

Council Meeting – 11 December 2012

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. Flooding

- 1.1 We have just experienced rainfall of almost unprecedented intensity and my sincerest sympathies on behalf of the Council go out to all the homes and businesses that have been affected. Some have had multiple floods this year which must be absolutely soul destroying as it is so difficult to control the force of nature once released. Let us hope that we do not see a continuation of what can only be regarded as exceptional conditions and those affected can start the difficult restoration process back to normality.
- 1.2 I must repeat my thanks to all our staff and the emergency services for the dedication and commitment they have shown, the long hours worked and the willingness to go that “extra mile” in the support of our community. Deane DLO and the administration team supporting them has to come in for special mention as they did a fantastic job ending up filling in excess of 9,000 sand bags and the majority of these were distributed to householders in desperate need.
- 1.3 Can I also extend thanks to the unsung support of officers throughout the Council that kept up a constant liaison with the emergency services, the Environment Agency and all the housing and other officers, who thankfully were not called upon, but were ready and waiting with contingency plans for emergency evacuation and establishment of rest homes should a major event have occurred. All of this in addition to their “day job” is dealt with in their stride as part of our duties to assist in the event of a major emergency occurring.
- 1.4 One thing we can all be thankful for is that Taunton’s Flood Defences held. I am pleased to report that despite uninformed comments of some and reports in the media, the River Tone did not burst its banks. Taunton’s flood defences dating from the last great flood in the 1960’s and the addition of further flood alleviation schemes since then of which some notable ones are Longrun Meadow, Norton Fitzwarren and Hillfarrance, worked as they should and very large numbers of properties were protected.
- 1.5 We must however spare a thought for the very severe problems experienced in some locations and particularly on the levels, both homes and agriculture. It does flood in normal circumstances but on this occasion it was so rapid and exceptional.

- 1.6 I again offer my sincere thanks to everybody involved but we now have to ensure that we proceed with all possible speed to agree and secure a major flood alleviation scheme that will add further protection to the River Tone corridor and hopefully will help alleviate the worst excesses downstream of Taunton. This has to be a top priority for the Council.

2. Budget Setting

- 2.1 The budget setting process has commenced and through various iterations the gap has been reduced from over £1,000,000 to around £500,000.
- 2.2 In arriving at this we are working on assumed Revenue Support Grants as the Government will not be issuing provisional figures until around the 19 December 2012. One thing is certain it is only likely to be less than anticipated given the parlous state of the country's economy!
- 2.3 We are now in the third year of substantial cuts year on year totalling nearly 30% over the four years stated. The concern is that we may be subjected to yet more cuts in funding on top of those already planned. That will really pose some hard choices if it occurs.
- 2.4 The Executive's proposals have now been presented to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and the usual confidential budget pack will be prepared for consideration by all Councillors over the Christmas period. This will be followed by officer presentations to Groups so all Members can ask questions and provide views.
- 2.5 We have to set a balanced budget so I would ask Members if they are concerned about some of the proposed reductions and wish to reinstate the budget for particular items, can you please consider where else you would find a budget cut acceptable by the equivalent amount. The Executive is happy to listen.
- 2.6 These are hard times with all streams of funding under serious pressure. We need to take action now to ensure our base budget is reduced. Short term fixes by using reserves or other one off sources only delay the inevitable and make it harder to deal with in the future.
- 2.7 Anybody that doubts me just take a look at our Medium Term Financial Plan, 2013/2014 showing a deficit of £500,000 rising to a deficit of £2,300,000 in 2016/2017 which does mean that we must start planning for the future now.
- 2.8 The Peer Review team were quite clear about this, that we must start making the difficult decisions now as to what action we will be taking to address this. Work is presently underway to set out proposals for the way forward and will be brought to Members for consideration when ready.

3. Project Taunton

- 3.1 With the pending sale of the Orchard Centre we have to re-think our strategy for the town centre as to how we can make provision for more retail space that can be delivered. We have just commissioned a refresh of our 2010 Retail and Leisure Study in support of our statutory plan making process and it will be interesting to see what changes are forecast since the study in 2010.
- 3.2 At a meeting with our public and private sector partners it was quite clear that Taunton has reached a cross roads with the possible removal of the proposed Orchard Centre development and we have to act or see our town centre lose trade. Some difficult decisions will be brought to Members and some may involve the loss or changes of car parking which we all know is a sensitive subject.
- 3.3 The opening of Castle Green went extremely well, the Earl of Wessex was warmly received by a large crowd and the official opening of the Somerset Museum and Castle Green was truly an auspicious occasion. We have enhanced and upgraded the historic heart of Taunton and returned it to a wonderful public open space to host all manner of events for the community.
- 3.4 I am also pleased to report that the Highways Authority have now agreed a scheme to relocate the bus stops from Castle Way to Corporation Street which will, if the Traffic Regulation Order about to be advertised is accepted, allow closure of Castle Street and completion of the Castle Green works. Because of weather and archaeological survey work there has been some overrun of costs and this is before Members tonight to allocate further funds from existing budgets which I hope Members will be able to support.
- 3.5 Somerset County Council is still awaiting the decision of the Secretary of State on the Compulsory Purchase Order process but hope this will be imminent to allow commencement early in the New Year. They have been pressing for early resolution and we have now requested our MP to take the case up with The Minister as the new road is obviously critical to opening up the majority of the Firepool site.

4. A303 /A358/A30 Somerset County Council Initiative

- 4.1 The major works that are proposed to this corridor are vital to the South-West region as a whole and particularly the A358 link to Junction 25 and of course the upgrading of Junction 25 to take the increased capacity from our development plans.
- 4.2 We have been providing economic data which the County Council is now incorporating into an Economic Impact Study to demonstrate to Government and the Local Enterprise Partnership how a corridor

improvement programme of the routes studied would provide a return on investment through economic growth.

- 4.3 For Taunton Deane, Junction 25 is of critical importance and this is presently under discussion with the Highways Agency (HA) and County Council to see what improvements can be made under a "Pinch Points" funding stream the HA have. If funding can be secured it would be an eminently sensible use of the available scarce resources at present.

