

Full Council Meeting – 30 September 2014

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. Scottish Referendum Vote

- 1.1 I applaud the result of the Scottish Referendum deciding by a clear majority that our successful and long established historical union of Countries should continue. Had the decision been the other way I would have grave concern for the economies of both Countries as it would be nothing short of a seismic shock which would certainly have been destabilising at this stage of the Country's recovery from the recession.
- 1.2 It seems we have interesting times ahead with the Prime Minister's promise of devolution to not only Scotland but all other countries in the Union including England. We will need to watch this closely as proposals are made.

2. Halcon One Team

- 2.1 I would particularly like to congratulate Councillor Jane Warmington, Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership, who was invited to speak at the Police Superintendent's Association Annual Conference earlier this month with Inspector Stuart Bell of the Avon and Somerset Police.
- 2.2 This was on the work of the Halcon One Team - reducing demand through multi-agency service transformation and it has been so successful that an award of £751,000 was received to fund rollout of this method of working across Taunton Deane. I reiterate my congratulations to Councillor Warmington and all the team for this enormous success.
- 2.3 There has been interest both County-wide and beyond, in this problem solving approach which co-ordinates existing multi-agency frontline staff into one area-based team working together. A joint initiative between the Police and the Council which has underpinned its success but driven forward by the commitment and dedication of those involved.

3. Firepool, Taunton

- 3.1 I am pleased to report construction of the new junction accessing

the Firepool site from the Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR) is now in progress. In addition our development partner St Modwen is having positive discussions with a range of potential occupiers, consistent with the 'Taunton Rethink' use mix as approved by the Council in January 2014. A temporary parking arrangement has been agreed with PPS (private provider).

- 3.2 It was heartening to receive formal confirmation that Somerset County Council have been awarded £150,000 'Hinkley Deal' funding for construction of a new road access for buses leaving Taunton Station onto the NIDR. This will start in the near future, in time for construction to be carried out with the NIDR.
- 3.3 The 49 dwellings on the Priory Bridge Road Car Park recently granted planning consent should be commencing on site shortly and there is an application in for a further 92 dwellings as an extension to the Crest Nicholson site which is under consideration at present.
- 3.4 With the development now progressing and access assured there is interest again in the old water tower, which is a listed structure, for conversion to a restaurant. This will be a great use for a building that forms such a part of Taunton's heritage and in a wonderful location.

4. Monkton Heathfield

- 4.1 Redrow Homes have been shortlisted to receive £28,000,000 Government funding to accelerate delivery of the urban extension. We also await news from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) on an application for funding for a dedicated delivery team for Monkton Heathfield to ensure this all important development site can proceed smoothly with the necessary delivery of vital infrastructure.
- 4.2 Already in place with funding awarded by the HCA is the Monkton Heathfield Delivery Board which focuses on the present development and delivery of the Western Relief Road (WRR). The WRR is vital to the whole development as it provides an alternative route into Taunton from the A38 so helping to ease the already congested junction at Creech Castle.

5. Infrastructure Funding

- 5.1 Transport issues continue to be a major priority on the back of our successful partnership bid for £4,600,000 for Taunton Railway Station. Taunton Deane is supporting Somerset County Council

(SCC) in submitting multi-million pound bids for other major road infrastructure improvements as follows.

- 5.2 The Toneway Corridor, (the junctions at Creech Castle, Obridge and Heron Gate) provides the key connection between the A38, the M5 (Junction 25) and Taunton Town Centre. These junctions currently serve existing employment sites and suffer from high levels of congestion at peak times (both morning and afternoon). Over the next 15 years, significant levels of employment, retail and residential development are proposed - as well as urban extensions at Monkton Heathfield. This corridor is currently congested and without improvement it will act as a constraint on future growth. The projected capital cost of the scheme is £12,700,000 with funding being sought from the Growth Deal of £8,890,000.
- 5.3 Junction 25 of the M5 is not only a key access point to Taunton, but also provides a link to the second strategic route of the A303 via the A358, making it a key access point within South-West England. The junction experiences excessive congestion but particularly in both peak hours, with queues frequently extending along the A358 and occasionally backed up onto the mainline M5. Improvements are proposed which involves full signalisation and widening of the circulatory carriageway, improvement to signage on approach to the junction, widening of the eastern exit from the junction, improved pedestrian and cycling facilities. The scheme will also support the delivery of the planned growth in Taunton, including Monkton Heathfield and a potential further strategic employment site as set out in the Core Strategy. The capital cost of the scheme is £15,400,000 with the funding proposal requiring £13,860,000 from the growth deal.
- 5.4 The A358 Henlade bypass, the problems with this stretch of road are well recognised. The A358 forms part of the A303 / A30 / A358 route which provides a strategic link between the South-East and South-West regions. The A358 in this locality suffers from congestion which is constraining growth and causing air quality issues in the settlement of Henlade, a declared Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The proposal is to provide a bypass route as an alternative aligned to the south of the existing A358. The capital cost of the scheme is £31,000,000 (excludes cost of J25 as it is a separate scheme). Funding is being sought from the Growth Deal Funding of £21,700,000.
- 5.5 In addition to the present application for the Henlade bypass SCC, with support from us, have been successful in gaining Government agreement to review an upgrade of the A358 from Southfield Roundabout to J25. It is included in the Highways Agency Phase 2 study of road improvements to the A303/ A358/ A30. The hope is to secure agreement to this within the Autumn Statement by the Treasury to allow early investment in a much needed road upgrade and safety improvements to this wholly inadequate route.

- 5.6 All of applications and awards already made are essential to unlocking Taunton's full growth potential and feature in our joint Growth Prospectus with Somerset County Council, approved earlier this year.

6. West Park 26 Development

- 6.1 A surge in demand for employment space at Wellington, has seen occupancy levels reach 100% in Block 1 at Westpark 26, triggering a new phase of expansion at what is the area's most exciting mixed-use business park.
- 6.2 All 40 units have been let or sold within six months of practical completion of the block. This has led to a decision to apply for planning permission for a fourth building of terrace units on the site.
- 6.3 Planning consent has now been granted for these further 18 terrace units, called Block Z, but such is the success that 7 units have already been pre-let or sold.

7. Broadband Availability

- 7.1 Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) have added a new interactive map to their web site which by entering your postcode it provides a status report on present progress. This has invigorated debate particularly in the remote rural areas that are shown excluded from the improved coverage. However, it has to be recognised, the advice is only against the 90% coverage that CDS are committed to provide at present.
- 7.2 It is worth noting CDS have now secured extra funds to raise the bar to a 95% coverage and they continue to explore further techniques as to how to provide coverage for the final 5%. Concerns are raised that some may not benefit from any improvement but all is not lost yet and as a Council we will be continually pressing the case for improvement.
- 7.3 In addition, reassurance given to date that the improvements to infrastructure being made by the CDS programme are such that all properties within the area will receive a service of at least 2 mb/s by 2016. It is appreciated that 2 mb/s is not "superfast" but it is a useful speed to work with while, hopefully, further work is carried out on improving the technology to deliver a better service yet again.
- 7.4 As regards the extra funding for coverage to 95% it is confirmed that a resolution by this Council has approved an allocation of £380,000 for this initiative being the Taunton Deane contribution towards the funding.

8. Garden Cities to Meet Housing Demand

- 8.1 It was interesting to be interviewed by BBC Somerset Sound about the possibility of an enormous Garden City for Taunton. A designer called David Rivulin had been awarded funding by the Government for his proposal to address the national housing shortage by constructing 40 Garden Cities across the land and Taunton was deemed a suitable location!
- 8.2 David was honest enough in his interview to acknowledge that he had no real first hand knowledge of Taunton so did not know where it could be sensibly sited but had identified Taunton on the basis of its great location and a lovely place to live. I pointed out that we already have one of the highest growth rates in the South West and the difficulties of finding sufficient land for development that would be necessary for a Garden City. With flood plain prevalent in the vale and ranges of hills either side of Taunton listed as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, I did not see how this could be sensibly taken forward!

