Community, Sports and Health Development

Tone continues to work hard to develop a number of community outreach programmes:-

Health Development

3.1 321 Running Initiatives

3.1.1 Tone, in partnership with Somerset County Council and England Athletics, has received funding to train three volunteers in the Leadership in Running Fitness (LiRF) qualification. As a result of this training, beginners running groups will be set up across the district and route/distance markers will be laid to also encourage more people to run individually.

3.2 Alzheimer's Society Memory Walk

3.2.1 Tone hosted the third year of the Alzheimer's Society Memory Walk in Vivary Park in September and over 160 people took part.

3.3 Hearts and Soles Nordic Walking

3.3.1 Tone's Nordic Walking programme, which has been part funded by the British Heart Foundation, has been running for one year and has generated interest from approximately 150 people. The programme aims to increase the number of older adults taking part in moderate intensity physical activity, particularly heart patients and their family members.

3.3.2 Of those that took part, 62% were aged 61-75 years old; 75% were female; 29% of participants were heart patients and/or a family member of a heart patient. A small team of volunteers have been trained as Leaders and are working towards helping to lead the Adventure Walks.

Facility News

Wellington Sports Centre

4.1 Wellington Sports Centre will undergo refurbishment work in the existing Health Suite area. This will include a new poolside entrance, new sauna and new steam room. Work will commence in October, with completion anticipated by the end of December, and the centre will be opened to the public from January 2014.

4.2 On Sunday, 28 July 2013, 100 children attended the summer Swimskool Pool Party, which saw the launch of the new commando run pool inflatable. Customer feedback has been very positive and it was the most popular session throughout the summer holidays.

4.3 On Sunday, 22 September 2013, Wellington celebrated its 40th Anniversary in style. Activities included a 12 hour class marathon, free junior activities, gym challenges and £1 family swims.

Wellsprings Leisure Centre

4.4 Tone has installed occupancy sensors on the Sports Hall lighting to reduce energy consumption in this centre.

Blackbrook Pavilion

4.5 The Council is installing energy efficient lighting in the Sports Hall, Tennis Bubble and Indoor Tennis Centre. Tone will pay back the installation cost over the remainder of the contract.

St. James Street Baths

4.6 Tone is currently in the process of affiliating the centre with the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) which will enable the team to host 'Learn to Swim' courses at the pools.

Vivary Adventure Centre

High Ropes

- 4.7 Business is growing rapidly at the High Ropes, with nearly 10,000 people using the centre so far this year. Tone has had a great year in the education sector, with over 2,000 school and college students using the facility. Tone has secured an Annual User Agreement with Somerset College, which will see up to 1,000 college students through the course over the next academic year. Tone is also currently in the process of agreeing another with Taunton Academy.
- 4.8 Tone is now offering Slack Lining and Circus Skills to add to the repertoire and will soon be constructing a new Abseil Wall to add another exciting activity to this great centre.

Golf

- 4.9 Golf Course usage has increased at a steady pace since the last report and there has been a strong rise in membership sales. The Green-keeping staff are maintaining the course in a fantastic condition, receiving exceptional feedback from the Senior Section at Taunton Vale Golf Club following a match at Vivary.

Café

- 4.10 Since the last report the café re-launch has been completed. Tone now has a brand new menu offering Barista coffee and a whole new line of quality products.

Councillor Catherine Herbert

Council Meeting – 1 October 2013

Report of Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins – Housing Services

1. Housing Enabling - Regeneration

- 1.1 **Victoria Gate, Taunton** - The first phase has been completed and 20 units have been handed over. A number of these tenants are relocating from properties to be demolished in the later phase. The land transfer for this has now completed.
- 1.2 **Ruskin Close, Taunton** - An opening event was held on 30 August 2013, attended by the Mayor and all but six units have been handed over.
- 1.3 **Burns Road, Taunton** - These two homes are almost ready to hand over at time of writing.
- 1.4 **Parmin Close, Taunton** - A planning application for 80 units is anticipated in the New Year following public consultation in December. 21 tenants have already moved and there are 10 left waiting for suitable accommodation.

2. Affordable Housing Target

- 2.1 I am happy to report that with anticipated Help to Buy sales added to homes already in the construction pipeline, we should be on course to achieve our annual target of 200 homes
- 2.2 The Government's 'Help to Buy' scheme is, however, affecting sales of discounted open market housing, so some of these intermediate units have been converted to shared ownership instead.
- 2.3 Completions as at 31 August 2013 were 106.

3. Right to Buy Sales

- 3.1 As reported previously, we have seen an increase in Right to Buy sales, receipts from which have to be ploughed back into affordable housing within certain time limits. Some of this money is earmarked for our Housing Development programme, but we have receipts which need to be spent sooner.

- 3.2 A decision was made, therefore to use some funds to buy back ex-Council homes when suitable opportunities occurred. We have just completed the purchase of one such property and are progressing some more.

4. Council House Building

- 4.1 The planning applications for the Creechbarrow Road, Taunton redevelopment come to Committee on 25 September 2013 and I therefore hope to report their approval to Council
- 4.2 The contract meanwhile has gone out to tender due to the tight timescale on this project. The date for opening has been extended by two weeks at the request of two of the short-listed contractors.
- 4.3 The decanting is almost complete, so a prompt start on site should be possible.

5. Estates Management – Anti-social behaviour

- 5.1 The success of our team has meant more cases coming forward because people are less reluctant to report issues, particularly around drugs.
- 5.2 Of the 37 cases closed to 10 September 2013, 26 have been resolved, whilst others were terminated at the complainant's request and one was deemed unfounded and in two cases no action was required.

6. Estates Management – Welfare Reform

- 6.1 The programme of visits to tenants continues and 89 have been identified wishing to downsize.
- 6.2 As at 13 September 2013:-
- 19 moves on Choice Based Lettings (CBL) have completed;
 - 4 bids were pending on CBL;
 - 1 direct match had completed;
 - 10 mutual exchanges had completed;
 - 6 mutual exchanges were being processed.
- 6.3 In order to encourage and facilitate mutual exchange, the Estates Team are holding a number of events, the first of which took place at Moorland Place Meeting Hall, Taunton on 13 August 2013.

