

# **Full Council Meeting –13 December 2016**

## **Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council**

### **1. Creating a New Council**

- 1.1 The next step in the process for the creation of a new Council is to engage with our residents, local businesses and other partners to seek their views on this proposal.
- 1.2 A new microsite (mini website) has been created to support this engagement and consultation. This will host all the historic information on our plans as well as our consultation document and will be a simple way of sharing updates with anyone interested in what we are doing. This will go live on 12 December and will remain in place until 28 February.
- 1.3 We have also had our first meeting with Civil Servants to plan the process and discuss our intended timescales and we will continue to engage as our consultation progresses.

### **2. Making a Difference Event – 22 November 2016**

- 2.1 We held our most recent Making a Difference Event on 22 November 2016 at West Somerset Council and many thanks to all those that turned up despite the foul weather.
- 2.2 It was good to have the opportunity to meet with Ignite and hear more on the blueprinting plans about developing our systems going forward. This is the detailed piece of work that is needed to hopefully confirm (and maybe enhance) the figures and plans in our High Level Business Case.
- 2.3 Ignite will be leading a series of workshops with some staff from each service over the coming weeks, which will help deepen understanding of how the new ways of working could work for us. The next Making a Difference session is planned for 24 January 2017 and it would be great to see as many of you there as possible.

### **3. Welcome Return of Southwest One (SW1) Staff**

- 3.1 I would like to welcome those staff returning from SW1. 47 staff will be returning from SW1 and around half this number will be relocating from County Hall. The returning services will be relocated in The Deane House.

## **4. Broadband Update**

### **Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) Phase 1 Delivery**

- 4.1 CDS's contractor BT reported that a further 7,000 premises were connected to fibre broadband in Quarter 2, July to September end. This brings the Total Homes Passed (THP) for phase 1 premises to around 317,000, of which 264,000 premises are capable of accessing superfast broadband. Further to this BT have assured the CDS Board that they are confident the programme will deliver the contracted level of superfast connections (circa 277,000) by the end of the deployment phase in December 2016.
- 4.2 Commercial build has been reported as below what was planned and this is likely to impact on the achievement of the Government's 90% superfast target by the end of the year. Therefore while CDS expect to meet its obligations to deliver its own superfast target, the wider 90% commitment is at risk. The target is dependent on commercial delivery and shortfall by commercial suppliers will result in this target being underachieved.
- 4.3 Take up of fibre service is almost at 28%, a 3% increase since the last quarter. This increase can in part be attributed to a CDS marketing campaign which included a mailout of leaflets to over 143,000 live addresses in the last quarter, as well as press coverage and further proactive marketing by CDS and its partners such as cabinet stickers to indicate availability of a service.
- 4.4 In total, 576 demand stimulation events have been held in local areas across Devon and Somerset since the start of the programme and a further 253 public engagements have been attended by CDS and its partners. The high levels of take up will return more funding to CDS through the Gainshare Agreement in the BT contract allowing further future investment for superfast delivery.
- 4.5 CDS are considering commissioning an interim evaluation report to provide definitive data on the benefits brought by the broadband programme and its initial economic impacts. The report will include a survey on businesses and residents, economic modelling of the financial returns, socio-economic studies over time and the wider impact on businesses. The finding would then be used to inform future parts of the programme and evidence any further funding CDS wished to apply for.

### **CDS Phase 2 Procurement**

- 4.6 The CDS partnership launched their tender for phase 2 outside the National Parks back in July following 12 months of dialogue and engagement with the broadband sector. With £39,500,000 public sector investment secured, it is expected that there will be delivery of Next Generation Access broadband services (a minimum of 30 Mbps) and ultrafast broadband (speeds greater than 100 Mbps) to many tens of thousands more homes and businesses across Devon and Somerset in predominantly rural areas over the next

phase. This will contribute significantly to meeting the Government's targets for superfast broadband coverage.

- 4.7 The tender opportunity will seek as much Next Generation Access coverage as possible across six lots by the end of 2017. Suppliers will also be asked to ensure full service commencement by 2019.
- 4.8 The deadline for submissions has now passed and the CDS Team can confirm a number of bids have been received covering all lots. The evaluations are complete and contract awards will take place in Mid-December at which point the CDS Board will announce the successful contractors.

## **5. Budget Process**

- 5.1 The Chancellor issued his Autumn Statement on 23 November 2016, covering a wide range of issues affecting our communities and public services. A summary of the headlines was circulated to all Councillors following the announcements. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is due mid-December, and will hopefully provide clarity on the level of funding we can expect to receive next year for our own budget planning.
- 5.2 The Secretary of State has also recently confirmed the offer of the multi-year settlement which means our funding through Revenue Support Grant, Rural Service Delivery Grant and Transitional Grant for 2016/2017 to 2019/2020 will reflect the figures published by the Government in February 2016. This will bring some elements of certainty as we plan to mitigate the ongoing reductions to the Government Grant.
- 5.3 Our budget setting process is well underway, and as Members know we must continue to plan and prepare to deliver a balanced budget both in the short and medium term. The latest 2017/2018 budget estimates, savings options and Medium Term Financial Plan forecasts were reported to Corporate Scrutiny on 8 December 2016. Our Transformation Plans have made some headway in reducing the Budget Gap over the medium term, but we will continue to face some difficult choices to fully meet the financial challenge ahead and maintain our investment in the highest priority areas for our communities.
- 5.4 Proposed fees and charges for next year were also reported to the Committee, and are presented for consideration and approval this evening.
- 5.5 The Draft Budgets for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme will be presented to Corporate Scrutiny on 26 January 2017 and then Executive on 9 February prior to consideration for approval at Full Council on 23 February 2017.

## **6. Deane DLO Depot**

- 6.1 I was delighted to attend the official opening of the new Depot on 2 December 2016 when Madam Mayor cut the ribbon to declare it officially open. I was particularly impressed because it was delivered on budget and not just on time, it was handed over two weeks early! A great credit to all those involved in the planning, supervision and construction of the depot in order to deliver this state of the art building.
- 6.2 What was particularly impressive was that full occupation only took place on 1 December and when we visited on the 2 December it was a busy, efficient working environment that was streets ahead of the old accommodation just vacated. From a visitors point of view the transition appeared to be completely seamless and I do appreciate these things do not “just happen” so thank you to all those that obviously planned it so successfully.
- 6.3 It provides an excellent working environment for staff that will deliver efficiencies in the way we operate both in the administration and delivery of services with far more efficient use of space because of the reduced size of the building and site. This development is also a huge vote of confidence in our Council and for the future of Deane DLO.
- 6.4 I was delighted to see that this development and others that are so self-evident on the site, demonstrates the important and positive role Westpark 26 is playing in the support of business and employment opportunities in the region. In addition, the relocation of the DLO has allowed us to sell their former site to Helston Garages Group, which has impressive redevelopment plans that will truly enhance Tone Way as the “Gateway” to Taunton. In doing so it will bring immediate and long term economic benefits to Taunton Deane by ensuring this prestigious business is retained in Taunton.