9. Joint Management and Shared Service (JMASS)

- 9.1 I am pleased to report that the Business Case we all agreed last November for JMASS is on track to deliver the savings we expected. A great achievement and I look forward to embracing the challenge of transformation for our Council.
- 9.2 The next Member Briefing on this is on 2 October 2014 at 6.15 p.m. in the John Meikle Room when we will hear more from Councillor David Tutt (Leader of Eastbourne) on the changes he drove through his Council to achieve not only savings, but better customer service too. I encourage you all to come along and find out more.

10. Accommodation Update

- 10.1 The Tender Specification for external professional services is near to completion and officers are working with Southwest One Procurement to get this out. This will be a four week tender from a Government Framework.
- 10.2 Sue Tomlinson has been appointed to be the internal Project Manager for this work and the details of her terms of employment are being finalised. Sue is currently working with Chris Hall on the Open contractor install.
- 10.3 The project workstream leads are due to be confirmed this week, for example IT, Finance etc. A Member Group needs to be assembled in order to get Members involved in design issues.

10.4 The broad timetable is set out below. This is suitable in terms of SCC requirements and means no decisions here at Full Council until post-election:-

Activity	Start	End
Detailed Design	Nov 2014	Aug 2015
Heads of Terms and Agreement to Lease	Dec 2014	July 2015
On site construction	Sept 2015	Nov 2016
Fit out	Nov 2016	Dec 2016
Occupy	Dec 2016	Feb 2017

Councillor John Williams

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Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Corporate Resources

1. Corporate and Client Services

Corporate Services

- 1.1 The key priorities for Corporate Services over the summer have been the implementation and embedding of the new Tier 4/5 management structure, the maintenance of service delivery and the development of a proposed Tier 6 structure. Good progress has been made in delivering these objectives.
- 1.2 A number of the services and staff within Corporate Services have been heavily involved in the development and delivery of the staff familiarisation sessions, which have been held during August for the new Tier 4/5 managers and staff transferring under TUPE from West Somerset Council.
- 1.3 Consulting on, finalising and implementing the Tier 6 structure will be a key priority for the next six months along with the identification and delivery of savings from non-staff budgets.
- 1.4 Detailed below are specific updates in respect of each of the service areas within Corporate Services.

Corporate Strategy and Performance (Lead Officer: Paul Harding)

- 1.5 This area incorporates the management of the strategy and performance functions for both Councils and includes functions in relation to the management of audit actions, complaints, local Government Ombudsman, Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection.
- 1.6 Monthly meetings continue to be held with officers from the South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) in order to track progress against the delivery of the Audit Plan and an update report will be made to the September Corporate Governance meeting. A key priority that we will be progressing over the remainder of the financial year is to ensure we have identified and have robust procedures for monitoring all outstanding audit actions.
- 1.7 We have recently received statistics for the previous financial year from the Ombudsman. These indicate that five complaints were upheld by the Ombudsman in respect of Taunton Deane. We have reviewed these complaints and are satisfied that there are no identifiable

underlying trends that need to be resolved. We continue to deal with a small number of complaints from both the Ombudsman and the Information Commissioner.

- 1.8 The Quarter 1 performance report is in the process of going through the Corporate Scrutiny and Executive cycle. We are intending later in the year to look at implementing improvements to the reporting process. The Corporate Risk Register is scheduled for review by Corporate Governance in September.

Facilities Management and Customer Services (Lead Officer: Angela Hill)

- 1.9 There have been no significant service delivery issues. The Facilities and Customer Services Manager has been heavily involved in getting to grips with her new role over the summer months, which incorporate facilities management for The Deane House and West Somerset House as well as management of the West Somerset Customer Services Team.
- 1.10 The service is currently assisting the Joint Management and Shared Services (JMASS) project in the delivery of new, single identity cards to enable staff access to both the Taunton and Williton Offices.

Human Resources (HR) and Organisation Development (OD) (Lead Officer: Fiona Wills)

- 1.11 The HR and OD service are heavily involved in supporting managers in the delivery of the staff restructure elements of the JMASS project. In addition, a draft OD plan has been developed by the team to support staff in the new structure, which is currently with service managers for comment.
- 1.12 Corporate absence continues to be closely monitored by the team. Based on trends to date, this year we are predicting an outturn absence figure of 7.23 days per employee, which is below the national average of 8.7 days.
- 1.13 The HR Team is also working with the Revenues and Benefits Service to understand the impact of the Government's move to a Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS), which will be run by the Department of Work and Pensions. This may necessitate the transfer under TUPE of affected staff.
- 1.14 In December, new legislation comes into effect which will allow parents to share parental leave entitlement. The HR Service is currently working on a new policy to reflect the legislation and will be consulting on the policy in October 2014.

- 1.15 The team are liaising with the Pensions Service following its merging with the Devon Pension Team to form Peninsula Pensions. We are experiencing some problems with service delivery which are being raised with Peninsula Pensions.

ICT and Information Management (Lead Officer: Fiona Kirkham)

- 1.16 This area incorporates the retained ICT functions for Taunton Deane, the management of the West Somerset Council (WSC) ICT service, information management for both Councils, Design and Print for Taunton Deane and website content development.
- 1.17 The team are heavily involved in managing the delivery of the ICT changes required to support the implementation of the JMASS restructure. Calendar and contact list sharing in Outlook has been implemented to enable officers working on either the Taunton Deane or WSC network to view each other's calendars and easily use e-mail.
- 1.18 We are currently in the process of implementing WIFI for The Deane House and Priory Depot. This will enable staff who use the WSC network to work from The Deane House or Priory Depot and will provide greater flexibility for staff working on the Taunton Deane network.
- 1.19 In the autumn we are aiming to implement changes to provide all staff, whether they currently use the Taunton Deane or WSC networks, with the access to the systems they need to use on both networks.
- 1.20 In August there was a power outage in the Taunton Deane Computer Room, which left us without power to the ICT servers or telephone system for a period of time. Whilst this was quickly fixed we are undertaking a lessons learned exercise to identify any technical and procedural changes we need to make.

Transformation and JMASS Project (Lead Officer: Kim Batchelor)

- 1.21 A JMASS project progress update report will be going to Corporate Scrutiny in November 2014. In summary, this will report that the project is progressing well.
- 1.22 The implementation of the Tier 4/5 structure is now largely complete and familiarisation sessions have been held for the new managers over the summer. The Tier 6 structure is progressing to timetable and staff consultation will commence in October. Work has also commenced to identify the non-staff budget savings.
- 1.23 Site visits are continuing to enable us to learn from the experiences of other Councils. These will help to inform the development of the transformation programme.

2. Corporate Health and Safety

Activities of the Health and Safety (H & S) Advisor

- 2.1 A request for H & S assistance has been received from Supported Housing. An inspection of all meeting halls has been carried out. Advice relating to lone working arrangements, fire risk assessment and an audit of the Extra Care schemes are due to take place imminently.
- 2.2 An audit of the Arboriculture Team and observations of work on site have been carried out.
- 2.3 An inspection of housekeeping arrangements in The Deane House was also completed with the Unison Safety Officer.
- 2.4 Following on from asbestos management concerns raised at the last Priory Depot H & S Committee, a follow up asbestos survey has been carried out with TDBC's Asbestos Surveyor. Remedial actions have been carried out and are subject to regular monitoring. Advice has also been given on reactive asbestos arrangements in Environmental Health.
- 2.5 Regular Corporate H & S inductions are now being carried out for all new starters and employees who have transferred to Taunton Deane from WSC. All managers received training on the key priorities for H & S, dynamic risk assessment and accident and incident reporting.
- 2.6 A "Health and Safety Guide for Managers" has been produced and has been made available to all employees via the H & S intranet site at Taunton Deane and via a shared drive at WSC.
- 2.7 A package of tool box talks for managers with specific information on hazards ranging from asbestos to electrics is almost complete. The information is provided in a format that can be used by Deane DLO Managers as a brief update during a team briefing.