- 6.4 132 tenants were invited. 21 attended and a further 12 have since made contact resulting in two potential exchanges.
- 6.5 A further two events are planned - in Wellington on 15 October 2013 at the United Reform Church between 10 am and 2 pm and the other at the Priorswood Resource Centre, Taunton on 20 November 2013 between Noon and 4 pm.
- 6.6 Welfare Reform Support Guidance has now been put in place to assist tenants wishing to exchange.
- 6.7 All tenants are being offered advice on Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and help to complete the application. This has resulted in 78 DHPs being awarded, although most do not cover the full amount tenants have to pay.

7. Estates Management – Rent Arrears

- 7.1 As anticipated the Welfare Reforms have had an effect on tenant arrears which rose from £32,094 in April (for the affected tenants) to £51,881 in July, but, happily are now decreasing, down to £46,860 in August.
- 7.2 However, this is against a background of overall arrears reducing.

Councillor Jean Adkins

Council Meeting - 1 October 2013

Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources

1. Customer Contact Centre

New Telephony

- 1.1 The service is working hard to deliver new telephony hardware both for the Customer Contact Centre and Revenues and Benefits, with a phased implementation during October and November 2013.
- 1.2 Training for the teams starts at the beginning of October, with implementation of telephony taking place from 15 October 2013. The Project Team includes officers from Customer Contact, ICT and the suppliers. Close working relationships means that the project has remained on schedule since order signature in February 2013.

Service Delivery

- 1.3 Service delivery came under pressure in June 2013 as a result of both service and client led issues, which resulted in a failure in meeting 2 KPIs. These failures have been discussed with the Client Teams and remedial actions looked at.
- 1.4 However, the failures did not affect the Customer Contact Team's ability to deliver their usual quality of service for customers. The quarterly customer satisfaction figure reported for that month was 96.61%.

Statistical Information – June – August 2013:-

Service Line	Reporting Authority	KPI No	Performance Measure	Frequency of Reporting	2012/2013 Target	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13
						QUART	QUARTER 2	
Customer Contact	TDBC	1	% of calls answered in 20 secs	Monthly	80%	68.89%	82.20%	85.63%
Customer Contact	TDBC	2	% of calls resolved at first point of contact	Monthly	92%	96.18%	97.76%	97.39%
Customer Contact	TDBC	3	% of external customers rating the Customer Contact service as Very Good/Good	Annually (monitored quarterly)	75%	96.61%		
Customer Contact	TDBC	4	Abandoned call rate - less than 5%	Monthly	<5%	6.28%	3.98%	2.86%

- 1.5 During the second quarter, a total of 5,011 enquiries were dealt with at The Deane House Main, Housing and Planning Receptions. 5,760 people visited Wellington Community Office – 3,225 to make enquiries including TIC and 2,535 to make a payment through the kiosk. Staff dealt with 1,306 letter and e-mail enquiries during the period including Garden Waste renewals.

2. Corporate and Client Services

Client Team

- 2.1 The Client Team continues to monitor delivery by the various Southwest One services, which remains broadly on-track.

Southwest One Contract

- 2.2 The review of Southwest One services, which followed the changes made to the Southwest One contract by Somerset County Council (SCC) in April, is ongoing, but will hopefully be concluded in the near future. Any recommendations for change will be brought before Members in due course.

Minor Change to Southwest One Contract

- 2.3 On 1 July 2013 we made a minor change to the contract which saw the successful return of the Health and Safety function.

Southwest One Update

- 2.4 We have been advised by IBM that they are selling their global

'customer care business process outsourcing services' business to a company called SYNEX. This is a large IBM global deal and will take a number of months to complete.

- 2.5 This may have some implications for Southwest One, but as yet we do not know any details. The Client Team, in conjunction with the other partners to Southwest One, is currently working to clarify any potential contractual issues. However, any contract to which we are a party cannot be changed without our agreement.

Procurement Savings

- 2.6 We continue to monitor the delivery of the Procurement Transformation Project and day-to-day procurement service by Southwest One. As at 31 July 2013, in excess of £1,800,000 savings have been delivered to the Council through the signed-off procurement related initiatives. A further £1,364,000 of savings are scheduled to be delivered from these signed-off initiatives during the remainder of the Southwest One contract.

Savings Initiatives

- 2.7 The strategic Procurement Services are working on a number of additional projects and savings initiatives, which should increase the value of savings delivered. A detailed Procurement Transformation Update report went to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 19 September 2013.

Retained Finance and Corporate Insurance

- 2.8 The Retained Finance Team continues to manage the finance functions not provided by Southwest One, provide support to the Section 151 Officer, assist the Client Team in monitoring the Finance Service element of the Southwest One contract and provide support for the retained Parking functions.

Corporate Insurance Renewal

- 2.9 The corporate insurance tender exercise has been completed in the last quarter. We have now moved to using four separate and specialist insurers in order to obtain the best value for money for the Authority. Priorities for the next quarter will centre on assisting with budget setting for 2014/2015 and including the setting of fees and charges.

Retained HR

- 2.10 The Retained HR Manager continues to provide strategic HR support to the Authority, manages the HR functions not provided by Southwest One and assists the Client Team in monitoring the HR aspects of the Southwest One contract.

Corporate Projects

- 2.11 The retained HR Manager continues to be heavily involved in supporting key corporate projects and in particular the West Somerset Shared Services Project.

Strategic and Retained ICT

- 2.12 The Retained Strategic ICT Officer continues to provide strategic ICT support to the Authority, manage the ICT functions not provided by Southwest One and to assist in monitoring the ICT element of the Southwest One contract.

Corporate Projects

- 2.13 Specifically the Retained ICT Officer has been heavily focused on supporting the ICT elements of key corporate projects and in particular the Customer Access and Accommodation and West Somerset Shared Service Projects.

Public Services Network

- 2.14 We are working closely with the Southwest One ICT service to complete our Code of Connection submission for our Public Services Network (previously known as Government Connect) audit. This ensures that we comply with government set ICT security standards.

3. Corporate Performance

Quarterly Performance

- 3.1 The Quarter 1 (2013/2014) corporate performance report was considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 15 August 2013. The corporate performance scorecard (content, measures / performance indicators and targets) has been refreshed and updated to reflect the new Corporate Business Plan (2013/14 – 2015/16) and this was the first time the new scorecard was used.

Theme and Performance Scorecards

- 3.2 Theme and Service performance scorecards are also produced quarterly and include detailed performance information and updates on progress against theme and service priorities – these are available from all Theme Managers and from Quarter 1 have also been published on the Members' Portal.

Staff

- 3.3 Charlotte Markham has recently joined the Strategy and Performance team (a six month secondment) to assist with performance monitoring work (Corporate, Taunton Deane Partnership and our Service Level Agreements with voluntary sector grant recipients).

