

Council Meeting – 12 July 2016

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. The Referendum - Decision to Leave European Union

1.1 The referendum was held 23 June 2016, only a short while ago, and the democratic vote was to leave the European Union. What a momentous decision and not one that I supported but now the decision is made it is incumbent on all of us to get behind it and make the best of the situation we find ourselves in.

1.2 Unfortunately, it seems, the fight to leave was carried out without any plans or forethought and we are now left rudderless with no apparent plans to take us forward. Hopefully this will be addressed soon and sensible plans emerge as to how we deal with a potential crisis facing the Country with our currency de-valuing, our credit rating being downgraded and the Stock Market in a spin with the loss of direction in the Country.

1.3 On the positive side I reiterate an early notice to all Councillors that I sent in respect of our own finances and future:-

“The EU Referendum result last week has clearly introduced uncertainty. Whilst the longer term effect is uncertain I want to assure Councillors that our officers are working with our advisors to carefully monitor the effects on our financial position. Initial advice on the day was to ‘keep calm and carry on’. We are well positioned within our portfolios having acted on previous advice and adopted prudent policies on dealing with our investments and borrowing. We do not need to take any immediate action, and our officers are continuing to monitor guidance and information from our advisors on a daily basis. We will respond accordingly to minimise any emerging risks to our investment and borrowing arrangements.”

Be assured, this monitoring of our position is still relevant and continuing.

1.4 In an article from South West Business Insider headed “Too Early to Speculate on Brexit Impact” the international commercial agents Colliers offered the following:-

“A head of retail agency at Colliers International has said private investors and Local Government must pull together to take a proactive

approach to property investment following Britain's decision to leave the EU.

David Fox, who leads Colliers retail agency in the North, was speaking at the firm's launch of its Midsummer Retail Report in Manchester.

He said any effects of Brexit, which was decided by a 48-52 majority on Friday, will "be slow to drip down".

"It's not like the 2008 crisis when effectively the money tap was turned off," he added. "Here, it's not a case of consumers not having the money; it's a Europe-wide worry and one that will take longer to sort out, but I don't think it will lead to inactivity."

"If interest rates go up, consumers won't spend as much but at the moment the indication is that interest rates will stay down."

Fox also said it is "too early" to be speculative and all of the uncertainty in the market can be solely placed on Brexit.

"Retail volumes in the US are down 30 per cent year-on-year. We're still getting strong indications that the UK will remain attractive to international investors."

1.5 The clear message from this seems to be just "steady as we go" as it will take some time for any impact, positive or negative, to become apparent but it is good that as a Country it is thought we remain attractive to investors.

1.6 In a briefing note circulated by Devonshires Solicitors the following comment was offered which Members may find of interest under the heading:-

"Brexit: The Implications for Public Procurement in the UK"

"All public procurement procedures applied in Member States are governed by EU Procurement Laws and principles which aim to promote fair competition between EU businesses in securing public sector contracts in EU countries.

One of many questions that arise following the referendum decision on the UK's membership of the EU is: what effect will Brexit have on the regulation of public procurement in the UK?

In the short term.....

In England and Wales the EU Procurement Directives have been implemented through regulations, including the Public Contracts

Regulations 2015, the Utilities Contracts Regulations 2016 and the Concessions Contracts Regulations 2016 (the “Procurement Regulations”).

The general consensus amongst practitioners is that the current Procurement Regulations will continue to act as the UK’s legislative framework until the terms of Brexit are known. Article 50 needs to be invoked by the UK giving formal notice to leave the EU, following which there will be at least two years of negotiations. In the meantime the Procurement Regulations apply and are in full force. Accordingly, contracting authorities (which include Central Government, local authorities and registered providers) will need to continue to comply with the Regulations and bidders can continue to enforce their rights under the Regulations if they believe there has been a breach.

So, at the moment nothing changes.

What happens once the UK has left the EU?

It is important to remember that the Procurement Regulations are all national laws, based on EU Directives. So, each set of Regulations would need to be actively repealed by the Government in order to lose their effect in the UK. Changing national legislation is likely to be a highly complex process,

The extent of any changes to the Procurement Regulations post-Brexit will depend on the outcome of the Government’s negotiations with the EU member states and what it wishes to achieve.

It has been suggested that the UK could adopt a similar approach to countries like Norway and Switzerland, opting to join the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) which promotes the free trade of goods and economic integration amongst its members. Should the UK elect to join the European Free Trade Association and then become part of the European Economic Area (EEA), nothing is likely to change. EEA countries have very similar procurement rules to the UK. This includes the availability of the remedy of a declaration of ineffectiveness for above threshold contracts.

As an alternative, the UK may look to enter other agreements with countries outside of the EU, like the recently established CETA agreement between Canada and the EU, or rely upon membership of the World Trade Organisation. Such arrangements are based on similar procurement arrangements to the EU and so there may well be less change in practice to the application of procurement regimes than anticipated.

Conclusion

Therefore, in our view, Brexit is very unlikely to mean the end of procurement regulation in the UK. There may be changes to existing procurement legislation following our exit from the EU, but these changes may not be that significant in practice.”

1.7 I thought Members would find this of interest to understand the likely options available for our future procurement process and the conclusion of “not much change!”

2. Heart of the South West Devolution

2.1 Recapping, we submitted our prospectus for growth to the Government in February 2016 and recently a meeting has been held between the Secretary of State, Department of Communities and Local Government CLG and senior Members of the Devolution bid. This was a positive meeting resulting in the following;

2.2 The Secretary of State made the following comments:-

- **Geography** – the Devon and Somerset area is agreed as the appropriate scale. Our proposal must clearly demonstrate why this is the right geography for our Devolution agreement - and all Councils and MPs must support the proposal.
- **Combined Authority** – the Partnership will move forward into the negotiation process based on a Combined Authority model. The Mayoral issue may be considered at a later stage, within the timeline agreed by our Partnership. A Mayor will not be imposed or be a pre-condition of any initial deal.
- **Extent of the deal** – areas that have agreed to have a Mayor will get more powers than a non-Mayoral Combined Authority deal. However, the negotiation process will be an opportunity to push the limits of this initial deal, and the process should be viewed as being incremental.
- **Timeline** – we will still work towards an Autumn Statement timeline for the announcement of an initial deal.
- **Growth Deal 3** – the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) would not be penalised in Growth Deal 3 negotiations because we do not have a Devolution deal with a Mayor. The decision for allocation will be based purely on the quality of the Growth Deal bid.

2.3 This is felt to be a very positive response from the Secretary of State who advised that if the Partnership, backed by each Council and our MPs, can sign up to the principle of a Combined Authority by the end of July 2016 he will arrange for the Treasury to open up negotiations towards a deal.

2.4 This is a very pressing timetable and set out below are the activities each partner needs to undertake:-

1. Secure an ‘*in principle*’ agreement from your Council or Board in the July cycle of meetings to the creation of a Combined Authority Governance model, subject to a further report seeking final ratification in the Autumn.

2. Develop and agree a draft Heads of Terms document that can be the basis of discussion with the Treasury and our negotiation team. A draft document will be circulated to Leaders and Chief Executives for consideration.
 3. Consider and agree a Member Development Programme to be rolled out across all Councils to address some of the myths surrounding devolution and give a fuller explanation of the Combined Authority model.
 4. Agree the messages for communication with key stakeholders including MP's
- 2.5 Why is it important to support Devolution? Currently productivity in the South West is running at less than 80% of the national average, the promise is that if local Councils have greater freedom to act, by 2030 they will help deliver:-
- A £4 billion uplift to the economy;
 - 163,000 new jobs;
 - 179,000 more homes;
 - Higher wage levels which are above the national average;
 - Apprenticeship starts up by 400%;
 - Every young person in education, employment or training;
 - A better qualified workforce;
 - Faster, more reliable rail services with greater capacity;
 - Faster road journeys with less congestion;
 - 100% Superfast Broadband coverage; and
 - A UK centre of excellence for skills development.
- 2.6 This in turn should give us the greatest opportunity of “upping our game” to address the lack of productivity and our low wage economy which impacts on all of our community.
- 2.7 The actions noted above (1 – 4) are in hand to implement and indeed the “In principle agreement for a Combined Authority is before us tonight and I hope Members support it. Please be assured this does not commit us as I fully accept that Members will want to see the full detail of the deal before finally committing to a Combined Authority.

3. Shared Services and Management with West Somerset Council

- 3.1 The three Business Cases have now been prepared and circulated to all Members which is the result of frenetic activity by our great team of officers. A great big thank you to all the team that has worked so hard to compile the necessary information in a relatively short space of time and producing it to schedule. Thank you again.