3. Customer Contact Centre

Performance indicators

- 3.1 The service has continued to perform exceptionally well in line with its contractual performance indicators, with no failures since the last update and consistently exceeding targets.
- 3.2 There has been a significant decrease in average abandonment, which is due to the implementation of enhanced queuing functionality. Specifically, the new contact centre technology now allows for certain information to be presented to customers dynamically, based on

business rules, which informs them of likely wait times and queue position.

New Telephony Technology

- 3.3 The implementation of the new Siemens OpenScape Contact Centre remains extremely positive news with no interruptions to service experienced. This is specifically important because one of the primary drivers for implementing a new contact centre system was to reduce the amount of operational downtime which was a regular problem with the old MacFarlane system.
- 3.4 Whilst we have still not implemented the new automated attendant, automated payments are still proving a popular channel for our customers. Over 50% of callers wanting to make a payment to Taunton Deane now choose to use the automated system.

Our World at Work

- 3.5 The Our World at Work Team, Customer Contacts' internal staff forum, continues to successfully manage staff satisfaction surveys and provides a valuable staff engagement forum for concerns and opportunities to be discussed.

Customer Contact Accreditation (CCA) 2014

- 3.6 The Service has once again been successful in its application to the CCA for accreditation to the Global Standard Version 5. Following a two day re-assessment in July 2014, the Service has now received confirmation of accreditation. The Global Standard is the benchmark for outstanding contact centres which focus on the constant pursuit of perfection and quality for their customers. 2014 sees the last re-assessment of version 5 of the standard and the Service will now focus on working towards version 6 for 2015.

Service Delivery Plan (SDP) 2014/2015

- 3.7 Whilst Taunton Deane has not formally agreed this year's SDP, Customer Contact has provided information on its current programme of work with SCC regarding the Operating Level Agreement (OLA) refresh. OLA's are the non-contractual agreements in place with service lines in both authorities which provide the forum for discussion and development. We hope to initiate a refresh for the Council in the coming months.

2014 Service Restructure

- 3.8 The Customer Contact Service's internal restructure is progressing in line with the original time-scale set out in the proposals. Consultation took place during July 2014. In August, feedback was consolidated

and published and Phase One commenced with selection processes for Management posts. Management posts were confirmed and in position in September.

- 3.9 Phases 2-4 are expected to commence in November 2014, once the Workforce Management System is implemented. This technology provides intelligent workforce planning and supports overall resource planning strategies allowing the Contact Centre to flex up and down depending on predicted demand.

4. Health and Wellbeing

Housing

- 4.1 The Assistant Director for Housing and Community Development led a Housing Workshop in July 2014 with the Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board. He showed the strong links between investment in housing and improved health (and resultant reduced cost to Adult Social Care and the NHS. Examples given were through tackling poor housing standards (particularly damp and mould) and addressing fuel poverty by improving thermally inefficient properties.
- 4.2 Additional improvements could be obtained through investment in the Home Improvement Agency, Disabled Facilities Grants, Handyperson Service and Lifeline Services – all of which prevent downstream costs to the National Health Service.
- 4.3 Great emphasis was given on the need to work more closely with partners such as the Mental Health Services and Adult Social Care, particularly in addressing the needs of vulnerable households at risk of homelessness.
- 4.4 The presentation was well received by the Health and Wellbeing Board, who committed to agreeing an improvement plan to address some of these areas.

Mental Health

- 4.5 The Assistant Director for Housing and Community Development represented the Council at the Somerset Mental Health Summit in July 2014, where he gave a joint presentation with Sergeant James Turner from the Police on the positive impact that the Halcon One Team is having and the need for greater support and engagement from Mental Health Services to ensure people in our most vulnerable communities are receiving the support they need.

Temporary Emergency Lifeline

- 4.6 Deane Helpline are in talks with Musgrove Park Hospital about trialling the installation of a temporary emergency Lifeline to help reduce bed blocking. The Telecare Services Team Manager has managed to secure 20 free Bosch Lifelines to help roll this trial out.

Community Activities in Meeting Halls

- 4.7 Across the whole of Taunton Deane there is a wide range of activities taking place in Sheltered Housing and Extra Care meeting halls. The activity in these halls has increased in the last 12 months. All the activities encourage local residents to be socially active, thus avoiding isolation and loneliness which can lead to depression and other diseases.
- 4.8 Gary Kingman is currently working on a project using volunteers to make available a range of activities which can be hosted in halls and have a benefit to the wider community.
- 4.9 Other activities include eye and hearing tests, carers drop in sessions, ex-service personnel groups and memory cafes – all of which are relatively new activities.

5. Legal, Democratic and Electoral Services

Legal Shared Services

- 5.1 Work on a Business Case with a view to establishing an initial shared legal service between Taunton Deane, Mendip and West Somerset Councils has continued. The intention is for a proposal to be developed which Members can consider before the end of the calendar year and, if approved, can be implemented in early 2015.
- 5.2 As has been mentioned before, this initiative will not prevent the continued close collaboration in respect of legal services with the other three local authorities in Somerset and any/or all of them joining the shared service at a later date should it suit all parties concerned.

In-House Legal Team

- 5.2 The in-house Legal Team continues to be extremely busy. The Legal Services Manager is currently working with Human Resources to engage additional capacity for the team to ensure that the appropriate legal support can be provided for key corporate projects.

Joint Independent Remuneration Panel

- 5.3 Following further discussions with SCC and an agreement in principle for changes in the composition of the proposed Joint Independent Remuneration Panel which will provide a greater balance between

SCC and District/Borough appointed representatives, this matter was given further consideration at the meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee held on 14 August 2014.

- 5.4 The Committee duly agreed to recommend to Full Council that Taunton Deane should join the Joint Independent Remuneration Panel which currently serves SCC, WSC and Mendip District Council, and this matter will be considered elsewhere on this Full Council agenda.

Electoral Services

- 5.5 As part of the transformation to the new Individual Electoral Registration (IER) process, a letter was sent out to all persons on the Electoral Register. The letters, which were worded by the Electoral Commission, did cause some confusion for many members of the public in respect of references to an "open register". This resulted in a significant number of telephone and email enquiries, which put pressure on the service for a two week period at the end of July/early August 2014. This was a phenomenon shared with the rest of the country.
- 5.6 There was some inconvenience caused to members of the public who were all trying to make contact at the same time, but the majority of enquiries have now been dealt with. Hopefully, this should not occur again as it was a one-off process forming part of the transformation to the new IER process.
- 5.7 Once again, it is worth repeating that any electors who do not match following the local data matching process will not be deleted from the Electoral Register prior to next year's elections. Nevertheless, any electors with postal or proxy votes who do not match, will lose their postal or proxy votes unless they successfully register under IER using the new application process. If you have any detailed questions on this process please contact the Electoral Services Team.

Democratic Services

- 5.8 The Democratic Services Team have been adapting to cover Member meetings at both The Deane House and WSC as part of the shared services project. To date, the transition has been smoothly managed and my thanks go to all the members of the team for their flexible and positive approach.

6. Resources

Procurement

- 6.1 We continue to monitor the delivery of the Procurement Transformation

Project and day-to-day procurement service by Southwest One. Latest information, as at 31 July 2014, reports that £2,241,000 savings have been delivered to the Council through the signed-off procurement related initiatives. A further £1,175,000 of savings are scheduled to be delivered from these signed-off initiatives during the remainder of the Southwest One contract.