5. Infrastructure Costs and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 5.1 The whole programme of developing the CIL policy has been both informative in terms of projecting forward what is required and alarming in respect of the huge sums of money required to deliver the infrastructure necessary for growth. As Members will be aware we have already consulted widely on our proposals and as a result of responses further work has to be carried out to substantiate some of the previous conclusions reached.
- 5.2 This work will be carried out and the results will be submitted to the Examiner for Public Scrutiny in February or March next year. It is unlikely that we will achieve the intended implementation date of April 2013 but it is hoped to achieve this by July 2013 or soon after. The delay is disappointing but better we take time and get it right following the representations received than get it wrong and perhaps discourage development.

6. Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

- 6.1 This is a key organisation for Taunton Deane because of our planned growth programme they are keen to support us and try and help remove any obstructions to growth. This is to be welcomed and we must do all possible to work with the LEP and draw in what we all know are scarce funds to support development in Taunton Deane.
- 6.2 From our discussions to date the LEP's remit is to focus on economic growth and they are looking for proposals that provide the "biggest bang for their buck". Taunton Deane already has an ambitious growth programme which does need help particularly with flood prevention and major roads and we now need to make the case to warrant assistance. I welcome their willingness to engage.

Finally I attended the Southwest One's Annual Team Awards Event (Celebration of Achievement) on 8 November 2012.

Congratulations to the various teams at Southwest One that were presented with Achievement Awards at a Celebration of Achievement 2012 during November. It was great to see the Customer Contact Centre and the Benefits

Team both receiving national recognition for outstanding service - Customer Contact by being awarded the prestigious Customer Contact Association Global Standard Certification, and the Benefits Service receiving the Bronze Award in the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (IRRV) 'Team of the Year' category. Well done to both of these teams. Southwest One awards were also presented to a number of other teams providing services to Taunton Deane, including the HR Payroll Team, Technology Services Teams, and the Strategic Procurement Service for supplying new fuel efficient, lower CO2 hybrid vans to Deane DLO.

Councillor John Williams
Leader of the Council

Council Meeting – 11 December 2012

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

The Economic Development Manager has recently met with several businesses who wish to relocate within and set up in Taunton Deane. As ever in these times it is challenging to match the right location and the affordable budget. However it is good to see that there are companies seeking to expand and that they are choosing Taunton Deane.

Recruitment of two new members of the Economic Development Team is reaching a conclusion, which will include the appointment of an apprentice and of a part time Lead Officer. Both interviews have been held and two people were identified who could bring our team up to full strength.

1. Launch of Taunton Means Business

- 1.1 The site was launched in November as the new inward investment web site for Taunton Deane. In the New Year we will carry out a national marketing and awareness raising campaign to encourage visitors to the site. For the moment we have circulated the new site locally amongst businesses and Councillors who have been invited to offer their views on its design and content - www.tauntonmeansbusiness.co.uk.
- 1.2 The site is accompanied by new literature '10 Reasons to Choose TD for your business relocation'. There has only been a small print run with the intention that each issue can be tailored for the specific businesses that we are dealing with at the time. There is also a new fulfillment protocol for the team to improve how the Council deals with inward investment enquiries.

2. Launch of Taunton Events website (www.tauntonevents.co.uk)

- 2.1 Designed in partnership with ADK Design on East Reach, the Taunton Events website provides details of all forthcoming events in the Taunton area. It is an excellent asset to promote Taunton's cultural offerings.
- 2.2 The Taunton Events Group is Chaired by Councillor Mark Edwards, and coordinates the planning of all proposed major cultural events in the town centre. The group is currently planning a programme of events in 2013.
- 2.3 Members views on the two new sites listed above would be appreciated.

3. Taunton Local Enterprise and Innovation Area

- 3.1 The Council has submitted a proposal to the Heart of the South-West Local Enterprise Partnership for Taunton to become a Local Enterprise and Innovation Area. The status would raise awareness of what Taunton has achieved recently, and highlights the infrastructure investment that it needs to move forward.
- 3.2 The submission aims to raise Taunton's profile and brings us closer to our goal of becoming a leading commercial and enterprise centre in the South-West. The document addresses the issues of flooding, employment land, and business support. Copies of the document are available from the Economic Development Team.

4. Business Start up Grants and Rural Retailer Grants

- 4.1 Ten new businesses and rural retailers have been supported so far this year, the most recent being Bishop's Hull Post Office and Stores which has been supported by an award of £2,000 from the Council. The shop was due to open its doors again on Sunday, 2 December 2012.

5. Job Clubs

- 5.1 Since April the three Job Clubs in Halcon, Priorswood and Wellington have supported 32 people directly into employment. Over the period to the end of October another 86 people have been assisted into work experience, voluntary work, or Job Centre Plus learning.

6. Taunton Youth and Community Centre

- 6.1 Tenders for the purchase of this site should have been received and assessed by 5 December 2012. There has been good interest in the site. I hope to be able to update Members.

7. Recent Events

- 7.1 **Project Taunton Open Day** on Tuesday 4 October 2012 at The Brewhouse Theatre was well attended by the public, local businesses and partner organisations. An interesting day was had by all.
- 7.2 **Dare to Dream**, a business support event was also held on 4 October, at Somerset College. The event was supported and sponsored by the Economic Development Team. The event targeted pre-start up businesses, offering them advice and guidance on how to get on the road of starting a business. During the event the team assisted circa 20 prospective new businesses.
- 7.3 **Royal Visit** to the Museum of Somerset and Castle Green. The visit by HRH Earl of Wessex on 15 October 2012 marked the official

opening of the Museum and was an opportunity to showcase the newly refurbished Castle Green.

- 7.4 **Christmas Fair** followed by **Make Taunton Sparkle** was held on Sunday, 18 November 2012. A very successful day attracted many thousands of visitors to the town centre. Thanks and congratulations are due to Councillor Kelly Durdan for her vision and perseverance in raising funds and the profile of the event. Thanks should also be accorded to the Taunton Town Centre Company for organizing an excellent Christmas Fair with around 120 community and local business stalls, and also for the assistance given to Councillor Durdan ensuring that Health and Safety requirements were met. The lights switch on event was a fitting end to a successful day and a lasting benefit to the Town for the Christmas period.
- 7.5 **Events on Castle Green** will take place each weekend to celebrate its opening, until Christmas. The events will include a traditional Christmas Fair, Carol Concert and Christmas Family Fun Day. This programme of events is funded by the Economic Development section, and delivered by the Taunton Town Centre Company.