- 3.2 The Business Cases have now been evaluated by independent assessors who, from verbal feedback on conclusion of their examination, have indicated the budgets allowed and assumptions made are sound and credible. So unless other issues are flagged up in the written report (not available at the time of writing this) Members can proceed with confidence based on the figures as presented to us.
- 3.3 The democratic process of considering the various options has commenced, with a Members Briefing to all Councillors 29 June 2016, the full report issued to all Members on 4 July, Scrutiny on 11 July and culminating in a final debate at a Special Full Council meeting on 26 July.
- 3.4 At this latter meeting, whichever way forward is resolved, it will be necessary to then work it up in detail for final approval and implementation. I look forward to all Members constructive input into this process.

4. Proposed Firepool Development

- 4.1 The current planning application for the proposed redevelopment of the Firepool site is due to be considered by the Planning Committee later this month.
- 4.2 Somerset County Council are still reporting completion of the Northern Inner Distributor Road (NIDR) is on track for the end of the year which will include the entrance bellmouth off the NIDR to service the Firepool access road for the development. We are also making progress towards assembling the full site by procuring the various plots of land in others ownership.
- 4.3 The Acorn Blue housing development adjacent Firepool Lock is now nearing completion and have proved to be very popular with quite a number being sold already. If the plans as proposed for the Livestock Market site are approved this will result in a total number of about 750 homes being developed on brown field land comprising the East Goods Yard, Livestock Market site and the old car park. A tremendous achievement.

5. Junction 25 (J25) and A358 Improvements with Access to Employment Site

- 5.1 Detailed plans for the all-important J25 upgrade and improvements have been prepared and the next step is final approval of the Business Case by the Local Enterprise Partnership for available funds to be released. This process is under way as we need work to commence on this soonest.

- 5.2 Highways England are working up various options for the much needed upgrade of the A358 with a view to “options” being available for public consultation later this year and aiming for a 2018 submission for Planning Consent.
- 5.3 Obviously with all the upheaval in Central Government of late there could be a risk of major projects such as this being postponed or removed from the budget. But, so far all I have seen stresses the need for infrastructure development to continue as it is very important to the economy. One thing is certain, this new road and the enabling of a major employment site has always shown a great return on expenditure. Therefore on that measure plus road safety it should continue.
- 5.4 The team for preparation and securing the Local Development Order (LDO) are due to be appointed imminently which will allow the planning process to commence and hopefully secure consent to open up much needed employment land around Taunton. This will be a major step forward towards attracting existing and new investors to Taunton Deane.

6. Merger of Bridgwater College and Somerset College

- 6.1 The merger of the above two colleges took effect as from 14 June 2016 and it was gratifying to meet with the now Principal of both colleges and hear his plans. Somerset College is a very important part of their growth and development plans going forward, using the existing campus and developing as necessary. The proposed move from Canonsgrove to new Halls of residence on campus is seen as a very important move and one that will be implemented.
- 6.2 Higher Education will generally be concentrated in Taunton and the joint college will be actively pursuing University status which is to be applauded as this is a long held aspiration to secure a University for Somerset. As a Council we have welcomed this and offered all help possible.

7. Blackbrook Swimming Pool

- 7.1 May I congratulate Councillor Catherine Herbert and the whole team for the great achievement of delivering this major project more or less on time and within budget. A major feat in these difficult times, thank you to all.
- 7.2 As a result our community have a fantastic facility which is just about to open to the public which I am sure will be welcomed by many. Great facilities in an eye catching building, we can be justly proud of our achievement in delivering this.

8. Deane DLO Relocation

- 8.1 I was pleased and proud to attending a 'Topping Out' ceremony at the new DLO premises and it was good to see the building works well advanced and no concerns about handing over on time or within budget. Again my thanks to the team achieving this.
- 8.2 Successful completion of this building allows vacation of the existing DLO premises along Toneway and redevelopment of this major site by a prestigious company so providing a major boost to our economy from the extra employment and trade they will create. This is to be welcomed.

And finally.....

Thanks to all involved, we have excelled in the number of new homes delivered across Taunton Deane in the last year. An enormous number of 883, of which 205 were affordable homes, the greatest number delivered in any one year for this century. A tremendous achievement and testament to the attractiveness Taunton Deane as a place to live, work and play.

Councillor John Williams

Council Meeting – 12 July 2016

Report of Councillor Mark Edwards – Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Tourism

Section 1: Business Development

Economic Development Service Plan

- 1.1 The team has completed its Service Plan for Economic Development, which sets out the context in which the team operates, the resources and the services available to support the Growth agenda and business investment. A glossy summary of the Plan has also been produced, and I have asked the team to furnish each Member with a copy.

Support for Digital Innovation

- 1.2 Over the past few months the team has been building a small network of business leaders to advise on a strategy to stimulate innovation amongst digital and data-centre businesses in Taunton. At the same time, and with support from Somerset County Council (SCC), officers have appointed a consultant to produce a Prospectus to focus this work.
- 1.3 This is a particularly exciting new strand of activity, which will produce a clear plan on how the Council can stimulate a high growth sector of businesses, through nurture and support for digital innovation. It is my intention to organise a conference in the autumn to feed back our progress and capture further business involvement in this project.

The Glass Box

- 1.4 In a similar vein I was very pleased to note the opening by the SCC last month of the 'Glass Box' in the former Tourist Information Centre on Paul Street, Taunton. Run alongside the Library Service, the Glass Box will provide information and cutting edge technology to support businesses, and will host learning and networking opportunities for businesses and the public. It is important that this new facility is well used by customers, and I would urge all Members to visit the centre and to spread the word about such an excellent resource.

Wiveliscombe Business Park

- 1.5 I would congratulate SCC for investing in employment land at Sandy's Moor, Wiveliscombe. Taunton Deane's Economic Development Team has worked closely with colleagues in SCC to build up the business case for the project, which includes the development of an Enterprise Centre within the site.

- 1.6 Premises for business growth have been in short supply in Wiveliscombe recently, so the new employment site and Enterprise Centre will become valuable resources in enabling business growth and investment.

Taunton Deane Business Awards

- 1.7 Following six months of promotion and shortlisting an awards evening was held at Somerset County Cricket club earlier this month. 150 business people attended a black tie event and eagerly awaited news of who had won awards in the seven categories.
- 1.8 Our MP Rebecca Pow was in attendance alongside Deborah Meaden. Entries were of a very high standard and after interviews and much judge discussion the overall winners were:-
- Start-up - Porrt Payroll;
 - Micro business - Granny Gothards;
 - Small business - Earlam and Christopher; and
 - Medium business - Ministry of Cake.
- 1.9 I attended along with officers, and I was particularly pleased to be able to present the award for Corporate Social Responsibility to Claims Consortium.

Heart of the South West Growth Hub

- 1.10 Businesses can now access a single point of contact for all the support they require, along the lines of the former Business Link. Whether looking to set up a business or looking for help and advice on diversification/ expansion businesses are urged to make contact with business advisors. For more information go to www.heartofswgrowthhub.co.uk.
- 1.11 In past months Officers have been working with the other County and District Councils in the Heart of the South West LEP area on an European Regional Development Fund bid to enhance business services and support available through the Growth Hub.

Wiveliscombe Business Showcase

- 1.12 The 10 Parish business group held a business showcase in Wiveliscombe on Saturday, 25 June 2016. Many businesses took the opportunity to take a stand to promote themselves to other businesses and the local community. A new Food, Drink and Accommodation Guide was launched and there was an opportunity for businesses to meet our local MP Rebecca Pow to discuss the economic needs of the local area.

Business Communications

- 1.13 A core element of the team's work is communication with businesses and investors. Over recent months attention has been focussed on increasing and cleansing the recipient list of the monthly newsletter, and it is now distributed

to 1400 business people. The read-rate of the newsletter is strong; the national average is 20% yet ours is achieving around 27% and is growing. The team also regularly meets businesses on a face to face basis, supporting them to overcome obstacles and to realise their growth ambitions.

Section 2: Marketing the Area to Businesses and Visitors

Marketing to Visitors

- 2.1 The Taunton Visitor Centre (TVC) has recently increased its staffing, appointing Katie Harris to a permanent Visitor Centre Assistant position, and appointing Mike Brook and Katherine Cruikshank to the team as Casual Visitor Centre Assistants. The new appointments will increase the number of staff on hand to serve customers, and to generate additional income to enhance the service.
- 2.2 In recent months the team has done particularly well to increase income from the town centre rotundas, the banner site at Castle Bow, and the new TV 'promo' screen in the Visitor Centre. I would encourage all Members to visit the TVC in the Market House to meet the new staff members and to see the excellent services the team provides to locals and visitors.
- 2.3 The team has also appointed Christopher Bowditch in the position of Marketing Assistant. Chris is due to commence in the role in mid-July on a one year industrial placement, and he will support the Marketing Manager in promoting Taunton Town Centre. This service has been brought in-house having been provided for the past 18 months by a contractor, Destination CMS. Chris will bring expertise in social media and communications to the team; he will continue the close liaison that the Council has with town centre businesses and event organisers, raising awareness of promotions and festivals throughout the year to encourage more visitors to the town centre.