- 6.2 The Strategic Procurement Service continues to review the 'pipeline' of further possible initiatives for Taunton Deane to provide a clearer forecast of likely savings at the end of the current Southwest One contract in 2017. The current best estimate is that a total of £4,990,000 savings could be delivered.

Financial Services

- 6.3 As part of the Joint Management and Shared Services (JMASS) Project, the 'Tier 4 & 5' element of the management restructuring has been implemented with effect from 1 August 2014, and we welcome colleagues into the new structure for the two councils. Steve Plenty has commenced in his role as Finance Manager. Reporting to Steve are Kerry Prisco and Emily Collacott, who have been appointed as Principal Accountants. Recruitment of the vacant third Principal Accountant is underway.
- 6.4 The Financial Services Team has been supporting the annual audit of the Statement of Accounts over the summer months, undertaken by our external auditor Grant Thornton. This has progressed as planned, and the team – with help from other service areas as necessary – have been working through a number of queries, as is always the case to help the auditor complete his/her work. At the time of writing, the indications are that the auditor will endorse the Council's accounts and our arrangements to secure value for money, which is excellent news – well done to all involved. This should enable the Corporate Governance Committee to approve the Statement of Accounts at its meeting on 22 September 2014.
- 6.5 The team has also been focussing on the financial year end and has successfully produced the 2013/2014 Statement of Accounts, which was approved by the Director of Operations (S151 Officer) on 30 June 2014 in line with the statutory deadline. The external auditor is currently scrutinising the accounts prior to formal approval by the Corporate Governance Committee in September.
- 6.6 The team continues to support the service managers with their monitoring of budgets. The Q1 report to Corporate Scrutiny and the Executive provides an early estimate of the potential financial year end position if trends continue. In view of the outturn position last year, the team has worked with managers to focus on the high risk / demand-led budgets, to help improve accuracy of forecasts.

- 6.7 We are now moving into the time of year where budget setting work gathers pace. An important update on our financial position and budget approach was reported to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 18 September 2014. The service will complete the detailed budget estimates in the coming weeks, as well as support managers and portfolio holders in making important budgetary decisions.
- 6.8 In addition, the team continues to support the continuing work of the JMASS Project, ensuring financial information and costings for the management and shared services structures are robust and are on track to deliver Business Case targets.

7. Revenues and Benefits

Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation (IRRV) Annual Awards

- 7.1 August was a busy month for the Revenues and Benefits Service, who hosted three separate inspections from the IRRV following their success in reaching the finals of the IRRV Annual Performance Awards. The winners will be announced on 8 October 2014 at an awards ceremony in Telford.

Customer Service Excellence

- 7.2 The service will also host an annual inspection to consider re-certification for the Customer Service Excellence standard in early October.

Council Tax Support Scheme

- 7.3 On 23 October 2014, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee will consider a report that provides information on the outcome of our Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for last year, as well as setting out our options for the scheme in 2015/2016. This report follows extensive consultation undertaken in response to significant cuts in the funding provided by Government to support local CTS.

Council Tax and Business Rate Collection

- 7.4 Council Tax collection at the end of August 2014 was ahead of target at 53.6% - this is an improvement on the amount collected at the same point last year. Business Rate Collection was also ahead of target at 51.82%. So far this year, we have helped 105 households in awards of Discretionary Council Tax Assistance totalling £13,500.

Fraud

- 7.5 We have submitted a bid to the Department of Communities and Local Government to assist us in tackling non-benefit fraud. The Assistant

Director – Resources will present a report to the next Corporate Governance Committee on progress to date.

Joint Working

- 7.6 Finally, good progress has been made by managers in the Revenues and Benefits Service in establishing joint working with West Somerset. Officers are now working across both authorities to maximise efficiencies, with an aim to provide excellent services to residents in both areas.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

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Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Planning, Transportation and Communications

1. Site Allocations and Development Management Plan

- 1.1 The Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) is now likely to be formally published in the New Year. The Plan which will set out more detailed development management policies as well as a number of site allocations which will be presented to members in November / December.
- 1.2 The delay to the plan is primarily as a result of a technical drag in transport modeling being signed off by Somerset County Council (SCC) and subsequent work including the Infrastructure Delivery Plan review and Viability Appraisal which is dependent on the findings of this modeling.
- 1.3 Following publication the Plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State and Planning Inspectorate for examination in the Spring.

2. Mid Devon Junction 27

- 2.1 At the current time, we understand that Mid Devon District Council are unlikely to contain a specific Policy for J27 in their Local Plan.
- 2.2 There are problems with retail evidence being in place in time for Plan publication (their October Committee cycle is proposed). Currently, much of the retail submission is considered poor and I understand would not constitute sound evidence to any degree. Delay for publication is unlikely due to other pressing issues which we well understand such as a five year land supply.
- 3.3 There are other leisure matters such as concert hall and cinema and the need for sequentially as well as capacity to address.
- 3.4 In addition, there are many other factors of concern surrounding their traffic figures indicating 2.3 million passengers at Tiverton Parkway (only 400,000 currently) and an increase of 1.17 million bus passengers per annum therefore Devon Highways and the Highways Agency have major concerns.

3. Neighbourhood Planning

- 3.1 Bishops Lydeard along with Trull and Staplehay are currently our most active groups; both progressing towards a draft plan. They are now at the stage of balancing the communities' wishes with what can be achieved and the objective evidence to support this
- 3.2 The Council has had a number of meetings with both groups to advise on technical elements, viability and qualitative evidence requirements for their plans. Because Neighbourhood Plans, when adopted, are local planning policy it is important that issues around viability – how their proposals will be paid for and thereby affect developments – and the factual evidence – studies, reports and data – to back up their proposals, will stand up to the rigors of examination.
- 3.3 Nationally the Government is continuing their financial support for Local Planning Authorities who are supporting Neighbourhood Planning in their area. This grants scheme is essential in helping the Council with the costs associated with designation, examination and referenda. Across the country there are now 13 adopted plans, around 80 draft plans produced for consultation and over 1,000 communities working on Neighbourhood Plans.

4. Monkton Heathfield Governance Board

- 4.1 The Monkton Heathfield Governance Board which was set up as a sub-group of the Taunton Economic Advisory Board continues to meet regularly. The Board is Chaired by myself and has representation on it from Taunton Deane, SCC, the Local Economic Partnership, Environment Agency and the Homes and Community Agency as well as the developers.
- 4.2 A key focus remains the resolution of issues around delivery of the Western Relief Road and following receipt of Counsel's advice all parties feel that the Board is facilitating substantive progress on this matter. This should prevent the development from stalling when the trigger for delivery of the road is met (651 dwellings).
- 4.2 This progress is really important for securing £25,000,000 of Large Sites Infrastructure Programme funding from the Government. The site has been shortlisted and is currently going through 'due diligence'. A mechanism for assessing viability has been agreed in principle and work has also commenced on providing valuation advice.
- 4.3 A memorandum of agreement is being drafted with a timetable for all of this work to be completed as well as for the submission and determination of planning applications for the road.
- 4.4 As I write this report Taunton Deane is still awaiting a decision on the Large Sites Capacity Bid for Monkton Heathfield. A successful

outcome would fund a dedicated resource within the Council to take forward not only delivery of the consented sites, but also master planning and strategy for the delivery of infrastructure that will unlock the wider urban extension, which is absolutely critical in terms of delivery of both housing and employment in the longer term.