Risk Management

- 3.4 The Corporate Risk Register is reviewed quarterly by the Corporate Management Team as part of the quarterly performance review process (most recently at the end of July). The Corporate Risk Register was reported to the Corporate Governance Committee on 24 June 2013 and will next be reported in December.

Risk and Impact Assessment

- 3.5 A new 'Risk and Impact Assessment' process is currently being developed to improve and simplify the way we identify and assess all categories of risk, including Equality Impact Assessments. This new process is likely to be introduced during the development of service 'business cases' (for budget saving proposals from 2014/2015) and to help inform the decision-making process for Members.

Programme and Project Management

- 3.6 The Council's Corporate Change Programme is overseen by the Strategy and Performance Team. Project Managers for all major corporate projects report monthly to the 'Programme Management Group' (PMG). There are two distinct 'programmes' that are designed to deliver the Council's strategic aims: (i) Growth and Regeneration, and (ii) Corporate Transformation. An overview of the entire programme is provided for Members as part of the quarterly performance monitoring report.

Training

- 3.7 To further develop the Council's approach to effective programme management, Simon Lewis (Strategy and Performance Manager) and Dan Webb (Performance Lead) have recently completed an accredited training course in August - 'Managing Successful Programmes'

4. Legal and Democratic Services

Legal Services and Shared Service

- 4.1 A Business Case for a shared Legal Service with Mendip and West Somerset is currently being drafted and nearing completion. A scrutiny report will be coming to Members for their consideration on 24 October 2013 prior to going to Full Council on 12 November 2013. The

timetable is concurrent with the Taunton Deane/West Somerset Business Case process as there is some linkage with that project.

Land Charges

- 4.2 The PALC (Public Access Land Charges) project is making some progress and we currently have an indicative completion date of mid-October 2013. A Project Board, involving officers from Taunton Deane and Southwest One, has recently been set up and regular meetings are taking place in order to keep the momentum going.

Service Transfer

- 4.3 The Land Charges service successfully transferred over to Building Control on 1 September 2013.

Shared Services Project

- 4.4 Tonya Meers has been busy working with Bruce Lang (Monitoring Officer/Corporate Director at West Somerset Council) on drafting the Section 113 Agreement (Local Government Act 1972) and the Inter-Authority Agreement that will be required if the Business Case is approved for Shared Management and Shared Services. These agreements will be scrutinised by Joint Members' Advisory Panel at their meeting on 8 October 2013.

Shared Joint Executive

- 4.5 The Section 113 Agreement for the Joint Chief Executive has been agreed.

New Microphone and wi-fi System

- 4.6 Richard Bryant is progressing the implementation of a new microphone system and wi-fi in The Deane House. He has looked at the system used in West Somerset Council offices and is currently working with David Carpenter to draw up a specification for our proposed new system.

Case Management System

- 4.7 Fiona Kirkham is working with Civica to progress the implementation of the Case management system. It is believed there may be some issues with the PSN which need resolving.

Data Security Audit

- 4.8 Work on the Data Security audit recommendations contained in the report of 26 November 2012 has now been completed.

Information Governance

- 4.9 Fiona Kirkham is looking at aspects of the Information Governance audit recommendations contained in the report of 23 December 2012. She is working with Tonya Meers to produce a new user guide for staff and Members, which will link with the data security audit work.

5. Revenues and Benefits

Discretionary Rate Relief Policy

- 5.1 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered two important reports from the Revenues and Benefits Service on 19 September 2013. The first was a review of this Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy.
- 5.2 The funding for Discretionary Rate Relief has undergone significant change since the localisation of Business Rates from 1 April 2013. The revised policy incorporates all recent legislative changes and sets out, as far as possible, objective criteria rather than subjective judgements for awarding relief.

Council Tax Support Scheme

- 5.3 The second report was on Taunton Deane's Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for 2014/2015 and beyond. While we aim to keep our scheme unchanged next year, Government funding for 2015/2016 and beyond will reduce. The report sets out options to reduce spending and seeks a mandate to start formal consultation with the public in Spring 2014 on proposals to cut CTS from April 2015.
- 5.4 With the consequences of Benefit Fraud in the news recently, it was timely that during August 2013 Heather Tiso attended a workshop to explore what Councils can do in deterring and sanctioning people who seek to defraud public funds. Work is continuing to determine if there is a Business Case to set up a Corporate Anti-Fraud Team in Taunton Deane, as we need to do all we can to minimise loss and this is ever more important as Local Government funding is constrained.

Council Tax and Business Rates Collection

- 5.5 Council Tax collection at the end of August 2013 was 53.59%, which was 0.49% less than was collected at the same point last year. Encouragingly, Business Rates collection was 0.64% ahead of target and has improved in comparison with last year.

Discretionary Payments

- 5.5 We have helped 129 households with awards of Discretionary Council Tax Assistance totalling nearly £15,000, as well as targeting take-up of Discretionary Housing Payments for working families.

6. Council Accommodation and Customer Access Project

Project Update

- 6.1 The project continues to progress, working from a detailed project plan to achieve a full Business Case ready to present to Full Council on 10 December 2013. Regular project meetings have been taking place and there are agreed Customer Access channels. A FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) document has recently been issued to staff and Members and been well received. A Member Briefing is due to take place on 7 November 2013.

Accommodation Costs

- 6.2 A full valuation on The Deane House has been requested and refurbishment costs for the building, including ICT, received. The work required to update it to modern standards would ensure the Council would then be able to share it with other organisations. Costs have also been received for refurbished accommodation in Block C at County Hall. In addition, the costs of a new-build at Firepool have been received and are under review.
- 6.3 Future maintenance costs for all three sites have been requested.

Office Requirements

- 6.4 Kate Owsley is currently undertaking a desk count, so that we have accurate occupancy statistics. This work is taking place concurrently with the on-going review of smart office principals, which is at present being undertaken by the management team.

Visits

- 6.5 Joy Wishlade has visited both North Somerset and Trowbridge Councils to learn from their experience in undertaking similar projects.

Customer Access

- 6.6 Footfall, telephone call and website statistics have been received and are currently being reviewed. Dean Emery is looking at the investment needed to achieve channel shift, with 25% of customers moving to self-serve and thus ensuring the cost of delivery becomes cheaper for the organisation. However, for some types of contact a greater level of human contact is required. It will be important to anticipate where the

Council will generate contact that will require reassurance and to plan for this in service provision.