8. Taunton Tourist Information, Ticket and Travel Centre (TIC) update

8.1 Visitor numbers and spend

Whilst the office has experienced a slight decline over the last couple of months, income levels have been maintained. The office has been boosted by the presence of the pop-up Cards for Good Causes multi-charity Christmas Card Shop (which remains open until 22 December) and various National Express promotions which have encouraged customer use of agents rather than booking online.

8.2 Tourism Update

The trade-led Somerset Tourism Association (STA) have just held their annual conference where the new 'Somerset Jewel of the South-West' brochure was launched (copies will be available from the TIC). The STA have exciting plans for the season ahead and the TIC team continue to work with them to investigate ways their activities can benefit our local businesses and raise the profile of our area.

A revised edition of the Welcome to Taunton leaflet is planned to be produced in early 2013.

8.3 New activities planned

Meetings have been held with the Museum of Somerset over a Tourism Literature Fair and Business Forum planned for Spring 2013, more details will follow when plans are finalised.

The TIC team also continue to work closely with the Economic Development Unit, Licensing Section, Project Taunton, Somerset Tourism Association, Taunton Town Centre Company and other organisations.

Councillor Norman Cavill

Council Meeting – 11 December 2012

Report of Councillor Ken Hayward – Environmental Services

1. Environmental Health

- 1.1 As reported in the Weekly Bulletin on 2 November 2012, the Environmental Health Team successfully prosecuted at Taunton Magistrates Court against Mr Adnan Hussain of the Bengal Lounge restaurant in Wellington. The Magistrates awarded full costs to Taunton Deane Borough Council.
- 1.2 Mr Hussain pleaded guilty to all six offences, relating to contraventions of the Food Hygiene (England) Regulations. The offences consisted of failing to keep the premises clean; failing to ensure that items which food comes in to contact with were effectively cleaned; and failing to have food safety programmes and procedures implemented and maintained at the premises.
- 1.3 A huge amount of work has gone into this and I share Scott Weetch's thanks to Jo Toogood and Maria Casey in particular for bringing a successful prosecution, which the bench commended. In awarding full costs, the bench recognised the importance of the Local Authority being able to carry out this work to safeguard the public.
- 1.4 The Magistrates made it clear from the award of costs that our work in safeguarding the public is highly valued. We work closely with businesses to provide advice and guidance but, as this case shows, we will not hesitate to take action if advice is ignored. Our duty is to protect the public.
- 1.5 Rats! We have had complaints from members of the public and businesses about rodents being spotted along the River Tone. I would like to assure Members that we do have baiting stations in some of these areas. However I ask that, should the opportunity arise, Members spread the message urging the public to play their part by not discarding unwanted food or feeding wild birds or other animals to excess – as they are likely to be feeding the rats as well!
- 1.6 I am sure Members will all join me in saying a huge "Thank You!" to the Ian Carter and the Licensing Team for the massive effort they put into helping to make the switching on of the Christmas lights on 18 November 2012 such a resounding success. WELL DONE to everyone!

2. Climate Change / Carbon Management

- 2.1 A series of one monthly articles in the Deane Dispatch section of the Somerset County Gazette was started in October 2012. The articles are short and punchy 'good news' articles covering subjects like carbon reduction, energy efficiency, renewables, food, etc. The articles come from local

community groups and the Council as an opportunity to showcase what they do. Residents get informed and learn how they can get involved in the agenda. Articles so far were contributed by Improve Your Resource Efficiency (IYRE), Transition Wellington and Taunton; and Deane Energy Savers. The January edition will be covered by Brendon Energy.

- 2.2 A data screen has been installed in the staircase of Taunton Pool for giving real-time information on how much energy is generated by the solar PV array on the roof and how much carbon is saved as a result of this to the public. The screen will be accompanied by a display board with additional information about the project. A press article will be released about the screen shortly. The costs of the cable run for transferring the generation data from the inverters to the screen were shared by Taunton Deane and Tone.
- 2.3 The solar PV array on Taunton Pool has performed well so far. It has generated 14,600 kWh of electricity in the 154 days since its commission. This equates to 95kWh per day and a total income to TDBC of £3,200 so far.
- 2.4 Latest data published by the Department of Energy and Climate Change in August 2012 showed a 9% reduction in carbon emissions per head of population in Taunton Deane from 2005 to 2010. At 5.9 tonnes per head, I am pleased to report that Taunton Deane is 8% better than the South-West average and 11% better than the UK average.
- 2.5 Production progress of Carbon Management and Energy Resilience Strategy:-
 - Directory completed;
 - Creation of Website in progress;
 - Strategy document in advanced draft stage
- 2.6 Forthcoming activities:-
 - Monitoring Report on Changes in Taunton Deane / Tone Leisure's CO₂ emissions for Q1+2 to be published in January / February 2013.
 - Next Carbon Management Steering Group meeting, 10 January 2013.
 - Stakeholder workshop to present nearly finished Carbon Management and Energy Resilience Strategy planned for Mid February 2013.

3. Waste Management

- 3.1 The Somerset Waste Partnership held an informal meeting on 20 November 2012 to discuss budget options for the coming year in respect of both collection and disposal. The County Council has set a challenging savings target, but I am assured that we should be able to meet that target from savings without affecting service delivery.
- 3.2 I am pleased to report that, despite extremely challenging conditions, only 36 properties in Taunton Deane were missed on the waste collection rounds through the recent flooding. A credit to everyone – particularly the May

Gurney crews on the road. Members of the Partnership, including myself, worked to produce severe weather procedures after the heavy snows we experienced a couple of winters ago. Those procedures were extensively tested.

4. Deane DLO

- 4.1 Continuing with the recent floods. Deane DLO experienced an unprecedented number of requests for sandbags, with over 10,000 being deployed, using approximately 90,000kg of sand. In addition to sandbags, silicone bags were also delivered to many properties, including my own and my neighbours.
- 4.2 The service was well supported by the DLO managers, supervisors, and employees most of which provided their support from the beginning.
- 4.3 Response to calls for help was swift, and teams are to be credited for this, and their cheery disposition in the persistent rain, as they worked long into the nights.
- 4.4 The DLO were also assisted by a church co-ordinated voluntary team of around 12 who helped by filling sandbags over several hours.
- 4.5 Members will all be aware that the Local Government Association is carrying an article on its website outlining the achievements of the DLO Transformation Project and citing them as national notable practice. Thus giving us, Taunton Deane Borough Council, once more, well-deserved national recognition.