## **7. Longrun Meadow - New Bridge**

- 7.1 The long-awaited bridge which links Silk Mills through Longrun Meadow to the town centre and Firepool, is now in place. I was very pleased with the efficiency of the contractors and the high quality materials used, which look natural and perfectly in place. The bridge will be welcomed by many in the community as an extension of the walking and cycling routes giving easier access to Longrun Meadow, the town centre and to the paths and wetlands adjacent the park and ride site.
- 7.2 Despite all the trials and tribulations such as bank erosion, causing renegotiation for land acquisition to re-locate the bridge, the need to seek Environment Agency permissions and ecological reports and then applying for

a new planning permission, once these were issues sorted out the bridge construction was achieved very swiftly.

## **8. Firepool, Taunton**

- 8.1 Since the application was refused at Planning Committee on 31 August 2016, we have been working hard with our development partner (St Modwen) and their architects to address the concerns raised, principally regarding the proposed layout of the scheme. The emerging revised layout has been well received and preparations are being made to resubmit a planning application in early 2017.

## **9. Devolution Agenda**

- 9.1 A prospectus setting out our offer and ask of Government has been approved by all organisations and we await the opportunity to discuss with the Secretary of State to try and agree the way forward. Part of this offer is the establishment of a “Combined Authority” as a means of governance of the combined Councils and other organisations. Most Councils remain firmly behind the proposals as they are all about increasing the health and productivity of our communities, why would we not support this?
- 9.2 As and when we receive further contact from the Secretary of State I will update Members accordingly.

## **10. Relocation of 40 Commando and Closure of Norton Manor Camp**

- 10.1 It was deeply disappointing to hear about the loss of the Royal Marines and the impending closure of their long established camp. Although it is good to know they are re-locating to a much larger base, with others, to achieve efficiencies in operations. They have had a long and happy relationship with Taunton since the 1970's and I was proud to be Leader when we granted them the “Freedom of the Borough” in 2003.
- 10.2 We can take heart that this is not a sudden closure, it is planned to take effect in 2028, 12 years away. We must use the time to best advantage and work with Government to ensure best use of the site in the intervening period to make plans that will deliver for our economy, which means investment and employment. In that way we can mitigate what would otherwise be a potentially serious negative impact locally.

## **11. Christmas Sparkle and Taunton Deane and West Somerset Food Banks**

- 11.1 I would like to say a big thank you to all staff for their very generous support in donating selection boxes to the food banks across our areas and toys/gifts to the Christmas Sparkle Organisation, a local charity which was set up to make a difference to local children this Christmas. Christmas Sparkle aim to give a Christmas present to every child aged 0 to 18 living in impoverished circumstances in our community. Thank you again for helping make a difference for a very special local need.

Finally, as it is our last Full Council before Christmas I take this opportunity of wishing all Members, officers and staff across the organisation a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and a big thank you for all that you have done over the year. Enjoy the Christmas break.

Councillor John Williams

# **Council Meeting – 13 December 2016**

## **Report of Councillor Terry Beale – Housing Services**

### **1. Deane Housing Development**

#### **Creechbarrow Road, Taunton – 60 units**

- 1.1 Handover notices received initially for the end of November have now slipped into December and may well move further due to issues with snagging. We are reaching the Christmas break therefore they may roll over into the New Year. The properties will only be advertised once we actually have the keys to minimise resident disruption.
- 1.2 The impact of delays continue to be handled through our Employers Agent with advice being taken from our appointed solicitors.

#### **Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green, Wellington – 26 units**

- 1.3 Ground works have started on site at the bungalow end. The necessary road closure will be put in place in January. Letters notifying residents of the closure are being produced and a press release has been issued.
- 1.4 Completion of the development is estimated in Autumn 2017. We anticipate partial possessions to occur on a rolling programme with the flats coming over last.

#### **Laxton Road, Taunton - 8 units**

- 1.5 Resident consultation and the Lane Estate Annual General Meeting went well. The main concern was who is going into the property and our management of them. We are waiting for one resident in the bungalow nearest the development to return from Australia prior to submitting a planning application.
- 1.6 The Development Team is working on the garage decant enquiries and preparing the tender documents as this scheme will be procured through the Westworks Framework.

#### **12 Moorland Close, Taunton – Community Centre and 3 units plus 4 unit conversion at 121-123 Outer Circle**

- 1.7 A planning application for 12 Moorland Close has recently been submitted and is currently being verified. With regard to 121-123 Outer Circle we are waiting confirmation from Planning on the current designated use and subject to their response we will then discuss obtaining approval through the Permitted Development route - where a planning application would not be required.
- 1.8 The recent Annual General Meeting of the Taunton East Development Trust was extremely positive and encouraging.

## **Oake**

- 1.9 We are currently investigating indicative costings to pilot a repair option for our Woolway properties on this site. Discussions will take place before Christmas to examine the results and look at other possibilities. There will be a full update in early 2017. In the meantime First Step Homes are preparing to submit a planning application for a rural exception site.

## **Offsite Manufacture (OSM)**

- 1.10 Information is being gathered on options and costings for offsite manufacture. This will feed into Officer discussions between Development and Housing Services where solutions to the shared housing /Under 35's issue are being discussed. More details to follow early 2017.

## **Development Pipeline**

- 1.11 There is a range of future development options. Financial and feasibility work is underway to further inform the decision as to which sites to bring forward next.

## **Photovoltaics (PV)**

- 1.12 Six properties are in the process of being sold through Right to Buy but have solar PV installed. Offer letters are being issued by Asset Management to the applicants to establish if they wish to purchase the panels. If they decline we will be removing the systems. We are therefore examining our options for refitting and this includes our own meeting halls.

## **Scooter Stores**

- 1.13 Individual installations continue to be undertaken.
- 1.14 A planning application has been submitted in relation to the rearrangement of scooter stores and bin stores at Kilkenny, Taunton.

## **Parking**

- 1.15 Bulford, Wellington and Polkesfield, Stoke St. Gregory - Tender documents are being prepared with a view to undertake work in early 2017.

## **2. Affordable Housing Delivery**

- 2.1 We are extremely busy across both Council areas to develop affordable housing. We are working hard with the Registered Providers to keep up the momentum of development and discussions are continuing regarding new business and also the next tranche of Housing Authority led schemes.
- 2.2 The 2015/2016 affordable housing completions totaled 222, which exceeded the annual target of 200 homes with a strong affordable housing pipeline continuing to come forward.