4. Car Parking

- 4.1 Car Park usage over the first five months of the year is broadly comparable with last year across the tariff bands with income matching the expected levels.
- 4.2 The proposed housing development on Priory Bridge Road Car Park, Taunton will mean that car park closing during October 2014. This will coincide with PPS operating on a daily basis the area on the Market site currently used for overflow cricket parking.
- 4.3 The current Taunton Car Parking Strategy was produced against the backdrop of the then known Project Taunton proposals. The 'Rethink exercise' and other potential decisions regarding town centre developments require the initiation of a complete review of this Strategy over the coming months.
- 4.4 This is aimed, as always, at ensuring we have the right amount of parking in the best available places to meet the needs of the public, both for long term and shorter stays. As a Car Parking Strategy is only one aspect of the wider transport and congestion agenda, we will need to work closely with SCC.

5. Taunton Railway Station Enhancement

- 5.1 Members will be aware of the Council's and Network Rail's ambitions to enhance Taunton Railway Station. The station enhancement will create a fantastic new gateway to Taunton for the traveling public, businesses and new investors.
- 5.2 The enhancement will create many jobs and economic benefits in its own right, and will also act as a beacon for new investment into Taunton.
- 5.3 Joint working by officers on behalf of Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils, alongside colleagues from SCC, has now seen the announcement of further significant local investment in Taunton Deane.
- 5.4 £150,000 for a scheme linking Taunton's new Department for Transport funded Inner Distributor Road to the rail station. This would improve connections between the railway and the new Hinkley Power Station, helping the workforce that is expected to travel by rail.

- 5.5 The Taunton Northern Inner Distributor Road is due to be completed in 2015.
- 5.6 The investment in Taunton follows the award of £4,600,000 which funds the early phases of a multi-million pound redevelopment scheme at the station being developed by Taunton Deane, SCC, Network Rail and First Great Western. This vital funding will kick start a £22,000,000 development programme of the station and surrounds which in turn is estimated to attract investment of up to £74,000,000 on the sites around.

6. Communications

- 6.1 The social media and filming policy has been drafted and will be submitted to Corporate Scrutiny in the late autumn with the aim of having the policy adopted by Full Council by the end of the year.
- 6.2 Taunton Deane is focusing on Twitter as this is believed to be the most appropriate social media for the Council to use. It is proving effective as we are able to issue information very quickly and respond to issues.
- 6.3 The support of the Customer Contact Centre is extremely valuable as they can respond to tweets as they would to a telephone call or email. The swift response is certainly appreciated by the majority of those who use this channel to contact the Council.
- 6.4 The @TDBC account is attracting about 100 new followers a month with numbers standing at 816 at my time of writing – the figure changes daily – sometimes hourly – so it is not possible to give the definitive number but we are looking forward to reaching the 1000 followers – a target in our sight.
- 6.5 Twitter has enabled us to put out useful reminders and alert people to events as well as promoting what the Council is doing.
- 6.6 Communications continues to be busy, both proactively and reactively. We continue to work closely with partners including other district authorities, SCC and Somerset Waste Partnership.
- 6.7 Deane Dispatch, compiled with the help of the Corporate Support Unit, continues to provide a monthly update on Council news and initiatives. This provides a good opportunity to focus in depth on important issues.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting - 30 September 2014

Report of Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

1. Deane Dragon Trail

- 1.1 This inspirational community art project celebrating the rich history and heritage of Taunton Deane has been a huge success throughout this summer. Thirty one dragons (at the last count) sponsored by various businesses and painted by local artists have appeared across the Borough. "Mapped, Apped and Snapped", thousands of people have joined the trail, visited the dragons, which have been featured weekly in the Somerset County Gazette.
- 1.2 This terrific trail of fiery fellows was the original idea of the Mayor of Taunton Deane, Councillor Dave Durdan, to have lots of fun over the summer and raise money for local community causes. For more information about the artists, dragons and sponsors, visit www.deanedragons.co.uk.
- 1.3 Money is being raised for community projects through the sale of trail maps; the mobile phone app(lication); a large dragon money box accompanying our Mayor on his official visits is to be raffled off; wonderful dragon cards available from our Tourist Information Centre; dragon beanies on sale from Watkin Toys and the Dragon Auction at Queens College on 12 October 2014. Funds are being administered by the Somerset Community Foundation (www.somersetcf.org.uk).
- 1.4 If you have only seen a few of the dragons, they are all being gathered together now the trail has finished, as part of the Annual Quartz Arts Festival and exhibited at Queens College from 29 September until 11 October 2014 a delegation of dragons destined to delight.
- 1.5 Many congratulations to our Mayor for this inspirational idea which has given so much pleasure to so many and made everyone smile. Hoards of children and grown-ups have followed the trail and visited different parts of Taunton Deane over the summer. The Deane Dragons will live long in the memories of many. Thank you!

2. Self Service Kiosks

- 2.1 The first five touch-screens have been installed in kiosks, two at The Deane House in the banking hall, one at Priorswood Community Centre, Wellington Council Offices and Milverton Community Hall. These are to enable easy access to on line services such as housing, CAB, shopping, internet and social media. They are simple and straightforward to use with trained helpers on hand to assist. There are more touch-screens to go into some of our meeting halls.
- 2.2 This is part of digital inclusion, to encourage tenants and residents to become familiar with and comfortable using information technology and making it easily

accessible in their local area. Enabling most people to contact us on line will allow us to continue to provide a face to face service for those who are not able to. The officer leading on this work is Steven Clarke, part of our Tenant Empowerment Team.

3. Police Superintendents Association Annual Conference

- 3.1 The Portfolio Holder was invited to speak at the recent Police Superintendents Association Annual Conference with Inspector Stuart Bell of the Avon and Somerset Constabulary (ASC). This was about the work of the Halcon One Team – reducing demand through multi-agency service transformation. Their joint presentation was at one of the Conference Electives.
- 3.2 There has been interest both County wide and beyond, in this problem solving approach which co-ordinates existing multi-agency frontline staff into one area-based team working together, a joint initiative between the Police and the Borough Council. The Portfolio Holder is Chairman of the Silver Governance Group for the One Team.
- 3.3 Good inter-agency communication (three briefings a week in Halcon) and early intervention means issues can be dealt with promptly before reaching crisis point, a much more effective way of working and improving people's lives.

4. Police Innovation Fund Bid - wider One Team working

- 4.1 A recent successful bid was submitted to the Home Office Police Innovation Fund to enable the Halcon One Team Model to be rolled across Taunton Deane focused on two other demand areas, North Taunton and Wellington, and allow Halcon to innovate further. The award was for £751,000.
- 4.2 The two lead agencies were Taunton Deane and ASC supported by Somerset County Council (SCC) (Early Help and Complex Families), Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and Somerset Partnership National Health Service Foundation Trust.
- 4.3 The bid was for the additional investment for three teams over two years and was expertly pulled together in a matter of days by John Hart, one of our Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and submitted through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner in April 2014.
- 4.4 Evidence to support the bid was based on impressive reductions in crime, anti-social behaviour, evictions, rent arrears and domestic violence in the area over the last eighteen months and significant improvements in support for victims and families who live there.
- 4.5 These include a structured committed approach to victim care, sustained partnership approach to reducing domestic abuse, improved examples of tenants being managed more effectively, increased referrals to specialist support such as Children's Centres, the Troubled Families Programme, drugs and alcohol support, education, employment and a quarterly local newsletter delivered to every address.

- 4.6 Evidence of early intervention reducing the demand on expensive acute services, will be gathered to challenge the already stretched big budgets which pay for these and to encourage education, health and social services to invest in this preventative approach to sustain improvements and dramatically reduce demand in the future.

5. Taunton and District Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

- 5.1 Taunton CAB has just published their Annual Report and are celebrating seventy-five years of advising people from across Taunton Deane. They have recently moved to St Mary's House, Magdalene Street in Taunton. They are providing money management surgeries in North Taunton, Wellington and Halcon as part of 'Target Taunton' with support from our Housing Services.