We can be proud of our Local Authority, and on that truly positive note, I end by joining my colleagues on the Executive in wishing everyone a restful and reinvigorating Christmas break.

Councillor Ken Hayward

Council Meeting – 11 December 2012

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

1. Parks

- 1.1 Vivary Park has again been underwater and has been closed for some days to protect it from any further damage on such wet ground. Some of the footpath was lifted and will need repair. We also had to make the difficult decision to cancel the Santa Run on Saturday, 2 December 2012, but assisted the organisers in moving the event to Queens College.
- 1.2 I would like to thank all the staff from the Parks Department who assisted with the emergency support work during the recent bad weather. Our Deane DLO staff worked tirelessly to fill and deliver thousands of sandbags to householders in need and their efforts were really appreciated by our community.

2. Community Leisure and Play

- 2.1 I would like to welcome Alison North into the new post of Community Leisure Manager. She brings with her a wealth of experience in working across arms of the Council and dealing with partners, which will be really helpful as she shapes and develops the Community Leisure Team for the future.
- 2.2 Wellington Recreation Ground is now open and the proud host of a great piece of sports play equipment. The tenders for the Wellington Pavilion works have been received and the work will start on site very soon.
- 2.3 Work on the application to Sport England for funds to assist with the refurbishment of Station Road Pool, Taunton is continuing and will be submitted to Sport England in mid-January.
- 2.4 The work on the possible Pool at Blackbrook is also progressing well.

3. Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities

Community, Sports and Health Development

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

Health Development

- 3.2 Hearts and Soles Nordic Walking

- 3.2.1 Tone's Nordic Walking programme was launched on 31 October 2012, with the first free taster session for people to try it out. A total of 28 people have taken part in this new outdoor activity so far, which has included taster sessions and courses, and they are now being encouraged to Nordic Walk regularly by joining the Adventure Walks which start on 27 November.
- 3.2.2 The project, Hearts and Soles Nordic Walking has been part funded by the British Heart Foundation and will help older adults in Taunton Deane, particularly heart patients and their family members, to lead an active lifestyle.
- 3.3 Back on the Bike - Cycling Initiative for Older Adults
 - 3.3.1 Five women took part in the Back on the Bike cycling course in Taunton during October, which Tone provided in partnership with DC Cycleworks and NHS Somerset. The aim was to help older adults start cycling again by giving them skills and confidence to ride their bike.
 - 3.3.2 The course consisted of four sessions of group instruction held in the community on weekend mornings in October. The participants received an exclusive pack containing cycle accessories, a retail voucher and local information to help them continue cycling beyond the course.
- 3.4 Volunteering Strategy
 - 3.4.1 Tone Leisure now has over 100 volunteers working across Somerset and Devon. Since launching the Volunteering Strategy in May 2012 Tone has recruited approximately 10 new volunteers in Taunton Deane in various posts such as Health Walk Leaders, Flexercise Leaders, and Promotional Assistants. A celebration event for all Tone volunteers will be held early in 2013.

Facility News

- 3.5 Wellington Sports Centre
 - 3.5.1 The Upper Hall floor is being replaced which has prompted some great positive feedback from the regular members. A temporary programme will be in place for three weeks, from 3-21 December 2012, while the work is being carried out. Also during this period the Studio will be repainted and carpet laid in the lobby entrance.
 - 3.5.2 The Z3 Lottery funded project is now about to finish its third year of the project. A full report is about to be submitted measuring the outcomes for the third year. Tone have committed a further two years' funding on this project which will see a great range of programming, to include teenage parties, family and group sessions and opening the door to many more schools and private bookings.
 - 3.5.3 Swimskool swimming lesson enrolment hit an all time high last month of 660 members. The key challenge is to maintain these numbers during December and build on this next year. The summer Olympics has had a positive effect on this sport.

3.6 Taunton Tennis Centre

3.6.1 Following the success of Lucy Shuker winning a Bronze medal in the Wheelchair Tennis Doubles at the Paralympics this summer, Tone has seen an increase in the numbers attending the regular Sunday afternoon wheelchair Pay and Play session.

3.6.2 Lucy is a member of the FANS (Free Access for National Sportspeople) scheme and therefore receives a free membership to use the indoor courts at Taunton Tennis Club and the gym for her off court training.

3.6.3 In addition, Tone has also seen an increase in participation following the 'summer of sport' in the tennis courses across Taunton Deane, reaching a record high of nearly 400 children playing tennis once a week in a Tone coaching programme.

3.7 Wellsprings Leisure Centre

3.7.1 The successful opening of the GX Revolution Studio took place in October. There are now 17 Studio Cycling classes available throughout the week for customers to book into.

3.7.2 The majority of Tone's Instructors have now completed their Level 2 Vibe Cycling course following an invigorating six hour workshop with a master trainer.

3.7.3 Following the opening of the Wyvern Day Nursery in June, Wellsprings is now joining with Wyvern and is offering a crèche facility to the customers, which will start in January 2013.

3.8 High Ropes

3.8.1 The school summer holidays produced more clients than Tone first anticipated and this continued on from the submission of the last report. From 25-31 August the centre saw 436 visits.

3.8.2 The centre has seen 2,745 visits since 25 August and 6,795 since opening in June.

3.8.3 Good relationships have been built with Somerset College, King's College and Taunton School and Tone continues to build relationships with other schools and colleges.

3.8.4 During October half-term Tone ran three days of adventure day camps for 24 young people. The day started at 8.30 am and finished at 5.30 pm, allowing working parents to drop off and collect outside of working hours. All 24 places sold out on all three days and parents are already talking about booking their children onto the next ones in the Easter break 2013.

Best wishes for the festive season to you and your families.

Councillor Catherine Herbert.

Council Meeting – 11 December 2012

Report of Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins – Housing Services

1. Affordable Housing Target

- 1.1 There are 70 completions to the end of October against a target of 200. Most of the 140 homes in the pipeline are due to complete in Quarter 4, so there is a danger of slippage.
- 1.2 However, the Government's Firstbuy Scheme is selling well with 22 completions reported so far, so we are reasonably confident that any shortfall will be made up and that the target is still achievable.