Alignment with West Somerset Project

- 6.5 As Members are aware, the West Somerset project is progressing alongside this project. The Council Accommodation and Customer Access Project will consider a recommended strategy for Taunton Deane Borough Council, but which can be scaled to accommodate a shared approach should that be the final outcome.

7. Joint Management and Shared Services Project

Progress

- 7.1 The Joint Management and Shared Services Project between Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council is progressing well.

Transformation Challenge Award

- 7.2 A decision is still awaited on the joint bid to Government for funding for transformational costs. We understand bids are still being assessed.

Communication

- 7.3 Regular newsletters for all staff and all Members at both Authorities have been circulated and have been well received. In addition, sessions for Lead Officers and Members Briefing sessions at both Councils have been delivered in order to keep Members and Managers fully up to speed with project progress. The next Member briefing at West Somerset will be held on 3 October and at Taunton Deane on 4 October 2013.

Peer Support

- 7.4 Member-peer sessions have been delivered by the Local Government Association via Local Partnerships. Political groupings have been able to tap into the expertise and advice from a peer matched to each group, so Members are well prepared for the decisions that lie ahead.

Project Team

- 7.5 The Project Team have held a number of informative joint meetings with some of the Service Managers from both Councils, and more are planned with other service lines. These meetings have been approached in a very positive manner and have been helpful in understanding the possibility for sharing services between our Councils, and will inform the Business Case.

Timetable

- 7.6 The project remains on track to deliver a detailed Business Case on joint management for consideration by the scrutiny committees of both Authorities on 24 October 2013. A high level business case for shared services will be delivered to the same time-scale. Subsequently, the business case will be considered at Full Council meetings at West Somerset and Taunton Deane on 12 November 2013. If approved, the joint management structure will be in place by 1 January 2014.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

Council Meeting – 1 October 2013

Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications

1. Planning

- 1.1 The Planning Department has been dealing with some particularly controversial planning applications in the last few months which have raised issues of prematurity in terms of the emerging Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP).
- 1.2 As the Council cannot control when and how many applications are submitted, it has meant that there has been a danger that planning decisions could be made in advance of the SADMP and critically the local consultation that would inform the plan.
- 1.3 This has been in particular concern in the Minor Rural Centres so in this instance I requested a policy document be raised to inform the Core Strategy of the basis of the numbers involved per centre. This was agreed by the Local Development Framework (LDF) Steering Group and signed off by myself in early September.
- 1.4 The Government is introducing a number of measures associated with the Planning Guarantee. These include a form of 'special measures' whereby in the case of the poorest performing Local Planning Authorities (based upon speed of determination for major applications) applicants will be able to by-pass the Council and apply direct to The Planning Inspectorate.
- 1.5 In addition, from 1 October 2013 any applicant will be entitled to a refund of their planning fee should their application remain undetermined after twenty-six weeks following submission in the absence of a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) or an agreed extension of time.
- 1.6 Taunton Deane is not a poor performing authority and much of officer time is spent working with developers to seek solutions that will allow important developments to proceed.
- 1.7 In the context of these changes it is considered that it is an appropriate time to prepare a Planning Protocol for major developments which will encourage developers to engage in pre-application discussions and to sign up to a PPA. In the absence of collaborative working, the default position will be to determine applications quickly and if all matters cannot be resolved within the thirteen week period, the applicant will be asked to withdraw the application or face having their application refused. A report containing more detail will be presented to the

Community Scrutiny Committee shortly.

2. Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP)

- 2.1 Following the two initial Issues and Options consultation periods over the period January-March and June-August 2013 the Planning Policy Team are proposing to issue the Preferred Options document for further consultation over the period October-December 2013. This document identifies the Councils preferred 'direction of travel' for detailed Development Management policies and site allocations over the Plan period to 2028.
- 2.2 A series of consultation events will be held in Taunton and the rural centres where development is proposed. Following assessment of responses from all interested parties it is proposed to publish the 'draft Plan' during summer 2014 with adoption in spring 2015. The Council will then have full Plan coverage across Taunton Deane to assist in ensuring a sustainable approach to development.

3. Community Infrastructure Levy

- 3.1 The CIL Examination was undertaken in July 2013 and the Examiners report is anticipated in September/October. The intention is for CIL to become operational across Taunton Deane from 1 April 2014. CIL is projected to raise around £44,000,000 over the Core Strategy period up to 2028 or £7,500,000 over the next five years.

4. Somerset Design Review Panel

- 4.1 The setting up of a mechanism for local design review was one of the objectives of the Planning Review. To have local design review arrangements in place is also now a requirement of National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPF).
- 4.2 When options were explored, it soon became apparent that a Panel to serve Taunton Deane alone was not a practical proposition. I am therefore pleased to be able to say that Taunton Deane has been instrumental in establishing a Somerset Design Review Panel, which will be Chaired and administered by Jonathan Braddick under the auspices of the Royal Institute for British Architects. Whilst the Chairman is an architect, the Panel will be multi-disciplinary.
- 4.3 The Panel will serve North Somerset Unitary Authority as well as the districts. The Panel is part of a new network of panels that will also cover those parts of Devon who do not currently have local arrangements.
- 4.4 The opportunity to refer proposals to a local Panel, will not only

enhance the Council's offer in terms of its pre-application advice to developers, but will also assist decision-makers in their assessment of design considerations, whether they be officers, Planning Committee Members or the Government's Planning Inspectors.

- 4.5 The cost of the service will be borne by the developer as part of their pre-application fee. The Panel was launched at Somerset County Cricket Club on 23 September 2013 and I would hope that Planning Committee reports should start to feature the Panel's assessments before the end of this year.
- 4.6 I want to thank Tim Burton for his efforts in progressing this initiative and am very hopeful that we will see long term benefits.