Somerfest

- 2.4 Fuse Performance again put on Somerfest on Saturday, 18 June 2016 on commission from the Council. It was a very successful event, attracting crowds of people, including young and old, families, schools and arts groups. The event provided a day-long celebration of Taunton's arts and culture amongst all of the open spaces in the town centre.
- 2.5 The event was extended into East Street, to take advantage of the road closure and to increase footfall in that direction, and I was particularly pleased to see greater activity on Somerset Square and around The Brewhouse Theatre. It was the first time the event ran into the evening with a fire parade performance on Goodland Gardens, which had a fantastic turnout. I would congratulate FUSE Performance for delivering an innovative, fun day, which celebrated our cultural diversity and talent in a safe and well organised event.

Taunton Live

- 2.6 The Taunton Events Group, which I Chair, is coordinating a summer long programme of arts and cultural activities. Plans are well underway by Go Create for a repeat of the successful Taunton Live, towards which the Council is providing funding. It will be a week-long celebration between 18 and 24 of July, and this year it will be focused on Castle Green. Each day of the festival will have a different cultural theme, and I would encourage Members to visit and to take part in the array of arts activities on offer.

Arts and Events Grants

- 2.7 For many years the Council has provided funding to arts organisations and event organisers to support their work and the provision of services to our community. This year the two funding streams have been brought together into one Arts and Events Grant, totalling £20,000, and I am pleased to report that the monies have been allocated to a broad range of organisations, including:-

- SPAEDA;
- Somerset Art Works;
- Take Art;
- FUSE;
- Somerset WI;
- CICCIC;
- The Brewhouse Theatre;
- Taunton Choral Society;
- the Wassail Theatre Co.;
- The Brew Food Fest;
- Taunton Live; and
- Taunton Carnival.

- 2.8 A full description of the organisations, activities and services to be supported through the grant is available.

Social Media and Website

- 2.9 Over the past six months the team has increased significantly our use of social media channels to raise awareness of Taunton as a visitor and investment destination, and of the Council's work in supporting Economic Development. As a result the number of followers and 'likes' is increasing. Members will be pleased to note that @moreTaunton on Facebook has risen from 3,660 to 4,436 likes in the period January to 30 June 2016. @moreTaunton on Twitter has risen from 4,522 followers to 5,217 over the same six months. @moreTaunton on Instagram was introduced in March, and it now has 693 followers.
- 2.10 On the business marketing side, @TauntonBusiness on Twitter has risen from 1,846 followers in January to 1,987.
- 2.11 The team also maintains the Visit Taunton website. From May to June, the site had over 20,000 users with 79% being new and 24% being returning

visitors. It also received over 8,000 plus views on the What's On calendar between May and the end of June.

Section 3: Regeneration in Taunton Town Centre

No report.

Section 4: Asset Management Service General Fund Activities

- 4.1 The past three months have been busy, finalising year end work, implementing a new staffing structure with additional functions now sitting within Asset Management, progressing a number of high value transactions and delivery of the Asset Strategy.
- 4.2 This is in addition to the 150 or more live projects for the General Fund currently being delivered by the Estate Management Team, these being smaller and more routine but nevertheless critical for the smooth operation of the portfolio. With summer arriving, there have also been the usual traveller encampment issues on Council owned land.
- 4.3 During the past three months the following projects are particularly worthy of mention:-
- Former Mike Chedzoy Motors premises on Greenbrook Terrace, Taunton – Exchange of contracts expected during July. Capital receipt of £750,000 expected spring 2017.
 - Community Asset Transfer Policy – Now adopted.
 - Former Park Keepers Cottage, 277 Cheddon Road, Taunton – A report is intended to be taken forward in July for a decision to sell.
 - Land at Frobisher Way – A report is intended to be taken forward in July for a decision to sell.
 - Continuing Asset Management support through dedicated Asset Projects Surveyor towards the Firepool redevelopment scheme. Positive progress has been made in respect of due diligence and general land assembly. Also supporting other key Growth projects.
 - Having been vacant, the Asset Strategy Surveyor post dedicated to the Taunton Deane General Fund work was filled in April and therefore this work stream is progressing once again.
 - Statutory Asset Valuations of General Fund portfolio completed.
 - The recently agreed structure which is now being implemented includes three dedicated Asset Surveyors along with an Asset

Technician to ensure that the quality of asset data is improved and supports proactive management of the portfolio. The Asset Surveyors will manage stock condition data, compliance matters and other corporate Asset Management activities, visiting all assets on a rolling basis over a five year programme, some inspections being annual depending on the nature of the asset and the risks arising through Health and Safety compliance.

- A Landlord Health and Safety Compliance Project Manager has been appointed for 18 months to manage key compliance related projects across all portfolios including the General Fund.
- A formal Officer based Asset Management Group has been established to provide strategic ownership, direction and support in delivering key objectives.

Section 5: Asset Development Sites in Taunton

Lisieux Way, Taunton (Thales Site)

- 5.1 Thales has recently confirmed they will now contract with Taunton Deane and take on a new 999 year Lease. MRMU will be advising Thales including project management of the relocation of GSI Exotec to new premises within the site. A price and headline terms have been agreed in principle with Thales, which are basically the same terms as those agreed following lengthy negotiations between Taunton Deane and their prospective developer partner MRMU.
- 5.2 The deal will give the Council control of new frontage enabling the potential reconfiguration of car parking and/or an opportunity for future new development on the site.
- 5.3 The price and terms are subject to exchange of conditional contract that achieves best value for the Council by increasing income and enabling the development of employment space for technology based businesses.

New footbridge at Longrun Meadow

- 5.4 A sale price and heads of terms have been agreed with the land owner, subject to contract. These include an arrangement with Somerset Highways to adjust access arrangements to the bridge.
- 5.5 Positive pre-application discussions have been held with our Development Management Team following relocation of the facility due to flood erosion. Black and Veatch have been appointed as specialist engineers and technical project manager to advise the Council. Quotes to install the bridge are currently being assessed with the aim of starting this summer and completing in the autumn. Ground surveys have been completed.

Unlocking Employment Land

- 5.6 Working alongside the Business Development Team, the Council is taking professional advice on bringing forward key employment sites for business occupancy. Sites currently under consideration include Langaller Lane and Hyde Lane at Monkton Heathfield, and other sites elsewhere in Taunton that have been frustrated in coming to the market. Options under investigation include potential joint ventures, acquisition and investment opportunities.
- 5.7 Members will also be aware that significant progress is being made by Somerfield Developments to bring forward a major Strategic Employment Site on land to the east of Junction 25 of the M5. Officers are liaising closely with the developer to ensure that the site becomes a prestigious business park of national repute, occupied by high value organisations and technology based businesses.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting - 12 July 2016

Report of Councillor Roger Habgood – Planning Policy and Transportation

1. Planning Policy

Officers remain actively engaged in developing Policy with Core Strategy, Site Allocation and Development Management Plan and Neighbourhood planning being the main themes.

Core Strategy Development

- 1.1 Preparation is underway for Core Strategy / Area Action Plan Reviews. Early steps will include taking a paper through Members of the Local Development Framework Steering Group to help scope the envisaged extent of the Reviews.

Site Allocation and Development Management Plan (SADMP)

- 1.2 Consultation on proposed main modifications to the SADMP closes soon (on the 15 July 2016). Shortly thereafter the Council anticipates being in receipt of the Inspector's Report recommending the adoption of the Plan subject to the Main Modifications we are currently consulting on.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 1.3 Lots of activity continues in this area of Planning Policy and I believe we should celebrate the fact that we are among, if not, the first in Somerset to bring a Neighbourhood Plan before Council.
- 1.4 The great deal of work is undertaken by our officers, our Parish Councillors and other contributors in putting together Neighbourhood Plans, I believe they add not just to planning policy but to local democracy and I thank them for their involvement time and effort.

Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone to be “made” (adopted)

- 1.5 Following a successful referendum the Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Neighbourhood Plan (c.80% of those voted supported it) is being put before Members tonight to be adopted (“made”). This is the first Neighbourhood Plan in Taunton Deane to reach this stage and is the accumulation of years of hard work by the Parish of Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone.

Two new Neighbourhood Plan Areas Designated

- 1.6 The Council has designated Neighbourhood Plan areas for the Parishes of Creech St Michael and Ruishton and Thornfalcon. This has defined the geographical area that their respective plans will cover. They are now beginning the task of identifying what is unique about their area and what topics their plans will cover.