2. Right to Buy Sales

- 4.1 The improved Right to Buy scheme attracted a large number of enquiries with 20 sales completed to date.
- 4.2 The original flurry of interest has abated although there were 26 applications still with the Legal Department so we will exceed the budgeted number of sales this year.
- 4.3 The extra receipts can be used for building more Council Houses or put to enabling schemes for affordable housing, so these will be kept in a separate reserve.

3. Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership

- 3.1 SWeLT – (Somerset West Landlord and Tenant Services) - This new service was launched at the Landlords' Forum held at Bridgwater Albion Rugby Club on 18 October 2012.
- 3.2 I attended the Landlords' Forum which was very successful and had a higher attendance than last year. Revenues and Benefits were amongst those on hand to offer advice.
- 3.3 Next year's Forum will be held in Taunton.

4. Estates Management – Anti-social Behaviour

- 4.1 Working in co-operation with the Police, a Crack-house Closure Order was recently obtained on a flat in School Road, Monkton Heathfield. A letter has been sent to local residents thanking them for their

assistance in this. As I write, the Gazette have published a report on this with a photo of Taunton Deane officers and the Police.

5. Self-Financing and HRA Business Plan

- 5.1 The refresh of the Business Plan has recently been through Scrutiny and approved by the Tenant Services Management Board.
- 5.2 Social Housing Development Fund : Four sites have been chosen as suitable for Phase 1 including one for Passiv Housing. Knightstone Housing Association have been appointed to project manage these for the Council.

6. Shelter

- 6.1 Regrettably, it has been announced that Shelter are closing their local office. Housing are looking for another provider for the Court Desk service which Shelter currently provide.

Councillor Mrs Jean Adkins

Council Meeting – 11 December 2012

Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources

1. Customer Contact Centre

Customer Service Excellence and Celebration of Achievements

1.1 Training

1.1.1 Customer Service Excellence training is now undertaken in October and November annually. A programme was devised and implemented last year to develop the professionalism and skills within the service to ensure quality of service for customers which enhanced their expectations. This programme is run in conjunction with the SWCCF (South West Contact Centre Forum) and we will be looking at the possibility of accreditation for this programme next year.

1.2 CCA Accreditation

1.2.1 At the beginning of November, the Head of Service, Claire Olohan-Bramley, and Business Development Manager, Rob Liddell, attended the Customer Contact Association (CCA) Convention in Glasgow. This gave them an opportunity to hear about new developments and thinking in the industry from Contact Centre industry experts.

1.2.2 It was interesting to hear that the SWOne Contact Centre is actually at the forefront of thinking and development in its own way and it is Claire's aim that it stays this way. The main purpose for attending the Convention was to pick up the CCA Accreditation plaque which was presented by Olympic gold medallist Greg Rutherford – an extremely proud moment for both Claire and Rob who had been working towards Accreditation for several years. If you go to the home page of www.southwestone.co.uk there is a very embarrassing photo!

1.3 SWOne Celebration of Achievements

1.3.1 The day following Convention was the SWOne Celebration of Achievements event, where the week was rounded off well for Customer Contact staff with two well deserved accolades - the Taunton Deane Face to Face Team received the Silver Award in the Unsung Heroes category, and the Training and Buddying Team received the Gold Award in the Working Together category.

1.3.2 I should like to congratulate all members of the Customer Contact Centre Team on receiving these well deserved and hard earned accolades of excellence.

1.4 Service Delivery

1.4.1 September was an excellent month for service delivery until the last three days of the month, when an unexpectedly high volume of calls into the service caused one of the KPIs not to be met. A meeting has taken place with the Client Team to discuss this issue and the matter is being taken forward internally.

1.5 Statistical Information – September and October 2012

1.5.1 During September and October a total of 8,310 enquiries were dealt with at The Deane House main, Housing and Planning receptions. 3,648 people visited Wellington Community Office - 2,048 to make enquiries including TIC and 1,600 to make a payment through the kiosk. Staff dealt with 594 letter and email enquiries during this time.

Service Line	Reporting Authority	KPI No	Performance Measure	Frequency of Reporting	2012/2013 Target	Sep-12	Oct-12
						QUART	QUARTE
Customer Contact	TDBC	1	% of calls answered in 20 secs	Monthly	80%	78%	82%
Customer Contact	TDBC	2	% of calls resolved at first point of contact	Monthly	92%	95%	95%
Customer Contact	TDBC	3	% of external customers rating the Customer Contact service as Very Good/Good	Annually (monitored quarterly)	75%	95%	
Customer Contact	TDBC	4	Abandoned call rate - less than 5%	Monthly	<5%	4.06%	2.95%

1.5.2 One customer has raised an issue about the service received and this is being investigated.

1.6 Service during the bad weather

1.6.1 As you can imagine, Customer Contact became the first port of call for many during the floods. The team across the whole service worked tirelessly to ensure that all calls were prioritised and dealt with efficiently and effectively. Some highlights are:-

- Initially 12 people across the service (both Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Teams) were unable to make it in, but

three people turned up later on Wednesday. Others came in even though unexpected.

- All members of the service except three were working on the telephones (including the Head of Service – that was an experience!) at some point during the first few days, with people working extra hours and changing shifts to help cover.
- There were doughnut runs, sandwich runs and coffee runs in The Deane House as advisors offered to work through and not take proper breaks.
- A serious IT issue caused systems to start failing on Friday and meant the service had to go to manual processes, with resolution being finalised and tested at 9.45pm (to ensure we were able to run our Saturday SCC Service) – our thanks to IT for their support.
- EVERYONE worked to deliver the best possible service to the customers of Taunton Deane and the County Council across all service levels.

Taunton Deane Statistics during the flooding:-

Bad Weather - Forecast Vs Actual Offered

	Wednesday 21st		Thursday 22nd		Friday 23rd		Monday 26th	
	Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual	Forecast	Actual
Volumes	546	659	528	649	558	647	722	657

1.6.2 I should like to record my thanks publicly to all members of the Contact Centre Team for their unstinting devotion to duty during the recent devastating floods. Their dedication is an exemplar of service before duty.

2. Corporate and Client Services

2.1 Client Team

2.1.1 The key focus for the Client Team at present is the feasibility study into the potential return of the Revenues and Benefits service. A detailed study has been completed over the past six weeks to understand the financial, contractual and staffing implications of bringing the Revenues and Benefits service back in-house. The team are also in the process of drafting a detailed exit plan, which will be required should Members decide to terminate the Revenues and Benefits element of the contract.