5. Neighbourhood Planning

- 5.1 The four Neighbourhood Plan Groups are each tackling challenges which arise with Neighbourhood Plans.
- 5.2 Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone - Following initial consultation exhibitions with village, there has also been a fortnightly meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Group with public question time which has been great for qualitative information gathering. The questionnaire is being finalised and will be "blind tested" before being sent out in the autumn. The group is also exploring the possibility of producing online mapping data on the issues raised through the questionnaire and collation of all quantitative data – such as listed buildings, green spaces, services and facilities, community assets – they have come across issues of copyright with data on Flood Risk and Ecological records. Discussions continue with the relevant agencies to find compromise solutions.
- 5.3 Trull and Staplehay – The Neighbourhood Plan Group issued their questionnaires in late July and has received 28.75% returns. This is a good response rate when compared with national statistics, which quote 6-8% return rates for national consultation and 14-16% for local consultations. The Group is commissioning an independent professional analyst and statistician to set up a simple data entry system which allows the groups to cross analyse the data into age and gender groups. This will help the Neighbourhood Plan Team identify any sections of the community who are under represented, allowing them to undertake some target consultation to correct this. The Neighbourhood Plan sub-groups are looking at key topics from the consultation – such as ecology, transport and green space.
- 5.4 Wellington - Following positive consultation which produced a significant amount of feedback; the group are discussing the value the Plan can bring to development in Wellington. Two of the three strategic developments in Wellington have planning permission and are being built out; the third is pending an application. The group has been involved in the sites but there is a dilemma being discussed about

weight and influence of the Neighbourhood Plan, the form and function of developments are being set ahead of the Plans completion. The second Wellington is facing is the lack of local people to resource the completion of the Plan; with most of the work to date completed by a very small number of people. Discussions continue in the group on the direction of the Plan and its form.

- 5.5 Wiveliscombe – The questionnaires have been collated and a report of the consultation circulated to the Town Council who decide the future direction of the Plan going forward. The Neighbourhood Plan Group will be engaging a local resident who is a planner to help with the policy writing stage. The group has a web site ready to go live for all documents and the draft plan, set up by a local resident. I am personally extremely happy with the progress made as they were one of the first to progress the plan and I feel their engagement has been excellent and has informed the other groups that have followed.
- 5.6 As well as the Department of Communities and Local Government's Direct Neighbourhood Plan Funding - direct support funding or grants from Government to help with the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans - the Government has also launched a '100 Champions' initiative. The aim is to build a support network of individuals from local councils and Neighbourhood Plan Groups who can tell their stories to their peers and help other communities with their Neighbourhood Plans. Support, materials and networking opportunities are being offered to help those willing to join the 100 Champions.

6. Communications

- 6.1 From award-winning parks and open spaces to facts and figures about stray dogs, recent weeks have seen the typically varied work of communications.
- 6.2 We continue to work in partnership with others, notably Somerset Waste Partnership, other District Councils in Somerset and with Wellington Town Council on the Free After 3 parking initiative.
- 6.3 July saw a lot of media activity around the appointment of Penny James as the Joint Chief Executive with West Somerset. Both film and radio crews attended Council meetings.
- 6.4 The refurbishment of the Station Road Swimming Pool in Taunton was the subject of a number of radio interviews and the launch of a regular update column in the local press.
- 6.5 We continue to prepare for the wider roll-out of Twitter with a draft User Policy prepared as well as a "handy tips" guide. This is due to launch later in the autumn.
- 6.6 At the time of writing the team were preparing for the Sounding Retreat ceremony by The Rifles at Castle Green which should result in positive publicity for a spectacular event in the historic heart of Taunton.

7. Car Parking

- 7.1 The six week 'Free After Three' promotion in Wellington has just come to an end. We are analysing the car park usage figures and will be looking at these against the same period last year to see what the effect has been. The real measure of success will come from the 27 traders in the town who will be giving Wellington Business Association hard facts about footfall and transactions during the promotion compared.
- 7.2 Last September we trialed 'Free After Three' in Taunton. I have agreed to run this again over five Saturdays starting next month and culminating with the Christmas Fair. This is a joint promotion with the Town Centre Company and we will be looking to them to provide hard facts to measure the success of the venture.
- 7.3 It is important that the Council does its part to support retailers in Taunton Deane, but we must recognise there is a hit on our own income stream in doing so. It is equally important therefore that businesses work with us in properly evaluating the benefits from such initiatives and that the positives are shared by the whole community.
- 7.4 I can report that refurbishment of two of the three Orchard Multi-Storey Car Park lifts is now complete. Work on the third is scheduled to be finished by the end of October. I am particularly pleased to say there has been little disruption and inconvenience to the public during these works, and would like to thank our contractors Stannah Lift Services for the way they have ensured this.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting - 1 October 2013

Report of Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

1. Priority Areas

- 1.1 For the last five years agencies and volunteers alike have worked and succeeded in making beneficial, visible changes in both Priority Areas across East Taunton alongside daily Police business, housing and tenant issues, family support and continuing community development.
- 1.2 During this time between January 2007 and January 2013 there has been a 28% reduction in total recorded crime, a 53% reduction in the number of young people suspected of crime and a 46% reduction in the number of youth victims of crime.
- 1.3 Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) has supported this through community development, a significant investment in CCTV towards community safety, upgrading green spaces, play parks and encouraging private enterprise to help fund larger projects like Viridor Green and Hamilton Skate Park through strong partner relationships.

2. Halcon One Team

- 2.1 Over the last six months a 'One Team' approach has been adopted in Halcon (part of a twelve month pilot) led by the Police, with officers from TDBC Housing (Estate, Anti-Social Behaviour, Supported and Knightstone), Family Support Workers (FSWs) from the Acorns Children's Centre and Family Focus, Somerset College Work Academy and staff from Taunton Association for the Homeless. The Team continues to grow with health visitors and local GPs also taking an interest.
- 2.2 These frontline workers understand more fully partner roles across the Ward, look at problems together and work out the various best ways to tackle and ultimately solve them. They address underlying problems, not previously apparent to all, which persist, often behind closed doors and have resulted in the Halcon Ward being in the top 5% most deprived in the country.
- 2.3 Ten key issues have been identified: Domestic Abuse; Drugs; Safeguarding Old and Young; Unemployment; Training and Education; Youth Diversion; Money Management; Environment; Tenant Management; Information What's On. These are the basis of a detailed Ten Point Plan the Team are working towards.
- 2.4 By regularly meeting up, sharing information, charting this (community mapping, family action plans, street by street residents surveys) using the different threads of expertise across the team, they are able to think differently and work differently, together. This concerted team effort is more responsive, efficient and pro-active and is already changing the lives of some people living there for the better and for good, by addressing the root causes of deprivation in the list above.

- 2.5 The Halcon One Team pilot project has already won the Avon and Somerset Tilley Award and now goes forward into the national round of this international problem solving award.
- 2.6 The project is being written up by the Police who are interested in applying this model in other areas. It recently received a visit from the Chief Constable of Avon and Somerset Constabulary Nick Gargan and the Police and Crime Commissioner Sue Mountstevens.
- 2.7 We would like to thank Police Sergeant Andrew Murphy QPM, who is the Halcon One Team Co-ordinator and the inspiration behind this, for coming along this evening to brief full Council.