### **3. Welfare Reform**

#### **Welfare Reform Visits**

- 3.1 The number of tenants affected this month is 301. 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 As reported to the last Full Council, tenants are still downsizing to more suitable accommodation, however the pace of this continues to be slow but there is evidence now of a levelling out as people are choosing to amend their budgeting to stay in their current accommodation.

#### **Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)**

- 3.3 All affected tenants continued to be offered advice on Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's) and assistance to help them complete the application form.

The DHP budget for 2016/2017 is £150,984 and so far this year 44 tenants have had a successful award.

#### **Universal Credit (UC)**

- 3.4 Full Universal Credit for new applicants has now been introduced. The benefits now rolled up are:-

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

- 3.5 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 manage their claims online.
- 3.6 It is too early to quantify any substantial effects but the system is being closely monitored.

### **4. Anti-Social Behaviour Service**

#### **Performance**

- 4.1 Satisfaction with the service remains high, with above target outcomes. However the level of ASB remains a concern. Discussion are continuing with our partners within the One Teams and indeed beyond to tackle the levels and to look at innovative ways of combating ASB.

4.2 Mental Health issues continue to be dominant and further discussions will be taking place and I will report back progress.

## **5. Deane DLO - Repairs and Maintenance**

The new DLO depot is virtually finished with all the operational matters around 80% complete.

### **Stores**

5.1 The new stores are fully racked out and the stores staff have worked tirelessly to ensure that all the materials and stock are now put away and ready for use. A tool hire section has been created which needs a little more work to it. However it is early days and once additional shelving has been built it will be fit for purpose.

### **Storage Unit**

5.2 This is the large room next to the stores which is being used for all the seasonal /flood prevention items. Staff will spend the next couple of weeks working out what is best for the area and move items where required.

### **Carpenters Work Shop**

5.3 This is now complete and a good job was done by our carpenters to build a work bench to suit. There are a number of new large planers and tools which staff will soon get training on before they can be used.

### **Office Area/Space**

5.4 The desks have now been constructed and the new chairs and computer arms fitted. Each desk with the exception of two has two screens and a unit for logging in.

5.5 Shortly these will be connected to the WIFI system, networked and be ready for use. Telephones are due to arrive shortly. There are a number of storage file systems on each floor for use by staff and a couple of large open cupboards with hangers for staffs coats etc. Each floor has a number of lockers and these are lockable and quite roomy. The break out areas and kitchens have a good number of chairs and tables and with a fitted kitchen/dishwasher/fridge and hot water unit they are a good size.

### **Finally:-**

There are a number of measures within the Autumn Statement that potentially will effect Housing. These include grants which we may be able to access. It is far too early to assess these in detail and I will report back when information is clearer.

One measure which was removed was the 'Pay to Stay' initiative. Although Local Authorities have a discretion to continue as already reported this system would have cost the Authority money to manage and a decision has been taken that Taunton Deane will not introduce discretionary Pay to Stay.

There has been some discussion of late about Rough Sleepers and Homelessness. I am acutely aware of both the issues and I have had a number of meetings internally and with partners on these matters. Work is underway to tie all the aspects together and will be the subject of a briefing and report early in the New Year.

May I take this opportunity to thank all our staff particularly in Housing and Communities for their continued hard work and dedication and wish all Members and officers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Councillor Terry Beale

# **Council Meeting – 13 December 2016**

## **Report of Councillor Patrick Berry – Environmental Services**

### **1. Environmental Health**

Officers in the Environmental Health Team have recently been involved in the following areas of work:

#### **Infectious Diseases**

- 1.1 The Environmental Health Team works closely with Public Health England (PHE) to investigate cases of infectious diseases including food poisoning such as Campylobacter and Salmonella. Recently officers in the team have been involved in two outbreaks of a parasite called Cryptosporidium.
- 1.2 During the outbreak, the Blackbrook Swimming Pool in Taunton and the splash pool at Butlins in Minehead were closed for a short time before being tested and deemed safe again.
- 1.3 Officers with specialist knowledge have visited both pools and risk assessed the management controls on site and provided advice to the pool operators. Officers have also been part of the Outbreak Control Team meetings and provided advice to the public and vulnerable groups that use the pools, such as local schools and toddler groups.

#### **Events**

- 1.4 Officers from Environmental Health and Licensing have recently attended event safety training. As a result we are reviewing how we offer advice to event organisers to ensure they deliver safe events in Taunton Deane. We are also sharing expertise across the County to ensure our approach to promoting safe events is consistent with regard to crowd and traffic control and emergency arrangements.
- 1.5 We are looking forward to an exciting year of events in 2017 including international T20 cricket at the County Ground as well as various music and community events across Taunton Deane and West Somerset.

#### **Environmental Health Reactive Work**

- 1.6 The Environmental Health Team investigate service requests and complaints regarding the following issues -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 Freedom of Information requests. Officers working in food safety respond to issues regarding food premises and complaints about food items including allergens.

## **Ongoing noise investigations**

- 1.7 Currently there are four ongoing noise investigations (Minehead, Norton Fitzwarren, Wellington and Holford) and a prosecution (Taunton). There is also an investigation into odour in Norton Fitzwarren.

## **Food Hygiene Inspections**

- 1.8 The team are working hard to maintain performance in the inspection of food premises across both Council areas. As well as routine inspections, officers also inspected newly opened food businesses. We aim to complete these within 28 days of registration.
- 1.9 In Taunton Deane this financial year we have completed over 200 routine inspections, 40 revisits, 14 rescores and 65 visits to new food businesses that have just opened or changed ownership. In the West Somerset area, 43 routine inspections have been completed, 12 revisits, 4 rescore inspections and 37 inspections of new businesses. On top of this we also assess low risk businesses and have completed another 75 desk top assessments of these businesses in Taunton Deane.

## **Private Water Supplies**

- 1.10 The Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016 came into force in June 2016. Officers in the team have attended training on the new requirements of the regulations. We have recently reviewed the fees and charges with regard to private water supplies to ensure both Councils are recovering their costs. We have two officers involved in this area or work – Simon Moon and David Alford.

## **Pest Control**

- 1.11 Our Pest Control service has been extended into the West Somerset area during 2016, we are able to offer treatments for rats, mice and wasps in domestic premises and also commercial contracts. This is a new service which will be promoted during Spring 2017 and again the fees and charges have been reviewed for 2017 across both Council areas.

## **Dogs and Dog Fouling**

- 1.12 Environmental Health are planning further Dog Action Days in the Spring of 2017 focussing on high risk areas of Taunton Deane and West Somerset where we receive dog fouling complaints. We will be promoting responsible dog ownership including providing advice not only on dog fouling but also keeping dogs under control and microchipping. We also give bags to dog owners to ensure they pick up after their pets.
- 1.13 We continue to have regular quarterly meetings with our dog warden, Laura Linnell of Somerset Dog Warden Service. She is based at St Giles Kennels and it is her services that enables us to ensure the collection of stray dogs is carried out effectively and efficiently in both Council areas.