Neighbourhood Planning Grant

- 1.7 Changes have been made to the amount of grant Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) receive for helping support Neighbourhood Planning in their area (from £30,000 to £20,000). In the past the Council has used this money to help cover cost of technical evidence, legal advice, statutory notifications and consultation, Independent Examination, and the referendum. The grant communities can claim directly remains unchanged at £9,000.

Timescales for Decisions on Neighbourhood Plans

- 1.8 The Housing and Planning Act has imposed timescales on Local Planning Authority's decisions at regulatory stages of the Neighbourhood Plan. Their aim is to speed up the regulatory process and the Council is looking into the additional resource (financial and human) implications for the Council.

Sharing Information and Experience

- 1.9 The Council is part of a new South West Neighbourhood Planning Hub/Group. This enables officers and academics from further education to share information and experiences of neighbourhood planning, helping each other with queries and issues. This activity benefits this Council both directly and indirectly as the knowledge pool increases.

Custom/Self-Build Register

- 1.10 Taunton Deane has updated its self-build and custom house building register. The information helps the Council understand the range and type of self-build and custom house building project needs for our area. It will be used by the Council in Planning Policy, Asset Management, Development Management and Housing Enabling.

2. Development Management

Development Management has made a strong start to the New Year, having met all performance targets. All Planning Officer posts are now filled. We have vacancies in Planning Enforcement and for a Conservation Officer. The posts have been advertised and the recruitment process is underway; meanwhile, support is in place to maintain the service.

Major Planning Applications

- 2.1 The two most significant outstanding applications form the urban extension proposals for Staplegrave. It is hoped that both applications will be before the same Planning Committee at the end of the summer. A briefing session for the whole Council on these two applications is being planned before they are presented to the Planning Committee. The briefing is for information and clarification.
- 2.2 The two applications have so far received approximately 150 representations from Members of the public and these are currently being analysed so that they can be reported to Members and discussed appropriately.

Local Development Order

- 2.3 We are undertaking a tendering exercise that will, I trust, lead to the appointment of consultants to assist us with the preparation of a Local Development Order for the Strategic Employment Site east of J25 of the M5. Interviews will take place with prospective consultants shortly and a decision on appointment will follow thereafter.

Making Saving Bringing Benefit

- 2.4 Exploration of efficiency savings, particularly reducing their reliance on paper is continuing which should bring significant time and cost benefits.

3. Transportation

20 Year Transport Strategy

- 3.1 Work continues with Somerset County Council (SCC) colleagues to refresh the Transport Strategy, the key outputs of this work being:- a Supplementary Planning Document; the full technical piece of work, that will form part of this Council's Core Strategy review, preceded by a document aimed at a public audience that outlines and explains the strategy.
- 3.2 The latter will be with us in the Autumn.

Car Park Performance

- 3.3 Performance has been good for April and May both in terms of usage across all Taunton Deane Car Parks with the odd exception in Wood Street where usage has dropped slightly which follows a six-month trend.
- 3.4 SCC are reporting a drop in on-street parking volumes in comparison

with last year, and level comparative usage at the Park and Ride facilities. It is still early days and whilst the performance is encouraging other factors are also at play such as retail shopping trends. We continue of course to work with retailers to ensure we do our part in enhancing our retail experience across Taunton Deane.

Signage

- 3.5 We have before us this evening a recommendation regarding Electronic Variable Message Signage and Pay as You Leave parking payment which, if adopted, will help transform the car parking experience in Taunton.
- 3.6 I commend the proposal to you. We have an exciting opportunity here that I feel we should take as I think it will benefit residents and visitors in more ways than one.
- 3.7 It will utilise proven technology, will help with wayfinding drivers to the car park spaces which in turn will help us with traffic congestion and lessen frustration in finding a car parking space. It will also remove the pressure of shoppers rushing to get back before their ticket runs out and boost trade in the shops.

Councillor Roger Habgood

Council Meeting – 12 July 2016

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

1. Parks

- 1.1 Planting out of bedding displays has started and hanging baskets have been put up in the town centre. We have already received some lovely feedback from members of the public.
- 1.2 Green Flag judging which had been planned for Friday, 3 June 2016 was moved at the last minute to Thursday, 2 June 2016 which unfortunately meant I was unable to attend. Feedback from those who were present was positive that it went well.
- 1.3 Nursery contract work has been going out to customers and feedback from them has been great, very impressed with the quality of product and service. Thank you to Steve and the team.
- 1.4 The tree survey work has been continuing.

2. Play and Leisure

- 2.1 The Vivary Bandstand concerts have been well received and we were pleased to have again hosted a group from the Youth Orchestra at Hestercombe House.
- 2.2 Work is progressing on the planning of Section 106 Agreement play areas and looking at the priority list for refurbishment and repairs required on our existing stock.
- 2.3 The Blackbrook Pool project is on schedule. I was able to visit last week and it really is going to be great to show this off to the public! Tone are working on a way of remembering St James Street Pool, so if you have any memories of the pool then please do share these with Tone as soon as possible.

3. Tone Leisure

Tone continues to develop and support a number of community outreach programmes:-

Active Lifestyles

- 3.1 Tone Leisure is launching its “Bumps and Beyond” project in July in partnership with Knightstone, NHS Taunton and Somerset Midwifery Team. Tone are putting on a timetable of exercise classes for antenatal and postnatal ladies across Taunton and Wellington. Classes include Aquanatal, Pregnancy Circuits, Pregnancy Yogalates, Mums and Babies Fitness and Core classes. This is a six month project funded by Sport England aimed at promoting health and wellbeing to expectant and new mums.
- 3.2 Tone Leisure is working with Taunton Deane Borough Council to provide free swimming over the summer holidays to low income and targeted families in the three areas of highest social need in Taunton: Halcon, North Taunton and Wellington. Tone Leisure is working closely with the One Teams, Getset Services and schools to encourage families to engage in swimming over the summer holidays. Over 1,500 vouchers will be distributed.

Facility News

Blackbrook Pavilion

- 3.3 The Blackbrook Pavilion Swimming Pool and Spa are due for handover to Tone Leisure in early July 2016, with the new facilities opening on Saturday, 16 July and the official opening on Friday, 22 July.
- 3.4 Tone Leisure has relocated 1,400 swimmers from its Learn to Swim programme at St. James Street Baths to Blackbrook and 200 to Taunton Pool, with a comprehensive pool programme built to complement Taunton Pool due to launch. The new Spa area will be branded ‘Spa Experience’ and will offer affordable spa treatments for the Taunton community. All this will be complemented with the launch of ‘Coffee Corner’, the new café brand.

St. James Street Baths

- 3.5 St. James Street Baths will close its doors to the public on Sunday, 10 July 2016 with a closing ceremony on Monday, 11 July. Tone Leisure is offering the community a last opportunity to swim in the pool at various times during the week commencing Monday, 4 July.

Wellsprings Leisure Centre

- 3.6 Wellsprings Leisure Centre proudly hosted a charity comedy evening with Russell Howard and guests in June. A full house resulted in £23,587 being raised for the Stand Against Violence charity.
- 3.7 VIBE youth group have been awarded a capital grant of £9,962 for new equipment for their Friday night sessions. The grant includes parkour equipment, which will enable more young people to participate in parkour, an outdoor table tennis table and a variety of sports equipment.

Councillor Catherine Herbert

Council Meeting – 12 July 2016

Report of Councillor Richard Parrish – Corporate Resources

1. Democratic Services

- 1.1 First of all it is welcome to a new member of staff, Nicola Paling, who started on 4 July, 2016. Nicola will be the Executive Assistant to the Leader and Chief Executive and be based in Richard Bryant's team.
- 1.2 The past few weeks have been very busy with the enjoyable Annual Council meeting taking place at Wellington School on 12 May, 2016, which saw Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams elected as Taunton Deane's latest Mayor.
- 1.3 The team also helped facilitate a successful Air Cadet Parade through Taunton on Saturday, 11 June, 2016 to celebrate their 75th Anniversary and held a ceremony to raise the Armed Forces Day Flag at The Deane House on 20 June, 2016.
- 1.4 Members of the team have been helping with the development and preparations of the Transformation Business Case and the holding of the European Union Referendum in addition to undertaking their 'normal' committee work. I am grateful for their extra efforts in this regard.

2. Electoral Services

- 2.1 Since the last meeting the Police and Crime Commissioners Election was successfully held on 5 May, 2016 (along with the Neighbourhood Planning Referendum for Bishops Lydeard and Cothelstone Parish Council).
- 2.2 Undoubtedly the 'main event' was the European Union Referendum held on 23 June, 2016. Due to the high national profile there was an unprecedented turnout which made for an extremely busy day.
- 2.3 In addition, which is not always so well recognised, there were weeks of hectic preparation leading up to Polling Day and unforeseen circumstances to deal with such as the last minute extension of the registration deadline.
- 2.4 This has involved Elisa Day and her Elections Team to work at a much pressurised level for a number of weeks and I should like to place on record my appreciation of the dedication of Elisa and her team and indeed all the other many people who helped to ensure the referendum was successfully managed.