3. National Citizenship Scheme (NCS)

- 3.1 This year there was the opportunity for 100 x 16-17 year olds to go on an amazing four week challenge this summer run out of Somerset College.
- 3.2 The first two weeks were away, the first concentrating on individual challenge, followed by a second week of team building. In the third week each group looked at community matters, planning and organising a worthwhile community project for completion in their fourth/last week.
- 3.3 This year the four groups (65 students altogether) cleared, planted and restored a riverfront bandstand at Morrison's for Project Taunton; refurbished seating, play equipment and collected litter in several town centre parks for Taunton in Bloom; worked at Conquest Riding Centre for the Disabled; sorted and sold surplus goods for Open Door; and fundraised for MIND, Think Amy, Taunton Opportunity Group, Children with Cancer and St Margaret's Hospice. All this added up to the NCS students giving over 2,500 volunteer hours to the community of Taunton Deane this summer.
- 3.4 During the third week they also gave short presentations and spoke about their experiences to a number of people (including Jeremy Browne MP) and again at the graduation ceremony at the end of their final week.
- 3.5 The course is well constructed and fun. It builds confidence; self esteem; team work; tolerance; consideration; respect; motivation; ability to plan, design and deliver a service; gain experience and broadens a student's outlook. It was apparent the students were benefiting from the challenges they were presented with and getting to know themselves better as well as each other.
- 3.6 <http://www.natcen.ac.uk/study/national-citizen-service-evaluation>.

4. Employability

- 4.1 Earlier in the summer Somerset College Work Academy ran a two day Employability training course for ten people in Halcon to improve their opportunities to find work. All reported that they found it very helpful.
- 4.2 This included writing CVs, types of work, filling in applications, mock interviews, how to dress, examples of what to say, what was expected once you got a job,

timekeeping and working relationships.

- 4.3 At a recent briefing Councillor Richard Lees asked if any of those attending had now found employment. The good news is that two of the ten have successfully found jobs and a third has enrolled on a full time training course at the College.

5. Staff

- 5.1 Penny Comley-Ross who has been part of the Community Development Team for nearly four years has now left. She leaves a legacy of really good practical ideas, which translated into popular activities, most if not all of which are carrying on. She was innovative and good at identifying peoples strengths and interests and worked mostly through the Link Centre in Halcon.
- 5.2 Matt Bullock has replaced Penny and we welcome him into the Halcon One Team.
- 5.3 Congratulations to Martha Dudman (nee Prangnell), the Community Development Officer for North Taunton, who is expecting a baby in the New Year.

6. Summer Activities

- 6.1 Eight Community Clean Up Days took place across Taunton Deane earlier this summer (with two more to follow early autumn). The weight of rubbish taken away by Viridor in huge skips (excluding metal and electrical equipment) is listed below for interest, a total of 21.4 tonnes:-

1. Inner/Outer Circle – 5.5 tonnes;
2. Wellington – 4.4 tonnes;
3. Darby Way (Bishops Lydeard) – 1.9 tonnes;
4. Laxton Road (Taunton) – 3.1 tonnes;
5. Howard Road (Wellington) – 2.2 tonnes;
6. Heathfield (West Bagborough) – 1.3 tonnes;
7. Polkesfield (Stoke st Gregory) – 0.4 tonnes;
8. Darwin Close (Taunton) – 2.6 tonnes.

- 6.2 Other holiday activities across the two main Priority Areas included:-

- Pride in Priorswood - Tuesdays (over 100 children plus parents);
- Happy Halcon - Thursdays (nearly 150 children plus parents);
- Halcon Brunch Club – Mondays and Fridays (around 45 breakfasts per day, supported by 8 local volunteers. Families within the Family Focus programme are also coming along).

- 6.3 As the summer holidays have finished, there is an opportunity to reflect on these projects to see how they can be improved upon.

7. Further Community Development in Halcon

- 7.1 New development projects undertaken by the Halcon One Team are listed. These are to start to address the gaps in services which the Team have identified. Most are weekly and all are held locally:-

Benefit Surgery; Work Academy Surgery; Cage Cricket (part of the local Business/Club Supported Sports Programme); Chill and Chat coffee morning (DA support); Acorns Hour (support for young families); Domestic Abuse Outreach Worker (one day a week); Mutual Exchange Event (housing swap).

- 7.2 Link Power Project continues to grow. An application to support this over the next three years has been submitted to the Lloyds Foundation to give it the time to then become a self supporting Social Enterprise Scheme. Fingers crossed.

8. Health and Wellbeing

- 8.1 The Health and Wellbeing Board is now officially established. They have agreed their priorities over the next three years:-

- Housing;
- Community Cohesion;
- Financial Inclusion / Benefits;
- Smoking in pregnancy;
- Obesity;
- Alcohol.

- 8.2 They also want to oversee the progress of:-

- Family Focus and Early Help;
- Independent Living Review (and links to frail and elderly and dementia);
- Urgent and Emergency Care.

- 8.3 The audit of our services against the Health and Wellbeing Strategy is being revisited to complete the work on 'mapping and gapping'. Proposals will go to the Taunton Deane Partnership to close any gaps in existing provision against Health and Wellbeing priorities and create a directory of TDBC services/contacts to be shared with GPs for their patients.

9. Financial Inclusion Strategy

- 9.1 The Somerset Strategic Housing Group has commissioned Somerset Advisory Network to do a review of this and will focus on Credit Unions in Somerset and how they can be used and supported.

10. Somerset Care Leavers Review

- 10.1 This is a multi-agency group looking to learn lessons where Care Leavers have died after leaving the Care system (but have often then used other parts of public sector services such as housing options).

- 10.2 Two detailed case studies will be undertaken in Somerset and if one of these is chosen from within Taunton Deane, the Council is committed to support this and will need to ensure internal communications and support is provided for the staff involved. Somerset County Council (SCC) is leading on this and on the external communications.

11. Family Focus

- 11.1 The six Family Support Workers (FSWs) are now in post and based at Children's Centres in Wellington, Halcon and Williton. Practitioner groups are again taking place and there are strong links to the Halcon One Team. However, the resource we have for the project is still not sufficient to meet the need of all the families already identified.
- 11.2 We are looking to add more FSWs to the project as soon as possible but need to do this through SCC.
- 11.3 A project newsletter with further information will be distributed this week.