## **2. Licensing**

### **Performance**

- 2.1 The service has achieved its performance target, of issuing 95% of licences within 14 days, for the first time in 15 months.

### **Staffing**

- 2.2 Recruitment is underway to appoint a part-time Licensing Officer and full time Licensing Assistant. Interviews are to be held in December;

### **Immigration Act 2016**

- 2.3 From the 1 December 2016, Licensing Officers will now be checking with those that are applying for taxi and private hire driver licences to make sure that they have the right to work in the UK. They have been trained by the Home Office in order to identify forged or counterfeited identity documents.

### **Town Centre Licence**

- 2.4 The Licensing Manager is working with the Assistant Director for Business and Development and the Police to progress plans to refresh the Alcohol and Entertainment Licence held by the Council in respect of Taunton Town Centre.
- 2.5 Proposals include identifying licensed streets and spaces where activity is common place, to help to reduce red tape for businesses and the introduction of a requirement for the sellers of alcohol to be supervised by personal alcohol licence holders.

## **3. Deane DLO (Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning)**

- 3.1 Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning - Contract awarded to The Landscape Group. Services have already started in West Somerset.
- 3.2 The commencement date for the services is 1 February 2017 in Taunton Deane.

## **4. Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)**

- 4.1 As part of the ongoing battle to reduce the amount of household waste we send to landfill, a new paint recycling pilot has now commenced for water based paints at the 14 Recycling Centres and two Community Recycling Sites.
- 4.2 If you find that once you have refreshed your living room wall or given your hall walls a makeover, that you still have some water based paint left over,

you now have the option to take it to your local site where it will be accepted for recycling rather than disposal.

- 4.3 The pilot is expected to last for at least six months and will give us an idea of whether the recycling route is a viable option for the future. If you take your water based paints to one of the sites, please let the staff know and they will direct you to the appropriate container. Just as a reminder, it is still far better to offer your left over paint to someone else who may be able to make use of it rather than taking it to one of the sites.
- 4.4 On the 28 and 30 November 2016, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and the Executive have both endorsed a proposal for the SWP to make several changes to the way we collect and sort our refuse and recycling materials.
- 4.5 The proposal will go before the Somerset Waste Board in a few days but is entirely dependent on all the partner Councils and Somerset County Council agreeing to proceed. The full details will be released within a few weeks but would, if accepted, increase the types of material that can be recycled and bring changes to the collection schedules.
- 4.6 These changes would come at a time when the collection trucks are at the end of their working lives and need replacement. The new trucks would be configured differently to take account for example of the ever increasing amount of card that we throw away.
- 4.7 One of the most important aims for this change is to increase the amount of waste that we recycle. It is estimated that although we do recycle a large amount of food waste, this is only 50% of the amount that is thrown away. i.e. if every one recycled all of their waste food the quantity collected each week would double. This would take thousands of tons out of landfill and avoid paying the Landfill Tax of over £100 per ton on that weight. The estimated savings for SWP and this council are considerable.
- 4.8 According to the national averages the average household uses 490 plastic bottles every year but only puts 270 in to the recycler. This must mean that 220 are put in with the refuse. SWP will take all kinds of plastic bottles including cleaning product, cosmetic and grooming product bottles. They do need to be empty and preferably rinsed. All tops should be put in the refuse.

## **5. Crematorium**

- 5.1 The service continues as usual. The new Manager has been appointed. He will be in place this month.....probably within the next few days.
- 5.2 The Assistant Director - Operational Delivery, Chris Hall, has supported the service up to now and we are grateful for his extra effort thereby ensuring a continuing smooth service. We are also grateful to the current staff for also making sure that the customers received the usual high quality service.

Councillor Patrick Berry

# **Council Meeting – 13 December 2016**

## **Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts, Tourism and Communications**

### **Section 1: Business Development and Inward Investment Marketing**

#### **Support for Digital Innovation**

- 1.1 Further to my report to the last meeting, I was extremely pleased with reports of the Taunton Digi event, held at The County Ground on the 9 November 2016, attended by the Leader. Delivered jointly by the Council with Santander Bank and The Claims Consortium Group, the event was attended by around 100 local and national businesses with an interest in the digital revolution.
- 1.2 The event was supported by speakers and exhibitors from a range of global businesses in the banking, IT and telecoms sectors, such as IBM, Samsung and Vodafone. Delegates learned about impending revolutions in the banking and accountancy sectors, and gained insights to changing digital technologies, being developed by global leaders in this field.
- 1.3 The event provided an opportunity for us to consult on Taunton's own Digital Prospectus, which has been produced in recent months alongside a group of local business leaders. It provides a vision and route map for Taunton to develop its own digital cluster, building on existing firms but also attracting new investors in new digital and data sectors.
- 1.4 The Taunton Digital Prospectus will be finalised over the next couple of months.

#### **BREXIT Research**

- 1.5 The Council recently commissioned consultants to carry out research amongst businesses on the effects of the decision to leave the European Union (EU). The research drew on interviews with 25 local larger businesses and business representative bodies, and it has given the Council some valuable insights to how businesses feel about the impending Brexit. The research explored the support that businesses need from local and national Government in preparing for Brexit.
- 1.6 Both businesses and stakeholders found it particularly difficult to forecast the impact of Brexit on their business, as there remains considerable uncertainty over key aspects of Brexit policy. Businesses highlighted that this made it very difficult for them to plan beyond the immediate period.
- 1.7 In summary, the research suggests that the key risks for Taunton Deane area

are:-

- **Reduction in the ability to recruit staff/labour from EU countries** – particularly of relevance to tourism, construction, manufacturing and food processing.
- **Reduction in the ability to trade freely with the EU** – Businesses which exported to the EU were concerned about the imposition of tariffs and other barriers to trade with the EU.
- **Wider recession/inflation** – A number of businesses highlighted concerns about inflationary pressures arising from the higher costs of imports.

1.8 The research drew upon officers strong relationships with our local business leaders. It flagged up particular issues relating to individual consultees, such as the need for support with skills development and recruitment as well as plans for growth and investment. Officers will follow up those issues with each consultee individually.

If you would like to receive a digital version of the Brexit study please contact [ecdev@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:ecdev@tauntondeane.gov.uk).