2.1.2 In addition, the Client Team continues to closely monitor the performance of Southwest One (SWO) services and specifically the delivery of key performance indicators (KPI's) and Service Development Plans (SDP's). Any issues with service delivery continue to be promptly identified and raised with SWOne. Work has started to agree the KPI's and SDP's for 2013/2014.

2.2 Procurement

- 2.2.1 The shortfall in delivered savings through the Procurement Transformation Project remains a significant concern and issue for the Authority. However, we are continuing to manage the position closely and ensuring that regular reports are being made to Members by the Strategic Procurement Service (SPS), the next report due to go to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee in January 2013.
- 2.2.2 Recent new savings initiatives include savings of £12,000 in relation to child care vouchers, £170,000 on the bathroom replacement project and £22,000 in respect of the bed and breakfast contract. The procurement service is currently working on the tendering for the renewal of our Treasury Management and Insurance contracts.

2.3 Retained Finance and Corporate Insurance

- 2.3.1 The Retained Finance Officer focuses on maintaining the day-to-day delivery of the retained finance functions and in providing support to the Section 151 Officer.
- 2.3.2 The Retained Finance Officer is also heavily involved in modelling the financial implications of the Revenues and Benefits Feasibility Study and in agreeing the required financial changes to the contract.
- 2.3.3 In addition, we are currently in the process of procuring new bank, insurance and treasury management advice contracts. This process is progressing well and we will have new contracts in place for banking in this financial year and for the others during 2013. It is expected that the bank contract will unfortunately be more expensive. However, areas where savings can be made to compensate for this have been highlighted through the tender process. For the other two contracts the market is very small and, even though the best contract for Taunton Deane will be selected, it will not automatically follow that savings will be made.

2.4 Retained HR

- 2.4.1 The Retained HR Manager provides strategic HR support to the Authority and assists the Client Team in monitoring the HR aspects of the SWOne contract.
- 2.4.2 The current priorities for the Retained HR Manager are to closely monitor sickness levels within the Authority, implement key policy changes (for example the new lease car and car allowance policies), manage any significant staffing issues, maintain an effective working relationship with the union and to identify and agree KPI's for 2013/2014 for the HR service with Southwest One.
- 2.4.3 Recent activity has included:-

- The agreement of a Wellbeing and Sickness Absence Plan with SWOne HR;
- Working with the DLO and UNISON on the 37 hour working week agreement; and
- Supporting the Revenues and Benefits Feasibility Study.

2.5 SAP Re-Launch and Patching

2.5.1 The key elements of the system have been launched and are working.

2.5.2 The staff performance review (PREDS) module will be ready for rollout across the Authority early in the New Year. The priorities for 2013 will be to launch the remaining outstanding modules - sickness, e-recruitment and overtime modules.

2.6 Corporate Projects

ICT Infrastructure Upgrade

2.6.1 The initial stage of the infrastructure upgrade has commenced, which has involved the upgrading of network switches in The Deane House. New servers are due to be delivered before Christmas and will be configured and installed in the New Year.

Revenues and Benefits service return

2.6.2 The feasibility study into the possible return from SWOne of the Revenues and Benefits service is being run as a major corporate project and is being managed from within the Corporate and Client Services Team. The project is currently progressing well and is on-track for a Member decision on 11 December 2012.

Welfare Benefits

2.6.3 The Welfare Benefits project is being managed from within the team. Initially the changes to the welfare benefits system will involve the replacement in 2013 of the existing national Council Tax Benefit Scheme with a new local Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme. The project to implement our new local scheme is progressing well. A proposed new CTS scheme has been identified and will go to Full Council on 11 December 2012 for a decision.

3. Corporate Performance

Corporate Performance

- 3.1 The Quarter 2 (July – Sept 2012/13) corporate performance report has recently been through the Corporate Scrutiny and Executive cycle. Quarter 3 (Oct - Dec) will be reported in February – March 2013. Once the new Corporate Business Plan is approved, CMT will commence a review of the Corporate Performance Scorecard and recommend new measures / updated targets for implementation in 2013/14. Members will also be invited to help develop a refreshed scorecard and suite of performance indicators

Performance Scorecards

- 3.2 Members are reminded that a full suite of 'Theme / Service' performance scorecards are also now produced quarterly by Theme Managers – these include a wide range of operational performance measures and are a useful tool for Members and Managers when discussing performance issues and progress against objectives

South West Audit Partnership

- 3.3 The Performance Lead is liaising with South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) to develop improved monitoring arrangements for all the Council's audit recommendations and follow-up management actions. Progress will be reported to the S151 Officer's Corporate Governance Group, and to the Corporate Governance Committee (next report due December 2012)

Corporate Risk Management

- 3.4 An audit (SWAP) report was received in October on Risk Management in Major Projects – this was assessed as 'reasonable assurance'. The recommendations were minor control issues and have been added to the Corporate Risk Management Action Plan

Corporate Change Programme

- 3.5 The Council's Corporate Change Programme is now being overseen by the Strategy and Performance team. CMT commenced a new approach to formal Programme Management in September – Project Managers for all major corporate projects are now reporting monthly to the 'Programme Management Group'. The major corporate projects currently within the scope of this group are:-

- Corporate Business Plan (Simon Lewis / Dan Webb)
- Community Infrastructure Levy (Tim Burton)
- Revenues and Benefits Service Feasibility Study (Richard Sealy)
- Deane DLO depot relocation business case (Sue Tomlinson)
- Welfare and Finance Reform (Paul Harding)
- Flood Alleviation Solutions (Mark Green)
- Taunton Retail and Firepool (Ian Franklin)

- New Swimming Pool (Simon Lewis).

4. Legal and Democratic Services

Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Elections – 15 November 2012

- 4.1 The recent PCC elections, from our perspective, went without a hitch. The turnout for Taunton Deane was only 18.8%.
- 4.2 As everyone is aware, Sue Mountstevens was appointed as the new Police and Crime Commissioner for the Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

Additional Full Council

- 4.3 Due to additional business at this time of year, an extra Full Council meeting has been scheduled for 22 January 2013 to agree the Business Rate Tax Base for 2013/2014 and the Corporate Business Plan.