Councillor Jane Warmington

Council Meeting – 1 October 2013

Report of Councillor Cavill - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Tourism

1. Businesses Supported

- 1.1 We have worked with 17 businesses in the last three months. To date, two Investment Grants have been awarded, namely to Rigid and The Ministry of Cake. Rigid kindly invited us to a tour of their new facilities at Chelston Business Park in September 2013 to see how well they have got on. They are increasing their workforce, and have recently installed a third production line at a cost of several million Pounds.
- 1.2 A recent Business Leaders' dinner was attended by nine representatives, a great opportunity to strengthen our links with business and to discuss opportunities and barriers to investment.
- 1.3 Inward investment enquiries: We have recently received seven business enquiries, one of which was via Into Somerset.

2. Business Grants

- 2.1 Three Start up Business grants have been awarded during the past three months to:-
 - 10 Parishes Business Group;
 - Happy at Home Care Group; and
 - Churchinford Shop.
- 2.2 The next deadline for applications is 31 October 2013.

3. Town Centre Company and BID (Business Improvement District)

- 3.1 The Council is now represented on the new Board of the Town Centre Company by Cllr David Reed. The Board has been fully overhauled with new members elected from businesses of all sizes and types across the town centre. A new Chairman has been elected, namely, Guy Bottard from Future Law Limited.
- 3.2 The company has produced 'A Plan for Taunton' which draws upon the views and issues faced by businesses and the company is currently consulting with

businesses with a view to turning the Plan into a firm BID proposal. If the company proceeds with the BID, the ballot will be held in the early months of 2014.

- 3.3 The company has recently approached the Council to support its investment in new street markets in the town centre. The company has an ambition to introduce regular weekly markets on the High Street as well as occasional specialist markets elsewhere in the town.

4. The Brewhouse Theatre

- 4.1 Since the Council agreed to the purchase of the remainder of the lease of The Brewhouse, significant progress has been made to reopen the theatre.
- 4.2 As the deadline has now passed for groups that wish to run the Brewhouse, the Council's consultant, David Pratley Associates, is working to refine the Business Plan and ensure that any proposal put before the Council is robust.
- 4.3 The Council's Steering Group will meet in late October to review the Draft Business Plan and to make a recommendation to The Council on whether or not a lease should be granted to the applicant.
- 4.4 Negotiations are continuing with The Administrator over the procurement of the lease on the property.

5. Business Rates Events

- 5.1 In response to continuing concerns raised by businesses over the high level of Business Rates we organised two meetings, in Taunton on 19 July 2013 and in Wiveliscombe on 17 September 2013. Around 35 businesses attended the Taunton event at CICCIC, and another nine in the Bear Inn in Wiveliscombe.
- 5.2 The businesses heard presentations from the Valuation Office, the Council's Business Rates and Finance Teams. The Taunton event was delivered alongside the Town Centre Company and was also attended by Jeremy Browne MP who gave the Government's view on the current Business Rates regime.
- 5.3 Businesses left the events with a much clearer view of who collects the Rates as opposed to who sets the levels, and a better understanding of what relief is available to businesses.

6. Rural Funding

- 6.1 Our LARC (Local Action for Rural Communities) programmes in Western Somerset and the Levels and Moors have been awarded continuation funding

to see development plans drawn up for the next round of Leader funding. This will take the programme through to December 2014, however there is no further project funding for that period.

- 6.2 Figures from scheme managers show through the Levels and Moors Programme a total investment of £36,838 for Taunton Deane residents which works out at £2.88/head. In Western Somerset the investment was £116,654 = £34.38/head.

7. Shakespeare Festival

- 7.1 In partnership with the GB Theatre Company the first Taunton Shakespeare Festival was held on Castle Green on 8-10 August 2013. Four performances of A Midsummer Night's Dream and The Merchant of Venice were given to an audience of 550.
- 7.2 Very positive feedback was given on the festival, notably the standard of the performers. The intrusion of external noise from other users of Castle Green caused a disturbance during the performances, but the event was partly a learning exercise and we have learned significant lessons on the use of the space for this type of event.

8. Job Clubs

- 8.1 In June 2013 the contract for the delivery of Job Clubs in three centres was awarded again to Vista. The contract will last for a 12 month period and the company aims to support at least four members of the public per month to obtain work.

9. Regeneration and Asset Management

- 9.1 We have just appointed LHC as the company who will provide the 'Refresh', or reappraisal of the Project Taunton Plan. The architect involved is the same architect who drew up the new masterplan for Taunton Station. The first Consultation should take place on the 9 October 2013 and the final report ready by the middle of November.
- 9.2 The former TYCC (Taunton Youth and Community Centre) site sale continues to progress satisfactorily and exchange of documents should be completed within the next few weeks, with LIDL.
- 9.3 Assessment of further sites, both freehold and leasehold, for the Deane DLO continues on schedule.
- 9.4 Whilst the legal negotiations with The Brewhouse administrator continue, instructions have gone out to three companies to tender for the immediate works required to enable The Brewhouse to operate as a theatre.

- 9.5 The recent two meetings held for Members to input to the future Asset Management Strategy produced useful information for our advisors and interestingly, the two separate groups were consistent in their objectives.

10. Taunton Tourist Information, Ticket and Travel Centre (TIC) Update

Visitor numbers and spend

- 10.1 The TIC has had a busy summer with a large number of visitors especially those from overseas all of whom have been exploring the Deane and the surrounding area.
- 10.2 TIC income has remained positive with spend per customer ratio remaining on target. Income was boosted by the sale of tickets for Tacchi Morris Arts Centre who the TIC covered whilst they closed for their summer break and also for a number of outdoor events which have been helped by the kind weather.

Tourism Update and business support

- 10.3 The TIC Lead and Economic Development Project Officer continue to work with the Somerset Tourism Association (STA), their current activities include working on the 2014 Visitor Guide and a new promotional website, these will be launched at their AGM which is taking place at Taunton School on 28 November 2013 (tickets for this are available from the TIC).
- 10.4 Meetings have been held with ADK Design, Apple FM, Castle Café, Museum of Somerset, Somerset County Cricket Club, Taunton Flower Show, Taunton Literary Festival and Wellington School over joint promotion and possible marketing opportunities.
- 10.5 The TIC has now taken over responsibility for the visitor and events pages on the popular Taunton Town Centre Company website and is now updating these.
- 10.6 The TIC Team continue to regularly tweet information on twitter about what is going on in and about the Deane. @TauntonTIC has now attracted over 1,400 followers with many positive comments on the pro-active way the area is being promoted.