3. Electoral Review

- 3.1 Following the Council's majority decision to suggest that the size of the Council should be 43 councillors, the Local Government Boundary Commission for England have announced that their preferred council size is 43.
- 3.2 There will now be a second consultation process on possible warding patterns to reflect this size. Any submissions in this regard will need to be made by 5 September, 2016 and a special meeting of the Council has been pencilled in for 22 August, 2016 to give the Council the opportunity of agreeing to make any formal representations within this timescale. The intention is to enable all Councillors to feed into this process.

4. Law and Governance SHAPE Partnership Service

- 4.1 The latest figures for the use of the service are set out below:-

Legal Referrals – April to June 2016 (Partial)

Received from TDBC	104
Received from WSC	20
Total	124

Category	Sub-Category	No. of Referrals WSC	No. of Referrals TDBC
Commercial, Contracts and Procurement	Advice – existing contracts		1
	Drafting and negotiation of new contracts		2
Employment	Advice on Employment Law & Procedures		2
	TUPE	1	1
Enforcement/ Prosecutions	Planning enforcement		1
	Statutory and other nuisance		
	Housing		1
Governance	Constitution		
	Corporate/Policy advice		3
Housing	General advice on all aspects of housing including policy and tenancy agreements		11
	Homelessness		1

Information and Complaints	Legal advice on FOIA, DPA SAR and EIR requests and policies		
	Corporate complaints and Ombudsman investigations		
Licensing	Advice		1
	Attendance at licensing committee and sub-committees	4	4
Litigation	Trespass	1	1
	Debt recovery		3
	Housing/property repossessions & advice		1
	Personal Injury		1
Planning	Advice on town and country planning matters	2	3
	Section 106 Planning Obligations, Enforcement Notices and Stop Notices		11
	Conservation Areas (Order and enforcement) plus Article 4 Directions	2	
	Public Inquiries and Appeals		
	Tree Preservation Orders		
	Lawful Development Certificates (CLUEDs and CLOPUDs)	3	9
Property	Property law advice	1	18
	Right to buy		17
	Sales	1	3
	Leases	3	4
	Agreements	1	2
	Licences	1	2
	Purchases		1
	TOTAL	20	104

5. Revenues and Benefits Service

- 5.1 We have a considerable amount of work within the Revenues Team following the usual trend of annual billing. While slightly below target, collection is broadly on track for both Council Tax and Business Rates. The time taken to process new claims and changes in circumstances for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support recipients remains well within target at 8.55 days.
- 5.2 Public consultation on our local Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for 2017/2018 starts on 4 July 2016 and will run for 10 weeks.
- 5.3 We will be consulting on four options for our CTS scheme for working age households for 2016/2017. These options are:-
1. No change;
 2. Reduce the maximum support we provide;
 3. Increase the maximum support we provide; and
 4. The ability to change our local scheme to reflect changes made to other welfare benefits
- 5.3 Pension age CTS recipients will not be directly affected by any of these options as they will continue to receive support of up to 100% through a scheme set by the Government.
- 5.4 However, everyone liable to pay Council Tax pays for the CTS scheme through their Council Tax payments. Therefore, it is important we get a broad cross section of views, regardless of whether residents receive CTS or not. To assist in achieving this aim, the Scrutiny Committee supported a proposal that every Member attempts to obtain views on the options from at least 10 constituents within their Ward. Consultation questionnaires have been distributed to all Members and I would encourage everyone to help in getting as many residents as possible to participate.

6. Procurement

- 6.1 As at 1 June 2016, the strategic and operational aspects of the function will be delivered by the new Procurement Team within the ONE Team. This follows the return of this service area from Southwest One, with two people returning to form the team. For Taunton Deane, the transactional elements of the function will continue to be delivered by Southwest One.
- 6.2 An early priority for the Procurement Team will be to review and align strategic and operational procurement arrangements across both Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council, to provide the benefit of consistent specialist advice and support across the ONE Team. Although the function consists of a small team, it will focus on strategically important procurement activity, as well as corporate processes and compliance work.
- 6.3 The Assistant Director - Resources provided a briefing note to all Councillors in early June setting out the main responsibilities and activities for the Procurement Team in more detail. The return of the service means that long-

standing procurement savings targets are no longer the responsibility of Southwest One to deliver. The new team will continue to progress existing opportunities and it is proposed to develop new procurement savings targets during 2016.

7. Finance

- 7.1 The Finance Service has been working through the financial year end period – always a particularly busy time of year.
- 7.2 The financial outturn position against budget has been confirmed for the last financial year, with details of performance against budget reported to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 30 June 2016 and to the Executive on 7 July 2016.
- 7.3 Overall, financial performance is positive with net spending remaining within budget and adequate reserves maintained.
- 7.4 The General Fund Revenue Outturn position for 2015/2016 was a net underspend of £280,000, with the Housing Revenue Account Outturn position reporting a net underspend of £476,000.
- 7.5 In respect of the Capital Outturn positions, the General Fund Capital Programme reported a net underspend of £125,000 against the overall programme, with the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme reporting a net underspend of £2,154,000 against the overall programme. The future HRA capital requirements are being reviewed as part of the work on the new HRA Business Plan.
- 7.6 The General Fund reserves balance as at 31 March 2016 stands at £2,113,000, therefore £513,000 above the Council's recommended minimum reserves balance.
- 7.7 The Housing Revenue Account Reserve Balance as at 31 March 2016 stands at £2,675,000, therefore £875,000 above the Council's recommended minimum reserves balance.
- 7.8 As well as monitoring the position against the budget the Authority has produced the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2015/2016 and these were approved by the Director of Operations by 30 June 2016 in line with the statutory deadline. These accounts are now subject to examination by the external auditor, with the audited accounts then scheduled to be presented to and approved by the Corporate Governance Committee in September.
- 7.9 Going forward, the year-end process will be even more challenging with the statutory deadline for completing the unaudited accounts being brought forward to 31 May, and audited accounts approved by 31 July, from the 2017/2018 financial year onwards.

- 7.10 The Assistant Director - Resources has reviewed and updated the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). Hopefully all Councillors have kept up to date with the latest forecasts – with the five-year MTFP being reported to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 30 June 2016, supplemented with a briefing note to all Councillors setting out a lot of supporting information behind our projections. It is important that all Councillors appreciated the financial position when considering important decisions such as our future Transformation Business Case.

8. Finance Systems Replacement Project

- 8.1 As part of the wider exit arrangements for Southwest One (SWO), the Council has approved the replacement of the SAP system. This project includes the replacement of the main accounting, purchasing and income systems that are currently part of the SAP solution. The project team have been busy preparing for this, and the procurement process is underway with bids invited on possible solutions to meet the Council's requirements. The plan is to secure the preferred solution in July/August with the replacement system planned for launch in April 2017.
- 8.2 This project will inevitably require significant support from the Finance Service. One of our team is seconded into the Project Manager role, and the change in system will mean we will need to review and update all of our main business processes affecting all parts of the service. This will also impact more widely with the new system and processes to be embedded in all services across the Council.

9. Corporate Services

- 9.1 The key priorities for Corporate Services in recent months have been around the following:-
- 9.2 Supporting the development of the JMASS Phase 2 Business Case. Specifically this has involved producing the draft business case, working with the external consultants to understand the approach to transformation, potential savings and costs and to evaluate different approaches to reducing customer demand, implementing channel shift and to identify the ICT and HR support required to implement the programme.
- 9.3 Proceeding with the SWO exit negotiations. We now have a deal in principle and are aiming to sign a deal with SWO by the end of June/early July. The deal negotiated can be delivered within the budget set by Members.
- 9.4 SAP Replacement – we have now commenced procurement activity to replace the SAP system and will report further as the exercise progresses.

Councillor Richard Parrish

Council Meeting – 12 July 2016

Report of Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

The strategic vision for Taunton Deane's most disadvantaged areas, is that resident's lives will improve significantly and that these priority areas will look better, feel safer and in the future place a more proportionate demand on public services. These services will be delivered in urban areas through co-ordinated, frontline, problem-solving, multiagency teams of individuals, already working in the areas, providing early help and based together. Rural parishes with more scattered communities will be helped to access services through community centres and local village agents identifying, signposting and supporting isolated residents to get the help they need. Urban priority areas need excellent education and health facilities on the doorstep which are then accessible to all, if we are to build independence, resilience and raise aspirations in individual people, families and communities, to sustain improvements and continue to reduce the need for and costs of intervention in the future.