5. Revenues and Benefits

Customer Service Excellence

- 5.1 It has been a very successful time for the Revenues and Benefits Service since my last report. At the end of September, the service received re-certification for Customer Service Excellence. The feedback provided in the report by the independent Inspector stated:-

we gave a high priority to continuous improvement in service delivery; our analysis of data for improvements was impressive; and we had made customer consultation integral to improvements.

National Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation (NIRRV) Award

- 5.2 Further success came in October when the Benefits Team received the Bronze Award in the "Team of the Year" Category from the National Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation. This award recognises excellence at a national level.

SWOne Award

- 5.3 Finally, on 8 November 2012, the Revenues and Benefits Service won a Gold Award in the Accountability category at the SWOne Celebration of Achievement. The submission detailed the work undertaken by the Benefit Letters Improvement Working Group. The judges were obviously impressed by the proactive work undertaken with our customers, leading to increased satisfaction and a reduction in avoidable contact.

- 5.4 I should like to congratulate all members of the Revenues and Benefits Team on the well deserved and hard earned accolades of excellence.

Localised Council Tax Support Scheme

- 5.5 Preparation for the new Localised Council Tax Support Scheme from April 2013 is progressing well. Since the start of September 2012, the Revenues and Benefits Service has dealt with 3,800 reviews from existing Council Tax Benefit recipients of working age.

Speed of Benefit processing

- 5.6 The service continues to perform well in speed of benefit processing for 2012/2013. The average time to reassess benefit is seven days from when the customer tells staff of a change in their circumstances. On average, new claims are worked out within three weeks of the date they are submitted.

Council Tax and Business Rates

- 5.7 Council Tax collection remains ahead of target, but as confirmed in my last report, Business Rates collection has been difficult. The Revenues Team has worked extremely hard to reduce the gap between collection and the target. At the end of October 2012, Business Rate collection was 72.06%, which was less than 1% short of the target.

Fraud

- 5.8 Our battle against benefit fraud continues. There was recent notable success in achieving a conviction against a person who had failed to declare he was living with his partner. In that case, the man was given a sentence of 100 hours community service. There are two more cases due before the Magistrates in November and a further case scheduled for a Crown Court Hearing in the New Year.

Customer Satisfaction

- 5.9 We now have preliminary results from the annual customer satisfaction survey. Overall satisfaction with the Benefits Service remains at 90%, with our Council Tax and Business Rate customers recording satisfaction of 83%. A full report on the survey will be presented to Members in early 2013.

Finally, I wish you and your families a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

Council Meeting – 11 December 2012

Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications

I would like to wish everyone a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

1. Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan

- 1.1 The Council will commence formal consultation on this Plan early in the New Year. This Plan will set out smaller allocations to meet the strategic housing, employment and other requirements as well as detailed development management policies which will help to inform decision-making on planning applications.
- 1.2 Officers are preparing a consultation draft setting out 'Issues and Options' for the Plan and will carry out a series of public exhibitions and 'listening events' in areas likely to be affected by development.

2. Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

- 2.1 The 2012 SHLAA will be published before Christmas.
- 2.2 The document will set out the latest five-year deliverable supply of housing land as well as the potential stock of housing sites from which future plans like the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan can draw allocations.

3. Authorities Monitoring Report

- 3.1 The Annual Monitoring Report, required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has been renamed the Authorities Monitoring Report under the Localism Act 2011. It reports on the progress of Plan preparation and the effectiveness of policies in statutory plans prepared by the Council (for example housing and employment completions).

- 3.2 Previously it had to be submitted to the Secretary of State. This is no longer a requirement although in the interests of transparency the report must be 'publicly available on-line'. This will be completed and published on the Councils Planning web-page in December 2012.

4. Technical Policy Reports

- 4.1 The Planning Policy Team have recently prepared two technical reports on the 'Criterion for Assessing Rural Workers Dwellings' and guidance for 'The Change of use of rural service provision and conversion of existing buildings'.
- 4.2 The former fills the void created by the abolition of Annex A of PPS7, which set out specific criteria and the latter sets out a consistent approach to marketing and viability requirements for consideration of proposals that could impact on the sustainable development in rural areas. These documents were considered at the Local Development Framework Steering Group.

5. Neighbourhood Planning

- 5.1 The Neighborhood Plans are progressing with a joint meeting of Trull, Wellington and Wiveliscombe scheduled for next week.

6. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 6.1 The consultation on the preliminary draft schedule has led to a number of questions and issues being raised that will need to be resolved before the Council can consult formally on the charging schedule and proceed to implementation. This additional work will be completed this year with the charging schedule being considered by Members in January 2013.
- 6.2 This will be followed by a four week consultation, with the proposal being submitted to an examiner in late February. The timing of an examination is in the hands of The Planning Inspectorate, but it is now hoped that an Examination could take place in April or May with implementation following reference to the Executive and Full Council in July.
- 6.3 A multi-disciplinary project group has been formed to look at the processes for collecting and monitoring. The processes are identified on process maps prepared by the Planning Officers Society and the issues that need to be addressed can be subdivided into four sections:-
- IT to support process;
 - Monitoring;
 - Calculating the charge; and

- Holding the money.
- 6.4 The monitoring of CIL will require an officer who holds clear responsibility for the implementation of statutory requirements, production of detailed reports, Government returns and where necessary production of evidence for legal proceedings. This person will also have responsibility for calculating CIL liability. This post could ultimately be funded by top slicing CIL receipts.
- 6.5 Options are currently being explored for governance of the process of identifying those projects, which should be funded, by CIL and priorities once the charge is received. Whilst Taunton Deane is the charging authority, there will need to be engagement in this process with those responsible for key elements infrastructure delivery, including Somerset County Council and the Environment Agency.