### **Taunton Deane Business Awards 2017**

- 1.9 I am really pleased to have offered the Council's support towards the 2017 Taunton Deane Business Awards. We will be one of two main sponsors for the awards, which draws out and highlights some of the amazing success stories amongst our business community. The programme will be rolled out over the next few months, with the finals ceremony taking place at the end of June next year. It will feature interesting new categories and opportunities for local businesses to shine.
- 1.10 This is an excellent opportunity to celebrate Taunton's businesses and I would urge colleagues to spread the word and encourage local business owners to enter. For more information take a look at <http://www.tauntondeanebusinessawards.co.uk/>

### **Small Business Saturday 2016**

- 1.10 Small Business Saturday is a national grassroots non-political campaign, which highlights small business success and encourages consumers to 'shop local'. It is predominately an online marketing opportunity to encourage footfall through the door. This year the event was held on Saturday, 3 December 2016.
- 1.11 The Council lends its support to the campaign in order to support our local small businesses. This year our activities included:-

- (a) Social media campaign. The @TauntonBusiness twitter banner represented the business and a tweet complimented facts. This is the first year we have done this and seven businesses signed up for the opportunity. The hashtag #TheDeaneSBS was also set-up this year which we hope to use annually. We doubled our Twitter impressions with 22,500 impressions – 1,442 people then went on to look around our business profile and we gained 70 new followers. Businesses we spoke to directly were very excited with the free marketing and 90% retweeted to their audiences.
- (b) PR to raise awareness and encourage those not on social media platforms through local printed media. An advertisement was placed in the County Gazette on the Thursday beforehand reading '*Put your money where your house is, shop local this weekend*'.
- (b) Small Business Saturday information was distributed throughout Taunton, Wiveliscombe and Wellington by officers in advance of the day to encourage businesses to take part. Businesses in Bath Place ran a Christmas prize hamper competition and other shops created their own hashtags and marketing.

## **Section 2: Destination, Events, Retail Marketing and Visitor Centre**

### **Destination Marketing**

- 2.1 A meeting was held between officers and the major attractions and hotels in Taunton Deane last month to discuss ways of working together. It is intended a joint programme of activities will be developed during 2017. A visitor guide for the area has been commissioned and will be published in the New Year. Officers continue to work with Visit Somerset and South West partners on tourism initiatives and campaigns.
- 2.2 The [www.visitsomerset.co.uk/Taunton](http://www.visitsomerset.co.uk/Taunton) destination website continues to be popular, with over 60,000 unique web visits during October and November.
- 2.3 Social media continues to be very popular, the @moreTaunton accounts on Facebook currently has over 5,700 likes, Instagram nearly 1,000 followers and Twitter over 5,800 followers and is being used to promote attractions, events, retail, special offers and services available in the Visitor Centre.

### **Events**

- 2.4 The marketing team have supported Christmas this year, this has included installation of the Christmas lights in East Street, High Street and North Street; working with Go Create, Langford Lakes and Taunton Farmers Market to deliver and decorate the Christmas Tree outside of the Market House; Christmas lights and a new tree in Castle Green, with the addition of lights outside the new Visitor Centre and a new Bow and light projector on the front of the Market House.

- 2.5 Support for and marketing of the events taking place over Christmas, this has included creation of a Christmas section on the destination website and regular social media activity. Posters and leaflets in rotundas and in the Visitor Centre to promote Christmas events and the “Free after 3” car park initiative. Advertisements on Apple FM, Tone FM and on the back of car park tickets, within the Lamp magazine, Primary Times, Somerset Leveller, Suited and Booted, Taunton Living, What’s On Somerset directing people to the destination website, social media and visitor centre for more information.
- 2.6 The team have joined the Local Authority Event Organisers Group which is proving to be valuable in learning best practice and developing new event ideas. Meetings have been held with existing and new event organisers, a number of new events which it is hoped to bring to the area in 2017, including plans for a Somerset Day event in Taunton.

### **Retail Marketing**

- 2.7 The Marketing Team continue to support the town centre, with daily promotion of businesses, offers and reasons to come and shop on social media. Best practice on town centres is being developed through membership of the Association of Town Centre Management group.
- 2.8 Regular account management meetings are being held with businesses within the town centre, with a monthly e-newsletter sent out to all town centre contacts.
- 2.9 An updated version of the Town Centre independent retail map was produced for Small Business Saturday, with dedicated social media content to promote shopping local within Taunton.
- 2.10 In preparation of the installation of town centre Wi-Fi, social media channels @moreWellington and @moreWivey have been created, our marketing team are sharing the use of these channels with Business Groups and the Town Councils in the two towns.

### **Visitor Centre**

- 2.11 In October the Visitor Centre were proud recipients of a Gold Award for Visitor Information Provider at the first Bath, Bristol and Somerset Tourism Awards, the team have now made it through the South West Tourism Excellence Awards. We wish them well at the Finals on the 2 February 2017.
- 2.12 The Cards for Good Causes (CFGC) Charity Christmas Shop is currently being hosted within the centre. The new Chief Executive of CFGC has visited, as has the Mayor of Taunton Deane and Widow Twankey from the Shooting Stars Pantomime Company all of whom have been very complimentary and have helped publicise the shop. If you have not been yet, this is the place to get your Christmas cards and stamps.

- 2.13 Two Italian students have been working in the office this autumn and the Visitor Centre Team are planning to welcome other overseas students in the future.
- 2.14 Popular social media competitions have been organised by the team, supported by prizes donated by businesses in the town centre and the area, a 24 day Advert competition is currently being run on the @moreTaunton Facebook page.

## **Section 3: Town Centre Regeneration**

### **Coal Orchard Redevelopment**

- 3.1 The planning application for a mixed use scheme is currently progressing through the planning process. I understand that this application should now be considered in January by the Planning Committee.
- 3.2 Officers intend taking a report to the January Executive to examine the Business Case, due diligence and risks, and will be seeking borrowing approvals to be put into place for funding the preferred development option.
- 3.3 The case once approved by Executive will travel on to the next available Council meeting for inclusion within the Council's Budget. In parallel, once the Executive has taken its decision, officers will commence procurement and legal work to create a development agreement against the preferred option.
- 3.4 We are also commencing work on a detailed business case for expansion of The Brewhouse Theatre which follows up on the venue study delivered by our partners at Arts Taunton. This work will be carried out in tandem with the ongoing outline planning application.

### **Wi-Fi in Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe**

- 3.5 A contractor was appointed in the summer to design a suitable scheme for the three towns and to roll out the installation of free Wi-Fi in the centre of each town.
- 3.6 The installation has been slower than expected due to a number of practical issues around consenting but we expect the system to be available shortly to users.

## **Section 4: Asset Management Service General Fund Activities**

- 4.1 The past three months have continued to be busy within the General Fund Asset Management work and there have been a number of key staff changes. Adrian Priest had been with the Council for many years most recently as Principal Estates Surveyor and Estates Team Leader has left and been replaced with an interim replacement prior to this key post being re-advertised

early in the New Year. A new permanent Assistant Valuer has also taken up post along with a new Compliance Technician.