- 5.2 The impact of the targeted service delivered in Halcon under the One Team model is dramatic. Money Matters Partnership Adviser Chris Mitchell has seen 517 residents (nearly 8%) from the Halcon Ward in twelve months (July 2013 to July 2014) and secured £141,000 in unclaimed benefits for eighty-six of them and £14,000 in lump sums. This and basic budgeting advice he provided locally from the Acorns through drop-ins, appointments and some home visits.

6. Troubled Families - Family Focus Integration with Getset Services

- 6.1 Somerset County Council launched their new Getset Services during June 2014. Getset Services are the amalgamation of the following services: traditional Children's Centres; Early Intervention; Family Focus; Targeted Youth Support and Parent and Family Support Advisers (PFSA) and support families with children from nought to nineteen.
- 6.2 Getset Services are to be delivered across the community from hubs where outreach work is coordinated at former Children's Centres in Halcon (Acorns), Priorswood (Hillside), Holway (Hollies), Wellington, Williton and Minehead (Alcombe).
- 6.3 Family Focus is currently delivered by the District Councils and each District Council is delivering a slightly different model. There is a combined model of service delivery across Taunton Deane and West Somerset (WSC). The districts are commissioned until March 2015 and SCC has recently announced that it wishes to bring the management of Family Focus back in-house over a phased timetable. The project management currently involves the secondment of two Taunton Deane/WSC employees who will then revert back.
- 6.4 Taunton Deane/WSC Family Focus will be handed back to the SCC on 1 October, 2014 six months earlier than previously envisaged and there are three reasons for this:-
- (1) The service is already based within Children's Centres (now Getset Services) and the Family Focus Workers working directly with families are employed by SCC and line-managed by Getset managers. This makes for an easy transition back to full project management by SCC;

- (2) The relative success of the project locally means that the transition should be smooth with no major outstanding risks or issues; and
- (3) Recruitment to Getset Services is largely complete across Taunton Deane/WSC.

6.5 Taunton Deane/WSC has an excellent relationship with Getset Services which has been forged through the close participatory work on Family Focus during the past eighteen months. Taunton Deane/WSC will continue to be a strategic partner in the delivery of Getset and remain on the Advisory Boards for both Taunton and West Somerset. Wider One Team working will provide an enhanced Troubled Families Model across Taunton Deane.

7. Volunteering Event

- 7.1 There are hundreds of different opportunities to help and support the work of charities and not for profit organisations in the area ranging from helping with administration, through working with animals and the environment, to youth work. Charity Trustees are also volunteers and joining a Board of Trustees can be an exciting and challenging way to use existing skills and build new ones, while supporting a good cause.
- 7.2 Engage West Somerset, in partnership with Taunton Deane, will have held their volunteering event, hosted by Somerset County Cricket Ground in the early evening on Tuesday, 23 September 2014 with representatives from a wide range of charities available to talk about volunteering.
- 7.3 Engage's Volunteer Centre was there to give information about other opportunities for volunteering in Taunton Deane and further afield. For anyone interested in finding out more about becoming a trustee, members of Engage's Board of Trustees were on hand to answer any questions about involvement in managing a charity.
- 7.4 Independent advice for trustees and managers for those who are already trustees or involved in managing a charity or voluntary group, and would like advice, visited the Trustee and Management Surgery running throughout the evening.
- 7.5 There were three workshops - on funding sources from Lloyds Foundation; demonstrating the impact of your project from Somerset Community Foundation; and finding and keeping volunteers from Somerset Sight (information@engagews.org.uk).
- 7.6 The following organisations booked stands to promote their volunteering opportunities:-

Girl Guides
 Headway Somerset
 Wiveliscombe Area Partnership
 Compass Disability
 Samaritans
 Blackdown District Scouts

Conquest Centre for Disabled Riders
 Taunton CAB
 Healthwatch Somerset
 Workers Educational Council
 MPH League of Friends
 4 – 40 volunteers (leaflets only)

In the Mix Youth Project
Age UK
RSPCA South West
Somerset Community Council
Advocacy in Somerset
TDBC Grants

Somerset You can Do
Bridgwater and Taunton Canal Association
Sue Ryder
SEAP (advocacy support for health)
Somerset Sight (provisional)

8. Creechbarrow Road Hoardings Art Project

The following panels are completed and due to go up in late October 2014:-

St James Primary School
Six Acres Resource Centre
Heathfield Community School
Lavender Court Nursing Home
Halcon Primary School
Chill and Chat
Streetlinkz
Link Power and Halcon Litter Pickers

Groups with a session booked to paint their boards are:-

Monday Night Youth Group
Link Centre Volunteers
Family Focus
Lane Estate Art Group
Young Adults Project
'Theme Board' to be painted by a small team from various groups.

PCSO Ian Warren from the Halcon One Team and the Link Power volunteers have been very helpful with moving the plywood boards from group to group.

9. Community Awards

- 9.1 Congratulations to Lucy Hawkins, Housing Estate Officer, one of three Halcon One Team members to receive a Police and Crime Commissioner's Pride Award last month for her outstanding contribution to the community. Sharon Collard and Tracy Harper from SCC's Getset Services (Acorns) also received this award from the Police and Crime Commissioner at Police Headquarters at Portishead.
- 9.2 Congratulations to Avon and Somerset Police Community Support Officer Linda Ebdon (Halcon One Team) and Lesley Thomas, Manager of Priorswood Community Centre, who have been invited to lunch with the High Sheriff to receive his award for exceptional service in their communities.

Councillor Jane Warmington

Council Meeting – 30 September 2014

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

1. Staffing issues

- 1.1 The Joint Service Review of the staffing structure has now been completed in relation to the Economic Development Team. The proposals will be shared on 1 October 2014 along with remaining reports on reorganisation.

2. Business Support

New Business Grants

- 2.1 Grants were awarded at end of August to 6 new enterprises:-

- £500 to Michael Lewis, Upper Wood Street, Taunton for his business 'Buff Box Limited@. The funding will be put towards some new refrigeration units for his food business.
- £500 to the Wiveliscombe and 10 Parishes Business group to employ a part-time person to undertake a study on the light industrial sector of the local area;
- £500 to Abi Treanor of Manning Road, Cotford St Luke towards the cost of a Licensing course and some promotional literature for her business specialising in unique alcoholic products;
- £500 to Marc Eggleton of Laurel Close, Taunton. The funds will go towards a personalised programme of Leadership and Management Development for 'Dexterous Designs', a business consultancy;
- £500 to Sally Lai of Silver Street, Wiveliscombe to fund developing her company's identity (Sally Lai Art Consultancy) and towards the cost of printing stationery; and
- £425 to Patricia Caller of Jubilee Street, Taunton towards her business, Genius PR and Events Limited, which delivers amongst other activities, The Taunton Comedy Festival. The funding will go towards a marketing campaign including banners, stationery and a new logo and branding.

- 2.2 A grant of £2,000 has also been awarded to the Blackdown Hills Business Association (BHBA), who will shortly be introducing a new weekly local craft and producer market to Castle Green, Taunton. The grant will enable BHBA to advertise and promote the new market and to support a greater number of local businesses.

Investment Grant

- 2.3 Christopher Ward of Advocate Consultancy Services Limited, has created 32 new jobs. He has been granted £32,000 to assist in setup and training costs. The business will begin trading from a town centre site during September 2014.