7. Positive Planning Protocol

- 7.1 Whilst Taunton Deane does a lot of good positive work with developers to find solutions to allow sustainable development to come forward, little is currently done to promote this approach. Tim Burton has therefore started work on developing what is being called a Positive Planning Protocol.
- 7.2 This will outline how the Council will adopt a positive “can do” approach, working proactively with applicants to unblock development and identify opportunities to add value to proposals which meet local visions. It will also promote the benefits of pre-application discussions and engagement with those communities most affected by development. It will be primarily focused on major and complex development proposals and is seen as a means of selling Taunton Deane as a positive planning authority to work with and therefore a good place in which to invest.
- 7.3 An important way of making the planning process work better for everyone is through planning performance agreements (a project management tool which sets out the process, timetable and resource requirements for the entire planning process). The protocol will set out the Council’s approach to PPAs, as well as explaining the potential consequences of failing to engage with the Council before submitting an application.
- 7.4 The Government’s current consultation on ‘Planning Performance and the Planning Guarantee’ clearly signals the importance of determining applications speedily and the consequences for local authorities who perform badly in this area will be that their power to determine major planning applications would be transferred to The Planning Inspectorate and planning fees refunded. It is therefore suggested that the protocol must give a clear message to the development industry that in the absence of a PPA the Council will seek to determine all

major planning applications within the statutory period and that this will inevitably increase the likelihood of an application being refused in such circumstances.

- 7.4 As part of this process, options for simplified planning regimes such as Local Development Orders are being explored as well as an alternative approach to pre application charges for employment generating proposals.
- 7.5 A report outlining the Protocol in more detail will be brought to Members in the New Year.

8. Heritage

- 8.1 Sandhill Park - The building has a fully sheeted scaffold and progress is being made in clearing debris from the building. Revised applications for the enabling development to the rear and conversion of the main building are expected in the New Year.
- 8.2 Tonedale - Works to reinstate the unprotected roof of Block A and protect other vulnerable buildings from further decay will be undertaken early in the New Year. Due to the passage of time, certain reports require updating and relevant conditions have as yet to be discharged.
- 8.3 Once the latter has been secured, the approved conversion works and new build will recommence. The developer is aware that at present there is a deteriorating asset and as such wishes to progress the approved scheme as soon as possible.
- 8.3 Tone Works/ Grease Works - final negotiations are actively underway and a resolution expected in December.

9. Communications

- 9.1 Flooding dominated the news, locally, regionally and nationally, in late November with Taunton Deane being one of the first places to suffer following torrential rain.
- 9.2 Working with partners, including the Environment Agency, we were able to satisfy requests for information and updates. Deane DLO was featured on BBC national news, in daytime and evening bulletins, thanks to their sandbag operation.
- 9.3 There was good and positive coverage of the Council's response to the flooding. The Press Office was kept updated throughout which enabled the Council to respond quickly to media enquiries.
- 9.4 Communications continues to work closely with partners – campaigns recently have included elections for the Police and Crime Commissioner, Empty Homes Week on behalf of the Somerset West

Private Sector Housing Partnership, and with Somerset County Council on the opening of Castle Green and the next stage of works.

- 9.5 With Project Taunton, we are working on an inward investment campaign for a regional business publication and on public realms work near the Viridor building.
- 9.6 The Deane Dispatch in November focused on events at Castle Green in the run-up to Christmas and the availability of parking in Taunton even at busy times of the year.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting - 11 December 2012

Report of Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

1. Police and Crime Commissioner

- 1.1 Avon and Somerset Police Constabulary has a new Police and Crime Commissioner, Sue Mountstevens, the independent candidate from Bristol.
- 1.2 One of the first visits after her appointment was to come down to East Taunton to meet the neighbourhood policing team which has won several awards and is upheld as exemplar. The partnership of TDBC and others working across the priority areas with the police were acknowledged as key to the success of their approach.

2. Safer Somerset Partnership

- 2.1 The SSP objective is to help make Somerset a safer place through a core partnership of those with a statutory requirement to do so - the Local Authorities, Police, Fire, Health, Probation and Road Safety with the support of the relevant Voluntary Sector bodies eg the Drug & Alcohol Partnership.
- 2.2 All five Districts are now formally signed up to the Safer Somerset Partnership.
- 2.3 The Partnership has reviewed and refreshed the Somerset Community Safety Strategic Assessment for the new PCC to help her set community priorities for policing.

3. Voluntary and Community Sector Grants Panel

- 3.1 The Grants Panel has brought its methodology and previous contributions (through Service Level Agreements to the Voluntary Sector) for Corporate Scrutiny to look at. Their comments and recommendations will have been considered by the Executive.
- 3.2 For small grants the proposal is to advertise (VCS and YF) at the beginning of January for a six week application period. This should be in time for those projects starting at Easter.
- 3.3 Next year, a small underspend and windfall from SCC means there is more grant aid available (one off for 2013/14) and more projects can be supported. We are very grateful for the transfer of nearly £30K from SCC for the Youth Fund.

4. Health and Wellbeing

- 4.1 The draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy has completed its consultation. The shared vision for health and wellbeing in Somerset is people living healthy, independent lives, supported by thriving and connected communities with timely and easy access to high-quality and efficient public services when they need them.
- 4.2 Taunton Deane has agreed the health and wellbeing focus for the year following its

third Health and Wellbeing Event at the Cricket Ground as part of the continued consultation. Active Lifestyles will be the focus next year with our partners Tone Leisure leading on this.

5. Priority Areas Strategy

- 5.1 This Strategy is the **action plan** for our priority areas and an ongoing commitment to tackling some tough entrenched problems with the multi-agency approach (MAGs) through the Taunton Deane Partnership.
- 5.2 More effort is being put into working as a team across the agencies particularly in Taunton East. This is the approach adopted to tackle the Troubled Families agenda and is being referred to as Family Focus across the five districts.

6. Family Focus (Troubled Families)

- 6.1 Within Taunton Deane there are 182 families that meet the Governments definition. Over the next three years the project needs to work with all of these and hopefully support them to improve their quality of life.
- 6.2 By March of 2013 the Government would like us to work with one third of these, a total of 61. So far the project has identified 98 families with the majority living in Halcon and Priorswood with small clusters living elsewhere.
- 6.3 Work has begun with six families with four families in Wellington agreeing to work through the ESF Programme attached to this. Next month a further 9 families should be signed up (and a further 5 to ESF).
- 6.4 It is apparent at this early stage that debt and money management are key issues for all the families that have been discussed in the practioner group.
- 6.5 The project has now got the much needed administrative support from within Childrens Social Care and shortly expects to receive the attachment funding from the Government of £163K.
- 6.6 No one doubts that this will be a challenge but it offers the opportunity to develop the best way to help these families improve their lives with a joined up, streamlined, less intrusive approach which should be more effective and cost less.
- 6.7 For a regular update visit www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/familyfocus

Councillor Jane Warmington