- 4.2 The Asset Management Service has now relocated to join Property Services on the ground floor of The Deane House and working side-by-side is a key step in terms of delivering the new structure and new ways of working within Property and Development.

### **Estate Management Work**

- 4.3 This Estate Management Team deals with day-to-day Estate Management, Valuation and Lease Event Management work. We are continuing to see a trend in the number of live projects reducing – now at less than 150 due to the backlog of projects reducing as a result of additional resource being committed and changes in the management of these projects.

- 4.4 This will enable the individual Surveyors to focus on a smaller number of live projects at any one time and by doing so ensuring improved turnaround times. This is being managed closely to ensure this trend does not reverse.

- 4.5 Progress on key projects is now being reported weekly to the Leader, Portfolio Holder and Senior Officers. Current and significant projects include:-

- Former Deane DLO site on Tone Way, Taunton - A particularly significant project is the sale of the existing DLO site which will result in the exciting redevelopment of this area. Following the satisfying of contractual conditions, including most significantly the move to the new premises at Westpark in Wellington, this sale will now complete in December 2016.
- Former Mike Chedzoy premises off Greenbrook Terrace, Taunton – Concerns around the re-negotiation of timescales by the proposed purchaser resulted in this property being re-tendered. Offers now received and due diligence taking place prior to recommending how to proceed. Of paramount importance to all is the importance of ensuring a development progresses as quickly as is practical.
- Former Park Keepers Cottage, 277 Cheddon Road, Taunton – This property is being taken to auction now early in the New Year to achieve greatest market interest. The Auctioneer has been instructed and the legal pack is being finalised. Following discussion with the Planning Officers, Asset Management are proceeding as initially intended without a planning consent for new dwellings within the site.
- Sale of land at Frobisher Way, Taunton – A report is going to the Executive early in the New Year to seek a resolution to negotiate with special purchasers with the aim of achieving a capital receipt in excess of market value. Should we fail to reach agreement then the site will be marketed more widely.

### **Asset Data and Compliance Work**

- 4.6 Significant work is continuing in respect of surveying the General Fund stock to develop comprehensive stock condition data of a level not had before. This will provide valuable data in respect of replacement cost of building components (roofs, windows etc) over the next 30 years together with indicative cyclical and reactive maintenance requirements to better plan future programmes and spend on assets.
- 4.7 A further benefit of having this data is that it will enable the performance of individual assets to be measured with the resulting appraisal tool being developed considering costs alongside income at individual asset level enabling the Net Present Value of assets to be known along with valuable cashflow data during that 30 year period.
- 4.8 This is a level of sophistication not previously applied to the General Fund portfolio and will be key in enabling active asset management of these assets in the future through understanding each asset's performance, and through this greatly assisting in decision making by providing robust data to support recommendations around investment, disposal or change of use.
- 4.9 Almost all surveys are now complete with just those of land still required and expected to be completed by mid-January. The wider performance work will take place during January and February.
- 4.10 As for the landlord, Health and Safety compliance work across the General Fund portfolio, we are continuing to gather data (on asbestos, servicing, fire risk assessments, legionella testing, electrical safety etc) and where necessary commissioning further works. The programme over the next five years is divided into three month blocks and the first such block was satisfactorily concluded on 31 October 2016.
- 4.11 Progress continues to be made on procuring a comprehensive Asset Management System to improve the availability and accessibility of data, improve and make much easier the reporting, improve efficiencies and to bring in line with the Housing Revenue Account portfolio.

## **Section 5: Media, Marketing and External Communications**

- 5.1 Storm Angus that battered the South West last month helped to underline the importance of social media for Taunton Deane – and other authorities and agencies.
- 5.2 Communications were maintained, principally via Twitter, and we were able to help Somerset Waste Partnership publicise missed waste/recycling collections due to flooded roads and fallen trees.
- 5.3 We were also able to signpost residents to the latest updates on the travel situation via Somerset County Council's Travel Somerset website and Twitter account. As a result our following showed an increase.

- 5.4 We also took part in the Local Government Association's annual "Our Day" Twitterthon with some great support from colleagues – special thanks to the Mayor for providing so many tweets and photos.
- 5.5 As well as harnessing social media, we continue to provide proactive and reactive communications, responding to media queries and issuing a wide variety of press releases.
- 5.6 We are currently reassessing how we can improve communications, particularly directly to our residents. This is a work in progress.

### **Appointment of Marketing and Communications Partner**

- 5.7 Coast Communications has recently been appointed to become the marketing and communications partner for Taunton's growth and inward investment programme. Coast has extensive experience of a major inward investment programmes and also work closely with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership, Chambers of Commerce and business organisations across the region.
- 5.8 Coast's current focus is to bring together the major infrastructure and growth investments planned or under way, with the strong attributes of the County Town as an investment destination, to develop a unique marketing proposition for Taunton that is shared by the Council and key partners.
- 5.9 This will form the basis of targeted campaigns to generate support for the growth programme and to promote Taunton to a wider audience as an investment destination. Coast will be working in partnership with the Council's Growth and Development Team at every stage and progress will be reported regularly through the Growth Steering Group of elected Members.
- 5.10 Members may recall that a Peer Challenge of the Council's growth and development aspirations was carried out by the Local Government Association during the summer of 2015. This provided a strong endorsement of the progress being made, with numerous major investments in the Taunton Town Centre and beyond providing an excellent platform for a renewed focus on marketing and promotional activity. Coast's appointment is an important part of that renewed focus.

Councillor Mark Edwards

# **Council Meeting – 13 December 2016**

## **Report of Councillor Roger Habgood – Planning Policy and Transportation**

### **1. Planning Policy**

#### **Core Strategy**

- 1.1 The Core Strategy adopted by this Council for the period 2011- 2028 sets out the vision for Taunton Deane and the strategic objectives, spatial strategies and policies for meeting that vision.
- 1.2 It specifies the locations and quantity of growth to be accommodated within Taunton Deane up to 2028 and identifies the strategic site allocations for developments over five hectares, including mixed-use urban extensions. Work on revising the Core Strategy has ostensibly begun this process which is extensive and will take up to 18 months to complete.

#### **Site Allocation Development Management Plan (SADMP)**

- 1.3 This document that sets out the site allocations, has been subject to extensive consultation and has now been through examination having very recently been passed by the Inspector. The SADMP (will presumably) be adopted at this meeting. The culmination of months of work.

#### **Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)**

- 1.4 The SHMA, one of the components of the evidence base to inform any new policy work has recently been held.

#### **Employment Retail and Leisure Study**

- 1.5 Officers are in the process of finalising a brief for another key commission: The Employment and Retail and Leisure Study.