New activities planned

- 10.7 The Cards for Good Causes Charity Christmas Shop opens for the season on the 4 October 2013 and will remain open until the 21 December.
- 10.8 The TIC Lead is working with the Asset Management Team on the possible relocation of the TIC project with a report due to come to committee for consideration in November 2013.
- 10.9 The TIC Team also continue to work closely with the Economic Development, Community Leisure and Licensing departments, Project Taunton, Taunton

Town Centre Company and other organisations to raise the profile of and market Taunton Deane.

Councillor Norman Cavill

Council Meeting – 1 October 2013

Report of Councillor Ken Hayward – Environmental Services

1. Carbon Management

- 1.1 Smart Meters now installed at all Tone Leisure facilities.
- 1.2 Early indications are that the work on the new Plant under Station Road Pool will lead to significant energy efficiency improvements at this site.
- 1.3 Deane DLO eco-friendly vehicle replacement and vehicle tracking system have reduced fuel usage by 28,000 litres a year and should continue to drop.
- 1.4 Housing are progressing a number of schemes. In addition to the installation of over 100 air source heat pumps they are continuing work on thermal efficiency such as loft insulation as well as plans to clad insulate 300+ Cornish Units and then later on 200+ Woolaway units.
- 1.5 New servers were installed at The Deane House in July, which should reduce electricity consumption by 25% from the server room (including less air conditioning needed). The server room accounts for around one-third of The Deane House's energy use.
- 1.6 Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership has been providing energy advice and signposting schemes to insulate private sector stock. A new Green Deal proposal is being put forward by them.
- 1.7 The Carbon Management Plan for 2013/2014 has 31 actions for this year. Obviously the quick wins are done and the law of diminishing returns means that future savings will slow down, but there is still a real energy and enthusiasm from the group with cross-partner and Councillor input. The addition of Caroline White and Stephen Major to the team and their work in Housing has also made a big difference, as well as their expertise to the group.
- 1.8 The 'Community Carbon Management and Energy Resilience Strategy' (which includes a directory of best practice and contacts) is going through its final consultation and will be published very shortly.

2. Environmental Health

- 2.1 In Environmental Health, we are pleased to welcome back Emily Vining from maternity leave, but sad to see Jo Bliss leaving us in November after 14 months to return to her native New Zealand.

- 2.2 The dog warden contract has now been agreed and this will involve St Giles' Kennels taking on the dog warden aspect as well as their current work acting as the Council's kennels. This will formally start in April 2014. It is expected that our excellent working relationships with St Giles will extend into this new partnership. In the mean time we must thank our partners of the last ten years, SDK, for their work in partnership with the Council. This contract has taken some time to put together and has endured numerous complexities. My thanks go to Principal Environmental Health Officer, Martin Stoyles, who has done an excellent job guiding this process through to a successful conclusion.
- 2.3 This year's food sampling programme is under way and the first survey has focused on ready-made sandwiches. There is some follow up with one supplier but otherwise there were no concerns. In the general food inspection programme, all of the outstanding high risk inspections have been completed that are due. 359 inspections have been completed since 1 April 2013 which is a good indication of the volume of work completed in this busy section.
- 2.4 Within Environmental Protection, there have been two cautions for fly tipping offences, which is a reflection of how seriously the Council takes these matters. This relies on good intelligence, which has been forthcoming in these two cases.
- 2.5 The Private Water Supply inspection programme is up to date, with some failures requiring notices to be served. This has been done and there will be further checks for compliance.
- 2.6 The major issue within Licensing has continued to be the objection against the 2011/2012 accounts relating to taxi fees. The auditor has submitted his reply to both parties and indicated that there will be two recommendations within his annual audit letter. The Council is working towards those recommendations and has, in any case, completely overhauled its approach to fees in this area. This has involved looking at the cost construction of each of the Licensing fees that the Council sets and apportioning time and resources to them. The Licensing Manager, Ian Carter, deserves enormous credit for this and there has been excellent support from the Finance Team as well.

3. Waste Management and Recycling

- 3.1 High Diversion collection trials - Plans are being prepared for trials to collect additional materials such as plastic pots, tubs and trays, small electrical equipment, cartons and batteries. Largely because of our track record as pioneers with Sort IT and Sort IT Plus, but also more recently my own continued expression of keen interest and desire to 'push the boundaries', Taunton Deane has again been selected to trial the scheme with 3,000 households on six rounds in the area. The trial aims to see the impact of this on recycling rates and the cost of using different vehicle configurations and, for some materials, collection frequencies.

- 3.2 I have agreed a timescale with the Somerset Waste Partnership - proposals will be taken to the Somerset Waste Board and Taunton Deane for endorsement this autumn. Subject to this, trials should commence in early 2014. Pre-launch briefings will be provided to Members and parishes serving these areas.
- 3.3 The first food waste was delivered to the Walpole Anaerobic Digestion Plant on 20 August 2013, with the amount increasing gradually through the commissioning period. If all goes smoothly, Somerset will shortly be self-sufficient in managing food waste and generating energy from the gas produced.
- 3.4 Taunton has a new Community Scrap Store (CSS) run by volunteers, headed up by Lisa Hunt. I attended its official opening in July 2013 and Lisa tells me that in that short time it has gained 111 members and already diverted one tonne of scrap that would have otherwise gone to landfill, which I think is fantastic!
- 3.5 The organisation collects safe clean scrap from business and industry. Only scrap that can be used as a creative resource is collected. Membership is open to any group/individual working in a creative play, care, educational or therapeutic setting. The scrap is stored in their premises located at Taunton Academy South Campus in Lyngford Road, Taunton and CSS members can go along and collect all the resources they need.
- 3.6 Opening hours are:-
Mondays 2pm - 6pm (30 September; 7, 14, 21 and 28 October; 4, 11, 18 and 25 November; and 2, 9 and 16 December);
Tuesdays 2pm - 6pm (10, 17 and 24 September; 1, 8, 15, 22 and 29 October; 6, 12, 19 and 26 November; 3, 10 and 17 December);
Wednesdays - by appointment.
- I encourage TDBC Members to go along, have a look, and spread the word about this fantastic community initiative.

Councillor Ken Hayward