1. Three Priority Area One Teams

- 1.1 The One Team model continues to work on the basis of co-locating our Estates Officers in the areas of Housing Estate which generate the most demand and to work alongside other partners to provide the best joined up to solution to these issues. Estates Officers working in this way continue to have responsibility for covering all council houses in Taunton Deane and supporting tenants from all areas, but there are significant benefits to the multi-agency approach we are taking in these priority One Team areas.
- 1.2 Partnership working continues to be good in some areas but challenging in others. A facilitated day has been organised with GetSet Services later this month to try to agree closer working arrangements and better understanding to ensure we provide a responsive service to families who need help. Conversations continue with Musgrove Park Hospital and the Ambulance Trust about sharing information and closer working to reduce future demand on their and our services.
- 1.3 Feedback on the MIND support to tenants has been positive both from tenants and the One Teams. MIND have been able to take referrals to provide support to individuals, and also train and support staff with difficult cases. A separate pilot is being developed in North Taunton funded by Public Health in Somerset County Council to provide a stronger framework of mental health support to One Teams and the community.
- 1.4 Inspired to Achieve are receiving increasing numbers of referrals to support unemployed tenants into work. With changes to Welfare Reform, families will become more disadvantaged in future if they continue to be unemployed. This also helps convert the practical experience gained through Link Power for some of our long term unemployed in Halcon and help them into paid work. The work of Inspired to Achieve will not only benefit tenants and their families but should also help protect future rental income. Inspired to Achieve has received national recognition as a best practice organisation for delivering this kind of support.

- 1.5 The three areas the One Teams focus on in Taunton Deane have seen some key achievements:-
- 1.6 In Halcon these include: progress at Halcon Primary School with RedStart Academy taking over and engaging with partners; Taunton East Development Trust developing their Business Plan with a greater focus on becoming an educational hub; continued success of Link Power and letters of recognition for their work on the estate; safeguarding and providing early help in the community. However there are still some vacant posts across partner agencies to be filled; loss of frontline engagement from GetSet Services following restructure; significant safeguarding concerns in the community; and crime and Anti-Social Behaviour are starting to creep back up.
- 1.7 In North Taunton key achievements include: well attended One Team meetings; MIND working really well to support identified need; Taunton Academy fully committed and attending every One Team meeting; two DreamScheme events planned with Knighstone Housing Association; a potential site identified for a multi-agency office - a business case will be developed; crime and Anti-social Behaviour are starting to reduce (although still relatively high). However, Chill and Chat is struggling to establish (local support for victims of domestic abuse); the One Team is experiencing significant demand from a handful of households where poor mental health is a contributing factor.
- 1.8 Key achievements in Wellington include: positive eight months building relations and embedding One Team model in; good levels of rent collection and management of rent arrears; support from Wellington Town Council who are contributing financially towards One Team Co-ordinator and projects; responding well to safeguarding and Early Help concerns; and about to interview for part-time Co-ordinator post up until March 2018. However, Wellington is still struggling with sexting and related concerns; it needs better engagement of schools, Housing Associations and GP Surgeries; and there are concerns about supporting families during delays in Children Services engagement.
- 1.9 All three areas have thriving community activity days planned for the school holidays in addition to the support the local community centres and voluntary groups offer residents throughout the year and this is to be applauded.

2. Link Power Project

- 2.1 The aspirations of the Link Power project based in Halcon are to offer local people the opportunity to contribute, learn new skills, build trust and confidence and prove to themselves that work can make a difference. PCSO Paul Johnson coordinates a growing group of volunteers, which is now a thriving business and a joint One Team project with the Taunton East Development Trust. Volunteers now help to run it and the project is making a huge difference.
- 2.2 Link Power deploys two litter carts daily across the Ward (a significant saving to the local authority); volunteer gardeners venture out across the Ward, cutting grass on our open spaces, verges and hedges, to keep the area looking clean and tidy; street work training is undertaken, ensuring all the volunteers are kept safe and

comply with Health and Safety requirements, including safe use of tools and machinery.

- 2.3 Link Power have a donated van in daily use which has reduced Deane DLO's workload in the area (another saving). They also collect and return shopping trolleys to the nearby ASDA superstore which makes the area look much tidier.
- 2.4 In the past six months, twenty-two and a half tonnes of rubbish have been removed from the Ward by them; over 3000 volunteer hours put in; 900 shopping trolleys were removed; 50 vulnerable families supported to clear unwanted clutter from their homes and gardens offering them a fresh start; and Link Power raised £500 for Children in Need.
- 2.5 We would like to thank PCSO Paul Johnson for his excellent work, following in the footsteps of previous project coordinators, PCSOs Linda Ebdon and Ian Warren (who are now both Police Constables).

3. Raising Aspirations through Mentoring in Schools

- 3.1 Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) expanded its successful mentoring programme. Raising Aspirations to Taunton Academy and Courtfields School in Wellington last year as a result of funding from Taunton Deane Borough Council. The scheme had already been running successfully for over three years at Crispin School in Street, having been launched by SCF in 2011 with support from the Ninesquare Trust. With the support of their mentors, young people in the schools have flourished, with testimony from parents, teachers and the young people themselves about their increased self-esteem and confidence.
- 3.2 SCF's Mentoring Recruitment Manager Jenny Perez, is keen to hear from people from all sectors of business and the wider community interested in becoming a volunteer mentor. Courtfields School is looking for twenty new mentors for 2016/2017. If you know anyone who may be interested, please contact Jenny at raisingaspirations@somersetcf.org.uk / tel: 01749 344949.

4. Let's Make Isolation and Loneliness History

- 4.1 Following a successful event in West Somerset last year, Taunton Deane held its own 'Let's Make Isolation and Loneliness History' event in Wellington on Friday, 3 June 2016 and shared good practice, ideas and what is already going on (an awful lot which most of us are not aware of).
- 4.2 The Housing and Communities Team in preparation for the day compiled a registry of Activities in Taunton, Wellington and the Parishes which they hope to update at least yearly with input from across Taunton Deane. We would like to thank the Parish Councils, churches, village halls, voluntary and community groups who responded which enabled this to be done. The team also produced a List of Services available for people in Taunton Deane; and a revised edition of A-Z of Taunton Deane Services.

- 4.3 These will be emailed out to all Councillors, made available on the website, and libraries, community centres and other local hubs can print these off for easier in house reference. We would like to thank St John the Baptist Parish Church for hosting the event and making us very welcome and our Housing and Communities Team for organising this very successful day.

5. Quantock Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

- 5.1 The Quantock Hills were the first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) to be designated in the country and have just celebrated their sixtieth birthday. Shared between the three local Somerset districts, many of us look north up to the wild tract of upland running east west, made up of moorland heath, natural wooded combes and planted forest and home to a variety of wildlife.
- 5.2 Traditional grazing by wild deer, ponies, sheep and sometimes cattle keeps the top of the hills open. Stock mostly belong to commoners (farmers/small holders with grazing rights) although the Quantocks still have relatively few landowners, all involved in sympathetic management supported by Natural England and the AONB Service. The recent appointment of a Health and Wellbeing Officer to join the team illustrates the varied benefits such a relatively wild tract of land has to offer us all.

6. Community Safety

- 6.1 Sue Mountstevens was re-elected in May 2016 as the Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset and we offer her our congratulations. She has launched 'your policing priorities' consultation for the views of residents, community groups, businesses and partners to inform the strategic policing priorities, which will help shape and develop the next Police and Crime Plan for Avon and Somerset.
- 6.2 Vulnerability, strengthening and improving local Policing teams are some of the areas that the Police and Crime Commissioner believes should be strategic priorities for the Police and she wants to hear your views. The Police and Crime Plan sets out the strategic priorities, aims and objectives for the Constabulary for policing Avon and Somerset.
- 6.3 People can respond to the consultation on-line by visiting www.avonandsomerset-pcc.gov.uk or alternatively call 01275 816377 for hard copy surveys. Copies of the consultation will also be available at Police Stations, libraries and on request. The consultation closes on Tuesday, 30 August 2016.

7. Businesses Against Crime

- 7.1 A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been drafted by our Community Safety Lead (we are an interested party) for Somerset Businesses Against Crime (SBAC) and Sedgemoor CCTV Monitoring following the recommendation from Community Scrutiny last month. This is a MoU rather than a Service Level Agreement because no finances are involved. Both parties are considering the

contents which can then be ratified by the SBAC Board as a more formal arrangement between the two partners.

