

COUNCIL MEETING 11 DECEMBER 2002

REPORT OF COUNCILLOR RICHARD LEES – COMMUNICATIONS

In my second report as the member with responsibility for Communications I am able to report success in our work for early and positive publicity and progress on our Communications objectives. You will remember that my role is to co-ordinate and review:

public relations,
media relations and
communications.

In the last two months we have faced, as usual media pressures for information on a number of major schemes, the latest of which is the proposal by Clearsprings Management Ltd that refugees are brought to Taunton to await determination of the application for asylum. This one in particular was quickly placed in the public arena, to inform and to remove uncertainty as far as we can.

To them all we have responded quickly and accurately and members have played their part in keeping themselves well briefed and available for immediate comment – we know that good communication is essential to good local government.

Of the items I brought you last time, the Communications Strategy is continuing to be developed alongside the Council's bid for Investors in People and also with some additional support from the Community Services Directorate, an example of cross-corporate working.

Our Council newspaper the Deane Dispatch is published this month, delivered with the free newspaper 'The Star' to urban areas and direct to every rural household by post. We will be pleased to hear in the New Year of any gaps in delivery – not that we believe there are too many!

The Deane Dispatch is a major vehicle for Council news and explanation in a way that is most likely to be considered by householders, directly to their home. The front page story gives space to our Budget consultation and details the pressures on this authority to do much, with not enough.

Please encourage your residents to respond, every slip returned will be read and will weigh in our Budget deliberations.

Finally on 20 November I was able to welcome delegates to a one day Seminar organised by the South West Access Forum. It was aimed at Architects and Surveyors and with Ed Norton from our Building Control was a valued speaker, informing professionals on access for all.

In the New Year I will be looking to gather information about access for all within the Borough of Taunton Deane especially as 2003 is to be European Year for the Disabled.

Executive Councillor Richard Lees
Communications