#### **Local Development Scheme**

- 1.6 Officers will put together a formalised project plan (a review of the Core Strategy Policies and those relating to the town centre) early in the New Year through an update of the Local Development Scheme.

#### **Local Development Order (LDO)**

- 1.7 LDO's are made by Local Planning Authorities and give a grant of planning permission to specific types of development within a defined area. They

streamline the planning process, they create certainty and save time and money for those involved.

- 1.8 Work on the LDO for Junction 25 continues. The Council's consultants have recently taken early ideas through the Design Review Panel. The feedback received has helped the evolution of design concepts.
- 1.9 Early consultation will now take place in March 2017. Technical work to support the Junction 25 improvements road application, an important dependency for the LDO, has led to a short but prudent delay.

## **2. Neighbourhood Planning**

### **Trull and Staplehay**

- 2.1 Following the acceptance of the Independence Examiners report on the Neighbourhood Plan we are working with Trull Parish Council on how to take forward the plan for their area.

### **Three more plans**

- 2.2 There are another three Neighbourhood Plans being progressed in Taunton Deane. Creech St Michael and Ruishton and Thornfalcon are at the early stages of producing a Neighbourhood Plan. They are working with their communities - utilising parish magazines, Village Days, and questionnaires - to identify issues and opportunities in their area that their Plan could address.
- 2.3 West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine are further along the process. Having gathered information from their community through exhibitions and surveys at the beginning of the year, and looked at the objective data associated with those topics, they are drafting policies for the Plan. They are exploring a range of policies; from mix of housing types to self-build plots, bus shelters to dark skies, employment start-up units to conversion of redundant farm buildings.

### **Community Council for Somerset Sessions**

- 2.4 Taunton Deane's Policy Officers have supported two workshops on Neighbourhood Planning and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) organised by the Community Council for Somerset. These sessions were open to Parish Councils and community groups.
- 2.5 Each session explored neighbourhood planning and CIL - stages and processes, what the advantages and disadvantages were, what other options there are to influence development and provide community infrastructure. They have been very well attended and we have received very positive feedback on them.

## **3. Placemaking**

## **Garden Town Bid**

- 3.1 In response to a call for expressions of interests in garden settlements a bid has been submitted to Government for Garden Town Status. Taunton Deane is projected to outstrip all other districts / boroughs in Somerset in terms of job growth. Garden Town status would further enhance Taunton as the County Town. Somerset County Council Leader John Osman and Taunton Deane MP Rebecca Pow have contributed and have supported our Bid.
- 3.2 The concepts of Garden Town, which combines the best of town and country living, have been successfully demonstrated by places such as Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City. Garden Towns remain as relevant today as when first introduced more than 100 years ago.
- 3.3 If successful, the bid will enable further steps to be taken in delivering unique settings, coordinating landscape wildlife and leisure in a person friendly environment and in supporting the vision and aspirations of the town.
- 3.4 The outcome of the bid is eagerly awaited.

## **4. Major planning applications**

### **Firepool**

- 4.1 The Planning Team continue to discuss revised proposals with St Modwen regarding the Firepool application which should be submitted in the New Year.

### **Coal Orchard**

- 4.2 The planning application has been received and is being considered. The application is scheduled to be referred to the Planning Committee in January.

### **Staplegrove**

- 4.3 The promoters of the two sites at Staplegrove have submitted a viability case, which is currently being assessed. Further information has been requested in order to assess the viability case. The earliest timescale that the applications will be referred to the Planning Committee is January.

## **Planning Performance Government proposal for change**

- 4.4 The Government has laid before Parliament a document setting out the criteria that the Secretary of State intends to use for designating a Local Planning Authority as underperforming, and the thresholds that authorities will be assessed against.

4.5 The document sets out that the Government intends to assess authorities' performance in determining planning applications during the first quarter of 2017. The document confirms that the Government will consider performance in respect of applications for major and non-major development separately, and sets the thresholds for designation as follows:-

For speed of decisions:

- For applications for major development: less than 50% of an authority's decisions made within the statutory determination period or such extended period as has been agreed in writing with the applicant. The threshold will rise to 60% in 2018.
- For applications for non-major development: less than 65% of an authority's decisions made within the statutory determination period or such extended period as has been agreed in writing with the applicant. The threshold will rise to 70% in 2018.

4.6 The speed for determining major applications is a performance measurement that has been on-going for some time and the threshold has been raised on a regular basis to improve performance nationally.

4.7 The speed for determining non-major development is a new performance measurement that includes a range of development types.

4.8 Currently Taunton Deane Borough Council are dealing with 85% of major applications within time and 81% of non-major applications.

## **5. Heritage Training**

5.1 A very helpful first session of Heritage Training for Members was held recently and it was considered helpful by Borough and Parish Councillors alike. It was also a helpful introduction for Tony Garratt our new Heritage Officer.

## **6. Planning Staffing**

6.1 The Planning Enforcement Team is now fully staffed. Chris Horan, the temporary Enforcement Officer who has been with us for over 18 months will be leaving at Christmas and we are grateful for his support and the assistance that he has brought to the team.

6.2 Jo Williams has settled in and working well with Ann Dunford in forming our enforcement team.

## **7. Transportation**

### **Car Parking Performance**

- 7.1 Car park utilisation remains buoyant across Taunton Deane's Car Parks. The general pattern is one of a reduction in longer term parking in Shopper Car Parks that has freed up spaces for shoppers, a key objective met.

## **Car Park Works and Updates**

### **Orchard Car Park**

- 7.2 Following a structural inspection report carried out earlier this year, technical work is continuing to prioritise the outstanding repair works.
- 7.3 Car Park Drainage - Action has been taken to clear the drainage system for the whole car park.
- 7.4 Safer Parking Award Scheme – 'Park Mark' – During November the British Parking Association (BPA) carried out an unscheduled review and inspection. The BPA confirmed that The Orchard Car Park "continues to meet the Park Mark standards and there were no issues which would give any cause for concern".

### **Wood Street Car Park**

- 7.5 An area of Wood Street Car Park has been resurfaced and relined following the removal of a tree trunks and roots which had caused damage to the asphalt.
- 7.6 The upgrade of the Wood Street car park is now fully integrated with the Variable Message Signing and Pay on Foot projects. The Enfield, Castle Street, Tangier and Canon Street Car Parks will all have maintenance works to boundary fences and entrances to support the introduction of Pay on Foot.

### **High Street Car Park**

- 7.7 Security Issues - There have been recent security issues that senior officers are working to resolve as they are associated with homeless sleeping.
- 7.8 Stair well Painting - The stairwells have also just been painted in the High Street Car Park.

### **LED Lighting**

- 7.9 Deane DLO are replacing all car park lighting with LED bulbs as part of the maintenance programme.