8. Psychoactive Substances Act 2016

- 8.1 The Psychoactive Substances Act 2016 (the Act) came into force on 26 May 2016 which banned so called Legal Highs. The intention is that supplies and usage will reduce although simple possession has not been made illegal so as not to criminalise users (especially the young).
- 8.2 A programme of education to include Illegal Highs will be delivered from September in primary and secondary schools across Taunton Deane through Stand Against Violence on our behalf. A report is coming to the Community Scrutiny Committee in July for Members to have the opportunity to comment on this.
- 8.3 Offences under the Act are: producing (S 4 of the Act); supplying or offering to supply (S 5 of the Act); aggravation of an offence under section 5 (e.g. if the supply is in the vicinity of a school, using couriers under 18 years of age to commit an offence or the offence occurs in a custodial institution. Note: the aggravated offence can only be committed by a person aged 18 or over (S 6 of the Act); possession with intent to supply (S 7 of the Act); importing or exporting (S 8 of the Act); possession in a custodial institution (S 9 of the Act); simple possession is not an offence, other than under S 9 of the Act.
- 8.4 A psychoactive substance is any substance capable of producing a psychoactive effect in the person who consumes it, and it is not an exempted substance. 'Psychoactive substance' is an umbrella term for products that are intended to mimic the effects of controlled drugs.

9. Syrian Refugee Resettlement

- 9.1 Since January 2016 Somerset has resettled six families under the UK Government Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme. Markers of success include private rental sector tenancies established for all families, school aged children settling well at school, nursery provision established for younger children, English classes arranged for all adults with early progress in language noted, and early signs of community integration. All families have expressed their profound thanks to the people of Somerset.
- 9.2 A working group comprising representatives from the County and District Councils (including this Portfolio Holder) and led by Public Health with input from other relevant organisations including the Clinical Commissioning Group, has overseen the resettlement process including monitoring any pressure on existing services and the financial balance.
- 9.3 The Somerset Resettlement Programme has benefited hugely from the support of local faith and community organisations which have enabled many costs to be mitigated, especially around furnishing properties and interpreting. Taunton Welcomes Refugees has been working alongside the working group with over thirty volunteers with various skills and some additional training who are able to directly

support families. This is an exemplar of collaboration and has the full support and participation of The Right Reverend the Bishop of Taunton, Ruth Worsley.

- 9.4 Somerset has been asked to provide an indication of capacity in the County over the next three years to feed into a regional plan for resettlement. This is being considered by County following consultations within District Housing, Family Support and Health services and local volunteer support capacity.
- 9.5 A longer horizon of three years would enable further resettlement in each area to be staggered and flexible to match fluctuations in capacity alongside the ability of local communities to absorb and welcome families. Further resettlement would continue to be on the basis that private rental properties are used and that there is local capacity to support families without undue impact on other services which would be provided to local residents. In particular, the expansion would need to be conscious of differential pressures on school places across the County and other movements of population.

10. Referendum

- 10.1 Following the Referendum result to leave the European Union and the disgraceful display we had to witness leading up to this with most of our senior politicians resorting to personal attacks instead of sticking to disinformation whichever side they were on, few seemed to have emerged unscathed. Interesting times if a little unsettling. Let's hope a few heads get banged together before the leadership of both major parties is settled and they put the Country first, then knuckle down and collectively work out how best to achieve what we dare to hope for.

Councillor Jane Warmington

Council Meeting - 12 July 2016

Report of Councillor Terry Beale – Housing Services

1. Deane Housing Development

Creechbarrow Road, Taunton

- 1.1 A further four homes were handed over on 22 June 2016. The total completions to date are 20. The remaining 40 homes will continue to be handed over in phases during 2016. Discussions are still continuing with Galliford Try regarding progress on site.
- 1.2 Work has started on the construction of Moorland House (previously called The Hub)

Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green

- 1.4 Demolition of Council properties on site is now complete. The demolition of these buildings including the remaining front section of the Weavers Arms Public House will take place once work has been undertaken to divert infrastructure by two utility companies. The Development Team are working with the local primary school for the children to produce some art work to be displayed on site. A similar offer will then be extended to community groups using the local meeting room.

Parmin Close, Taunton

- 1.5 The first site meeting was held on Tuesday 28 June, 2016 and work has started on site. The perimeter fence and gates have been installed and the temporary pedestrian fence is about to be put in.
- 1.6 The soft strip and asbestos strip have commenced and the Tree Surgeon is on site for reduction or removal and attention to hedgerows.
- 1.7 There will be a ground breaking photo shoot at the beginning of September 2016 and completion of the scheme is set for 2 March, 2018. Congratulations to Housing Options and Lesley Webb-Crooks in particular for rescuing this development from what, at one time, seemed a non-starter!

Extensions

- 1.8 The tender process is underway and properties have been identified for the families to ensure a smooth decant while work is undertaken.

Scooter storage

- 1.9 32 scooter stores have been delivered and a further six are under construction

currently across Taunton Deane with more installations in the pipeline. Kilkenny Court residents will have further consultation shortly regarding the proposed scooter store installation there.

Car parking

- 1.10 The Planning Application for the proposed additional parking at Bulford, Wellington has been approved and work is underway to procure a contractor.
- 1.11 Parking solutions are being investigated at Polkesfield, Stoke St Gregory.

2. Affordable Housing

Delivery

- 2.1 The 2015/2016 affordable housing completions were 222, which exceeded the annual target of 200 homes with a strong affordable housing pipeline continuing to come forward.

Affordable Housing Open Day 2016

- 2.2 Over 200 residents came to the affordable housing open day on the 8 June 2016 to find out more about affordable housing opportunities in Taunton Deane. The exhibitors ranged from our own Housing Development Team, Deane Housing Development, Housing Options and Revenues and Benefits through to our Housing Association Partners, mortgage advisors and legal advice. The feedback received from both the residents and the exhibitors has been extremely positive and we look forward to the 2017 event.

3. Welfare Reform

Welfare Reform Visits

- 3.1 The number of tenants affected this month are 321, however this is subject to change on a daily basis due to tenants moving in and out of employment and any changes in their family makeup.
- 3.2 Tenants are still downsizing to more suitable accommodation however the pace of this has now slowed and people are choosing to amend their budgeting to stay in their current accommodation.

Discretionary Housing Payments

- 3.3 All affected tenants are being offered advice on Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's) and assistance to help them complete the application form.
- 3.4 In the financial year 2015/2016 the total DHP budget was £117,000 out of this 107 DHP's were awarded to Taunton Deane's tenants.

3.5 The DHP budget for 2016/2017 is £150,984.00 so far this year 39 tenants have had a successful award.

Universal Credit (UC)

3.6 Universal Credit went live on 20 April 2015. To date Taunton Deane have 42 tenants who have submitted a claim, however not all of these have been entitled to UC for various reasons and some of these have now found work so are currently not entitled to payments. I have been working closely with these tenants and the level of help and support needed is substantial and needs to be tailored to each of their personal circumstances.

3.7 Currently only single newly unemployed people are able to make claims for UC, this accounts for the small number of affected tenants at this time. We have now been informed by the Department of Work and Pensions that the roll out of the Full UC service will start in Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils in October 2016, we have yet to be given a firm date. This will see a significant increase in our UC case load as anyone making a new claim for any of the following benefits will then have to make a UC claim online and then manage the claim online:-

- Housing Benefit;
- Working Tax Credit;
- Child Tax Credit;
- Job Seekers Allowance (income based);
- Employment and Support Allowance (income related); and
- Income Support.

3.8 It will also include anyone on these existing benefits who report certain changes in circumstances. Our existing UC claimants will also have to re-apply for UC on line but their payment dates should not be affected and their claims should continue to run as they do now it will mean for them that they will also managed their claims online.

Rent Arrears

3.9

- 1st January 2016 Bedroom Tax rent arrears were £38,148.32 with 181 tenants in rent arrears. With an increase in rent arrears of £1,709.07 on the previous month
- 1st February 2016 Bedroom Tax rent arrears were £35,653.73 with 164 tenants in rent arrears. With an decrease in rent arrears of £2,494.59 on the previous month
- 1st March 2016 Bedroom Tax rent arrears were £32,713.81 with 154 tenants in rent arrears. With an decrease in rent arrears of £2,939.51 on the previous month
- 1st April 2016 Bedroom Tax rent arrears were £33,464.98 with 164 tenants in rent arrears. With an increase in rent arrears of £751.15 on the previous month
- 1st May 2016 Bedroom Tax rent arrears were £36,784.46 with 168 tenants in rent arrears. With an increase in rent arrears of £3,319.48 on the previous month
- 1st June 2016 Bedroom Tax rent arrears were £37,914.66 with 164 tenants in rent arrears. With an increase in rent arrears of £1,130.20 on the previous month

- 3.10 It must be remembered that any data is a snapshot in time and the overall figure over the six month period varies from month to month. However I am pleased to report that in the six months to the 1 June the overall figure fell as did the number of people in arrears.
- 3.11 The Estate Teams work very hard to reduce the amount but this can be a difficult task particularly as enforcement action can take time and eviction is a very last resort. I commend them on their work.