Business events

- 2.4 A Superfast Broadband (SFBB) Roadshow is planned for the 8 October 2014. Its purpose is to raise awareness of SFBB and the opportunities it will bring to businesses and residents across Taunton Deane. All Councillors will have received an email with more detail on this and are encouraged to get people to sign up and come along.
- 2.5 Councillors will no doubt be aware that whilst there is now significant coverage across the area residents and businesses need to sign up to the service. Additional users could create more coverage in the follow up phase as higher percentages of sign up can lead to additional investment by the network providers.
- 2.6 The commissioning of the extension phase will shortly start with Ian Timms acting as Lead Officer for Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council (WSC). Members should feed any information on coverage holes to myself and Ian to enable us to secure the most effective coverage for Taunton Deane.
- 2.7 There is work continuing on the existing rollout programme to deal with shortfalls in the town centre coverage. Any business that has a poor connection can provide its address and postcode to enable us to take it up with BT.
- 2.8 Traders Boards have been installed in Wellington and Wiveliscombe Town Centres. They have been placed in the towns' car parks and will encourage local trading and marketing of businesses within the towns.

Support for larger businesses

- 2.9 Current conversations are continuing with the owners of 20 larger businesses throughout Taunton Deane, most of whom are looking for land and property to enable their growth and investment. This is a very positive indicator of the recovery of Taunton Deane's economy and will directly lead to job creation. The Economic Development Team is able to offer expert advice and support to businesses including; land and property, funding, business advice and business networking.

Support for inward investors

- 2.10 Extensive support is being given to prospective inward investors. These relate notably to the continuing regeneration schemes in Taunton and the upturn of the town centre in recent months. For example, discussions are currently ongoing with three national restaurant chains, each of which is

bringing a currently redundant or under-utilised property back into positive use. Those restaurants will boost the town's evening economy and will attract additional visitors to the town centre.

- 2.11 Officers are also discussing with neighbouring Councils and the Heart of the South West Local Economic Partnership a marketing programme aimed at attracting Hinkley related businesses to Somerset. This would complement our own 'Taunton: Growing for the Future' support as well as Into Somerset.

3. The Brewhouse Theatre

- 3.1 Discussions on the 10 year lease of The Brewhouse Theatre, and the Annual Funding Agreement for 2014/2-15 have been concluded. Taunton Theatre Association (TTA) has had a summer of successful performances and events managed by volunteers and delivered on a shoestring budget.
- 3.2 The TTA is now putting in place the human resources to enable it to ramp up its operation of the theatre. It has appointed a number of its Trustees and has advertised for a Chief Executive Officer.

4. Taunton Town Centre

- 4.1 From the Town Centre Management budget the Council has progressed the following:-
- **Town Centre Marketing**
The Council awarded this month a contract to *Destination CMS* to deliver a year-long marketing programme for Taunton Town Centre. They will use traditional as well as digital media channels, to promote businesses in the town, as well as a continual stream of stories to raise the profile of the town centre as a destination to visit. It will aim to attract visitors locally as well as from a wider catchment area. The provider plans to establish good links with businesses and cultural providers in order to generate stories and features. This will add local value to national campaigns and holiday promotions.
 - **Footfall Counters**
A new license to draw upon the data from the four counters in the town centre has been negotiated. They provide effective monitoring of footfall trends in the town centre, particularly during special events. This data will be linked up with the Orchard Centre counters.
 - **Cultural Events**
The residual of the budget has been allocated to supporting cultural events. To date financial support as well as professional advice has been provided to:-

- Family Fun Day in May;
- Somerset Remembers Project in November (Museum of Somerset and Castle Green);
- Castle Green Fun Day in August;
- Party on the Park on Castle Green in August;
- Taunton Shakespeare Festival in August;
- Deane Dragon Trail, including DLO support to install the sculptures, in July, August and September. The Council sponsored its own Dragon 'Daisy Making in Vivary Park';
- Hammet Street Arts Festival in September; and
- Taunton Literary Festival in November.

Festive Lights and Switch on

- 4.2 Discussions are progressing between TIME4 and Make Taunton Sparkle to provide festive lighting and an event similar to last year on 23 November, 2014 including a main stage for local artists complemented by a large street market and craft fair throughout the day. A separate producer fair is being organised by the BHBA and will be held on Castle Green on the same day.

Street Markets

- 4.3 A grant of £12,000 has been given to TIME4, enabling the Community Interest Company to buy canopies for its street markets on a Friday and Saturday. This will enable TIME4 to improve the attractiveness of the markets, and are branded with the Taunton T Logo. The 20 September witnessed the first anniversary of these markets.
- 4.4 Officers are working closely with TIME4 and the licensed traders in the High Street to reorganise their current positions. This with the aim of creating greater use of the whole of the High Street and encouraging visitors and shoppers into that part of the town centre.

5. Job Clubs

- 5.1 The contract with Vista to deliver Job Clubs in Halcon, Priorswood and Wellington has been temporarily extended to the end of September to provide more time to agree a future for the service.
- 5.2 An indicative amount of funding has been available through Job Centre Plus (JCP) to upskill local residents which will need to be spent by March 2015. Officers are discussing with JCP the forms of support required and the most effective mechanisms to reach those individuals.

6. Castle Green

- 6.1 A coordinated action plan has been put together, led by Ian Timms, and

drawing upon all relevant services within the Council. The Plan aims to enhance the appearance and amenity of Castle Green and encourage greater use of the space by the public.

Continuing communication with the surrounding businesses is an important element of the plan, particularly to stimulate events and activities. For example, in August the Apple and Parrot Public House arranged a Party in the Park pop concert with all profits generated being donated to the local charity, Stand Against Violence. The Council assisted this first event financially, but it is hoped that in future years the event will be self financing.

7. Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and Marketing

- 7.1 The Deane Dragon Trail has led to a very busy summer for the TIC team as the office has acted as the outlet for Trail maps, souvenirs and is still selling the raffle tickets to win 'Roary' at the Auction event at Queens College on the 12 October 2014. The Dragon Trail was a great success with visitor throughput in the TIC up in July and August by 35% year on year and it has been great to see so many families enjoying the trail.
- 7.2 Ticket and Travel ticket sales continue to remain positive helped by the good weather, a wider variety of events using the TIC as a box office and the on-going closure of the Travel Shop at Taunton Bus Station.
- 7.3 The Cards for Good Causes Charity Christmas Card shop reopens in the TIC on 1 October 2014 and will be open until the 23 December.
- 7.4 The new Visitor website for Taunton -www.visitsomerset.co.uk/taunton went live in August 2014 and remains work in progress with this site replacing the current content (including the popular events diary) in October. The Tourist Information Lead would welcome feedback and will be working with Destination CMS to add enhanced content to promote Taunton as a visitor and shopping destination over forthcoming months.

Councillor Norman Cavill

Council Meeting – 30 September 2014

Report of Councillor James Hunt – Environmental Services

1. Environmental Health / Licensing

- 1.1 There have been a few changes in staff in the Environmental Services Team. I would like to thank leaver Martin Stoyles for his nineteen years of service with Taunton Deane and welcome Erica Lake who takes up the post of Environmental Health Manager.
- 1.2 I would also like to thank John Lewis who also leaves this month for his service to Taunton Deane and for his advice and guidance as support officer for Somerset Waste Partnership Board Members.
- 1.3 Safe use of food on the barbeque was an area highlighted in a 'Barbecue Safety' message issued by the Environmental Team in August 2014. Again taking a proactive approach to food safety the team and the Food Standards Agency issued advice on how to avoid the increased instances of food poisoning that occur each year during the summer season when barbeque use increases.
- 1.4 Licensing are making progress towards achieving a shared Licensing service for Taunton Deane and West Somerset. Officers are now in residence at both Council offices and are taking the best practice from both authorities to move forward with a robust and resilient Licensing service.
- 1.5 Licensing are also again working closely with Economic Development, Time 4 Taunton and Make Taunton Sparkle on this year's Christmas festivities.