4. Anti-Social Behaviour Service

Performance

- 4.1 Satisfaction with the service remains high, at end of Quarter 3 97% (target 66%) of tenants who reported ASB in year to date rated the help and advice received as good or excellent. This is a slight improvement since the last update.

Casework

4.2 ASB cases recorded between 29/06/15 – 27/06/16 (12 months)

84 cases were opened during the period:-

14	Alcohol
1	Communal Areas
1	Domestic Abuse
11	Drugs
5	Garden Nuisance
18	Harassment
4	Hate Crime
14	Noise
1	Other Crime
1	Pets
8	Physical Violence
1	Rubbish/Fly Tipping
2	Sexual Acts
3	Vehicles

Closed cases

- 4.3 48 cases were closed during the period, all cases were resolved.

High Profile/Risk Cases

4.4

- Lyngford Road – Noise, assault on neighbour. County Court Possession hearing 19/2/16 – Mental Health.
- York Road – Situation quiet, which is likely to be the result of significant additional support put in place by HOT partners.
- Laxton Road – closure order tenancy ended.

- Juniper Road – Seeking Injunction – Mental Health.
- Selworthy Road – Tenant transferred to new property progressing well - Mental Health.
- Outer Circle – Relationship breakdown, due to lifestyle clashes, impacting negatively on emotional development of 7 children all under 9 – Options to resolve to be finalised.
- Moorland Road – Relationship breakdown, resulting in community tension – All One Team partners involved in particular Social Services.
- Pickeridge Close – Hate crime – victim vulnerable – perpetrator arrested - in court – Options once court outcome known.
- Kelway Road, Wellington – Mental Health, perpetrator currently in long term supported accommodation.

Councillor Terry Beale

Council Meeting – 12 July 2016

Report of Councillor Patrick Berry – Environmental Services

1. Environmental Health

- 1.1 The team has achieved its Quarter 1 target to complete the required number statutory routine food hygiene inspections.
- 1.2 In July, Taunton Deane Food Officers will be taking part in a National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme Consistency exercise. This involves a virtual scenario set in a food business; information including photos and videos are available on line and each local authority scores the premises and submits the assessment to the Food Standards Agency. This ensures that officers are making correct assessments in line with the brand standard and consistently across all areas.
- 1.3 An updated Food Service Plan is now available for Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council.
- 1.4 Dog Action Day : This took place on 25 May 2016 and involved officers patrolling areas throughout the whole district including the parks within Taunton plus areas of Wellington and Wiveliscombe. Officers gave advice on responsible dog ownership to those out walking their dogs. Owners were advised on the new legislation regarding micro-chipping dogs and also on the use of licensed animal boarding establishments. Further Dog Action Days are planned for the future. Areas where we have received high volumes of complaints regarding dog fouling will be targeted.
- 1.5 Environmental Health Reactive Work : The Environmental Health Team investigates service requests and complaints regarding, noise from music and barking dogs, excessive bonfires, overgrown gardens and rat sightings. The team also investigate complaints regarding drainage, smoke and odour and also respond to the Planning department regarding applications and queries relating to contaminated land and air quality as well as many FOI requests. Officers working in food safety respond to issues regarding food premises and infectious diseases.
- 1.6 Revised Private Water Supplies Regulations have been issued and are due to come into force in the coming months. The new regulations require Radon to be included in risk assessments in high risk areas. The Regulations will introduce Radon hazard maps for groundwater for first time in the UK. Taunton Deane is classed as a low risk area for Radon in ground water supplies. Officers working in this area will be attending workshops later in the summer regarding the new regulations.

- 1.7 Public Health Officers in the Environmental Health and also the Licensing Team attended training on Illegal tobacco during June. The training was provided by an experienced colleague from the Trading Standards service. The training was aimed at officers visiting retail and other commercial premises and explained the signs to look out for during the course of our work in the community. The sale of illegal tobacco is very profitable and is often aimed at young people as it is much cheaper and easier to buy than legitimate tobacco.
- 1.8 Staffing Update: Claire Haines started in the team in April 2016 as a Technical Officer. She will be working across all areas of Environmental Health to help her achieve her qualifications to become a fully qualified and registered Environmental Health Officer. She has recently been offered 4 weeks of work experience with Public Health England (PHE) in Exeter. This will be a benefit to the team as this will not only strengthen our relationship with our colleagues at PHE but also she will be able to bring examples of good practice back to Taunton Deane and develop her knowledge and skills in this area of work.

2. Licensing

- 2.1 The isolated backlog of applications received during 2015 was finally cleared in April.
- 2.2 Performance over the first quarter; 95% of all applications received after 1 April 2016 was determined within the 14 day time scale. For the month of June the figure was 99%. However because the department was still dealing with the remaining backlog during April and May, the overall figure for the quarter was 88%.
- 2.3 Thanks to efforts to mediate between applicants, interested parties and responsible authorities, Licensing Officers have been able to dispense with two formal hearings during the quarter. Instead, decisions to grant licences to Buddhafield Festival and North Curry Sports Pavilion were reached by members of the Licensing Committee in an informal meeting.
- 2.4 The Taxi Forum met again recently and caused interesting discussion regarding small differences in regulations and requirements between adjacent authorities. These differences may cause drivers to try to switch authorities to avoid a particular requirement. There was also a debate on the use of in-cab cameras. The meeting was addressed by Reverend Adrian Prior-Sankey, who talked about the work of the Street Pastors and how they relied on and worked with the taxi community.

3. Deane DLO

- 3.1 Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning Tender : The tender documents have been issued and pre-bid meetings held. The target dates for the bid submission, evaluation and recommendation to Council are:-

- i. Closing Date for Bid submission; 15 July
- ii. Evaluation 18 – 22 July
- iii. Interview Bidders 29 July
- iv. Recommendations to Council 2 – 22 August
- v. The proposed commencement date for any awarded contract would be 1 December 2016.

3.2 The DLO Manager Cyril Rowe will be leaving on 29 July 2016 after many years of service. We wish him all the best wherever he goes and thank him for his efforts. A new manager will be appointed and announced in due course.

4. Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)

4.1 The Cashless Trial at Chard Recycling Centre, in which a no-cash, card only pilot was put into effect, has been very successful. It has now been rolled out at Taunton (Priorswood) Recycling Centre from 3 May 2016.

4.2 The only part of the Taunton Recycling Centre that is not giving up cash is the Reuse Shop, which sells items that would otherwise have been recycled or sent to landfill. The Taunton Recycling Centre was chosen as the pilot site as the level of transactions, although considerable, is manageable and the staff is experienced in handling payments by plastic. If all continues to go well, it is likely that the Somerset Waste Board (SWB) will consider rolling the same arrangements out to all SWP Recycling Centres later in the year.

4.3 With effect from Monday, 4 April 2016 the SWP Recycling Centres started charging for asbestos and plasterboard disposal. The charges for these are £12 per sheet (or equivalent) for asbestos containing materials and £4 per sheet for plasterboard or plaster, with payment which must be in advance, on-line by debit or credit card. Asbestos must be sealed in thick plastic before being taken to a recycling site. More advice on handling these materials is available on the SWP website.

4.4 Nearby authorities continue to limit the use of their recycling facilities to non residents. At the same time our facilities are becoming more congested especially at week-ends. The SWB has therefore taken the decision, at its meeting in June, to implement a permit scheme for Somerset residents who visit our recycling centres in a commercial type vehicle or use a trailer to transport their household waste.

4.5 The permits, which will be available free of charge to Somerset residents, will restrict access to such vehicles at peak usage times. The permit scheme will be implemented towards the end of the Summer, with publicity beginning to appear at the recycling centres and in the local press soon - remember if you drive a van or use a trailer to transport your household waste to site, keep an eye out for the permit information. Non Somerset residents will not be eligible to apply for a van or trailer permit.

- 4.6 SWP is also aware that the refuse collection vehicles are reaching the end of their working lives and will need replacement soon. The tonnages of refuse going to landfill are not reducing and SWP are looking at ways of trying to reduce landfill and the associated charges. Both areas are being studied.
- 4.7 Increasing the amount recycled is essential and residents are encouraged to put more of their waste food in the waste food bin. It is also the best way to end smelly bins. Currently it is estimated that @ 50% of all waste food goes in to the black refuse bin thereby adding to landfill charges when it could be recycled.
- 4.8 Residents of flats and apartments who dispose of waste in communal bin stores do not currently have the ability to recycle as wide a range of materials as residents who present waste for kerbside collection. The SWP continues to receive support and encouragement from the partner authorities to seek ways to enable residents of communal properties to recycle more.

Councillor Patrick Berry