2. Deane DLO

- 2.1 In August 2014, Taunton Deane and Somerset Waste Partnership jointly took steps to counter a growing problem with trade waste causing problems in Taunton Town Centre. A statement was issued and a letter delivered to all businesses within the town centre area instructing them on their responsibilities regarding trade waste. An improvement has been noticed.
- 2.2 Following Full Council's approval of the allocation of additional funding in August, the additional street cleansing operative is now in place in Taunton Town. This has resulted in a cleaner and a faster response to incidents. The additional weed spaying should have been completed by the time Full Council meets. The replacement bins are being sourced with consideration to the type and placement to try and mitigate some of the issues of cigarette disposal.

3. Somerset Waste Partnership

- 3.1 For the next three months a total of about 5,000 households in Taunton Deane will be involved in one of three different “Recycle More” trials organised by Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP). These are to explore more ways in which we can improve the recycle rates in Somerset and so send less to landfill.
- 3.2 Each household involved is being sent full information, and anyone with concerns or questions about the Recycle More trials will be offered advice and support.
- 3.3 As well as testing new items in kerbside recycling, such as the often requested plastic containers, these small-scale, short-term trials will review recycling and refuse collection frequency.
- 3.4 In addition to the existing dozen recycled materials, including food waste, these new items will be collected in only the Recycle More trial areas:-
- Plastic pots, tubs and trays, such as yoghurt pots, margarine tubs and fruit trays.
 - Beverage cartons, such as Tetra Pak containers used for milk, juices and soups.
 - Household batteries and small electrical items, from toasters to mobile telephones.

4. Community Scrap Store

- 4.1 Last year Councillor Ken Hayward brought to the attention of the Council a local Community Scrap Store which has been providing a service to schools and community groups helping to recycle scrap donated by local businesses.
- 4.2 I am pleased to report that since the store opening in May 2013 it has recycled almost 3.5 tonnes of waste that may otherwise have gone to landfill.
- 4.3 The store has now changed locations and can be found on the Somerset College campus where it is open Monday-Friday 10am-4pm and Wednesday 3pm-7pm.

Councillor James Hunt

Council Meeting – 30 September 2014

Report of Councillor Catherine Herbert – Sports, Parks and Leisure

1. Parks

- 1.1 The Taunton Flower Show went very well this year. A shame there were some showers on these dates after such a scorching lead in.
- 1.2 The Vivary Park Partnership will shortly be having another meeting to review how the summer went and look to working better together for the next 12 months.
- 1.3 Great news that we have again secured a Gold Pennant Award from Britain in Bloom.

2. Community Leisure and Play

- 2.1 Parish Play Area Grants – Thanks to the decision to support the applications received we have been able to help three Parish Councils with their play projects. I hope to bring a paper to scrutiny soon suggesting a new smaller grant scheme for the future.
- 2.2 Blackbrook Pool Project – Planning permission is now granted and the project continues on track. More information will be shared at the Members' Briefing on 2 October 2014.

3. Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities

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

Active Lifestyles

Seated Boccia

- 3.2 In partnership with the Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP), Tone is running seated Boccia sessions in a variety of locations. The focus is on older people's groups due to the low impact nature of the activity. The project is also being run for Knightstone Housing and North Taunton Partnership's Men's Group and their Monday Club. Being hugely popular, the request for this activity is increasing.

Wacky Wednesdays - Project Wellington

- 3.3 Tone, in partnership with Wellington Children's Centre, Knightstone Housing

and Somerset Skills and Learning, held a series of community fun days throughout August in open spaces/parks in Wellington. Team sports, mini-health checks and a signposting/leaflet stand were set up aimed at family activities and young people.

Community Pounds

- 3.4 A new Community Pounds project was launched at The Hollies Children's Centre in South Street, Taunton and the Acorns Children's Centre in Halcon, Taunton led by the Children's Centre staff. Tone are offering weekly weigh-ins, nutrition and dietary advice and giving away pedometers for a physical activity challenge with a competitive element. The programme is running for 12 weeks at both centres and aims to encourage a 5% reduction in weight for those participants with a BMI of ≥ 25 .

Facility News

Wellsprings Leisure Centre

- 3.5 Wellsprings has recently partnered with Somerset County Council and carried out a week of free NHS health checks to members.
- 3.6 Wellsprings are excited to announce the launch on Wednesday, 8 October 2014 of a new Les Mills workout called 'GRIT', which is a 30 minutes high intensity class.
- 3.7 A new Fast Track terminal system has been installed to allow members the option to check themselves in to enhance and speed up the entrance time.

Taunton Pool

- 3.8 From Monday, 8 September 2014, the pool started opening its doors on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 6.30 am for public swimming.

St. James Street Baths

- 3.9 Swimschool figures continue to grow, with 1,611 swimmers attending in August, which was 25 more than the same time last year.

Vivary Adventure Centre

- 3.10 Tone are currently exploring Footgolf as a new income generating activity at Vivary Park.

Councillor Catherine Herbert

Council Meeting – 30 September 2014

Report of Councillor Jean Adkins – Housing Services

1. Tenant Services Management Board Election

1.1 The recent election has resulted in the following being elected as Board Members:-

- Richard Balman;
- Jessie Bunn;
- Marion Davis;
- Mark Edwards;
- Dustyn Etherington;
- Dennis Galpin;
- Judith Hegarty;
- Kevin Hellier;
- Ivor Hussey; and
- Robert Middleton.

1.2 I would like to welcome the new Members and welcome back the familiar faces. My thanks go to everyone who stood for election and commiserations to the unsuccessful candidates.

1.3 At the first meeting of the new Board on 15 September 2014, Dustyn Etherington was elected Chairman.

2. Deane Housing Development

2.1 Work on the Phase 1 sites at Normandy Drive and Bacon Drive, Taunton and Vale View, West Bagborough is progressing well and completion is hoped for on some plots in December 2014.

2.2 **Creechbarrow Road** - Build here is also progressing well despite some issues with asbestos and a gas main which was discovered that was not shown on the utility company's map of the area.

2.3 The main contractor, Galliford Try and sub-contractors are honouring their

commitment to employ local labour with four sub-contractors within walking distance of the site.

- 2.4 Community engagement is also excellent with the contractor regularly attending both Halcon One Team and Halcon Multi-Agency Group meetings.

3. Digital Access Project

- 3.1 Housing Services have been working on a project to provide tenants with free internet access as part of our response to Welfare Reform, especially the introduction of Universal Credit and to enable them to search for jobs as well as other on-line services.

- 3.2 Four kiosks equipped with touch-screen computers have been opened at:-

- The Deane House Banking Hall;
- Wellington Community Office;
- Priorswood Resource Centre; and
- Creedwell Orchard Community Hall, Milverton.

4. Right to move for Social Tenants Consultation

- 4.1 We are working on a Somerset-wide response to the Government's "Right to Move" consultation with our Homefinder Somerset partners. This closes on 22 October 2014.

5. Somerset County Council (SCC) Extra Care Consultation

- 5.1 SCC is currently consulting service users and their families on the future provision of Extra Care services. Events are being held at Kilkenny Court, Taunton and Lodge Close, Wellington on 22 and 23 September 2014.

6. Homefinder Somerset Annual Report

- 6.1 Homefinder Somerset was the first choice-based lettings system in the South West and was introduced in 2008.

- 6.2 In response to the Localism Act 2013, the policy was reviewed and a local connection requirement was introduced. The way that bedroom requirements were calculated was also amended to reflect changes to Housing Benefit. Some changes to banding were also implemented.

- 6.3 The system has also been improved to allow applicants to report changes of

circumstances and renew applications online.

6.4 Due to a number of factors, including the rolling programme of annual renewal, there has been a reduction in applicants registered of 22%.

6.5 Some figures which may be of interest:-

- For Taunton Deane there were 3084 applicants registered as at 31 March 2014, compared to a high point of 5221 in 2011;
- Our Housing Association partners advertised 391 properties in Taunton Deane in year ended 31 March 2014; and
- Almost 60% of Taunton Deane applicants are in the 25-44 age bracket.

Councillor Jean Adkins