### **Signage**

- 7.10 New car park entrance signage is due early in the New Year. The new "Have you Paid", reminder signs are in place.

## **Re-lining**

7.11 A Programme of relining car parks across Taunton Deane has commenced.

## **Car Park Capacity - A Comparison**

Bridgwater	376	(plus 261 which are currently closed until October 2017)
Street	2014	
Yeovil	1815	
Taunton	3000	

## **8. Cycling**

- 8.1 The formation of the Taunton Area Cycling Campaign (TACC) is welcomed. The group has carried out a survey and put together a list of hotspots that require attention in order to improve cycling for our residents. As we have heard, TACC is an amalgam of cycling groups enabling a coherent voice to promote cycling and sustainability in the Taunton Area.
- 8.2 I put questions to County Colleagues last week at its Full Council meeting together with TACC members. I look forward to building the relationship with County Colleagues and the TACC group.

I wish one and all health and happiness this Christmas.

Councillor Roger Habgood

# **Council Meeting – 13 December 2016**

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

### **1. Parks**

- 1.1 Friends of Wellington Park – I was pleased to attend the AGM of Friends of Wellington Park along with Nick Whitmore from the Parks Dept. It was a very well attended meeting, showing how well supported the park in Wellington is and there was lots of lively discussion about plans for next years events.
- 1.2 Tiverton in Bloom – In November I attend the Presentation evening of Tiverton in Bloom with Shaun Cregan our Bloom co-ordinator. Shaun was there with his SW in Bloom hat on and gave a short overview from SW and hints to Tiverton for next year. I had been invited to receive thanks from Tiverton for the excellent quality plants we supply to them – it is much appreciated to hear they are so happy with our product. It was a lovely evening seeing awards to so many members of their community and local business's who really engage and support the town.
- 1.3 DLO move - The depot move is well under way as I write this – driving past the deport site is quite empty and eerie. Priory Depot has been in operation for 51 years and has over time become less and less suitable for the council's needs. We look forward to settling in to our new home.
- 1.4 The flooding at the beginning of last week did necessitate the brief closure of Vivary Park on safety grounds but this was only for a couple of hours on Monday afternoon.
- 1.5 Fields in Trust – The Fields in Trust Awards took part on 30<sup>th</sup> November and we were one of six Local Authorities recognised in the category for Partner of the Year (no single winner) and Hamilton Gault Park was recognised as one of the Showcase Centenary Fields (1 of only 8 in the country that achieved this accolade). We are very proud to be recognised by such a well respected organisation.

### **2. Play and Leisure**

#### **Focus on Petanque**

- 2.1 The Wellington Petanque Terrain Official Opened on Thursday 3 November 2016 by both the Mayor of Taunton Deane and the Mayor of Wellington.

- 2.2 What is Petanque.... Well it's a form of Boules that is played in teams, and the first team to get to score 13 wins " Simple que ca"!!! (simple as that!)
- 2.3 It was a chilly day but what a huge turn out – around 30 guests including members of the U3A, Honiton Petanque Club and BBC Radio Somerset. (who did a broadcast later on that day which was very informative)
- 2.4 Warming refreshments were being served by the Wellington Basin volunteer group which generated lots of chatter about the new facility and its usage potential.
- 2.5 Great fun was had playing an informal game of Petanque, connections were made and plans being made for games being organised on a regular basis – SUCCESS!!!
- 2.6 The locals were very enthusiastic and hopefully this is a facility that can be used by ALL ages at all times – as sets of boules can be hired from the Sports Centre.

### **3. Tone Leisure (Taunton Deane) Limited Activities**

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

#### **Health and Sport Development**

- 3.1 **Project Wellington** - An October half-term autumn fun day was held in partnership with Taunton Deane Borough Council, Knightstone, Get Set services and Wellington ONE team. 167 children and parents registered on the day at Cades Farm Play Area.
- 3.2 **National Older People's Day** - 300 older people attended this event, which was held on Saturday, 1 October 2016 at The Brewhouse Theatre. Tone Leisure's tailored products for older adults were promoted, for example, Health Walks, Walking Football, Forever Active and Nordic Walking.
- 3.3 Tone led Outreach after school football sessions, in partnership with the Council's Wellington Community Officer in Priory, Wellington. These were run for four weeks with a core group of 10 children attending.
- 3.4 Community engagement sessions were run during October half-term in Viridor Green Neighbourhood Park in partnership with Taunton Deane Borough Council and Knightstone as a way of supporting those affected by the loss of the play area due to the Creechbarrow Road project.
- 3.5 **Flexercise Training** - Two Flexercise leader workshops have been run in the past quarter, resulting in the training of 16 staff and volunteers in Taunton Deane to deliver in their community or care homes. Tone also ran a refresher Flexercise workshop in partnership with Age UK for 10 staff to further expand their skills and knowledge.

- 3.6 **Learning Disability Sessions in Partnership with Future4 Resource Centre, Roman Road** - Through funding from Somerset Skills and Learning 16 adults with learning difficulties from Six Acres Future4 Centre have enjoyed six weeks of swimming at Blackbrook Pavilion and Health/Nature walks in their local community. The staff at Blackbrook are supporting these service users to continue to keep active by regularly attending these sessions each week. The next stage of the project will enable more learners to experience trampolining and Zumba activities.
- 3.7 **Health Walks** - This programme continues to grow into the winter season. So far this year 334 people have participated in Tone's Taunton based Walk Well scheme and 100 new walkers have registered.
- 3.8 **This Girl Can Run** - Tone now have a beginners ladies running group at each of the three main leisure centres; many of these ladies are completely new to exercise and running. Attendance averages eight ladies per group each week and some ladies that started with a target of running 5K have now completed the Taunton 10K.
- 3.9 **Bumps and Beyond** - This partnership project, with the NHS Midwifery Team at Musgrove Park Hospital and Knightstone Housing Association, has seen over 80 pregnant ladies and 20 mums and babies access Tone's tailored ante/postnatal fitness classes, which include Aquanatal, Yopalates and pregnancy circuits.

Merry Christmas greetings to you and your families.

Councillor Catherine Herbert

# Council Meeting – 13 December 2016

## Report of Councillor Richard Parrish – Corporate Resources

### 1. Legal Services

- 1.1 The Law and Governance SHAPE Legal Services project continues to be busy in delivering services on behalf of the Council, with the latest figures set out below. The Partnership is currently recruiting to fill some vacant posts and Taunton Deane officers are actively involved in this process.

Category	Sub-Category	No. of Referrals TDBC
Commercial, Contracts and Procurement	Advice – existing contracts	
	Drafting and negotiation of new contracts	5
	State Aid	
Employment	Advice on Employment Law & Procedures	1
	TUPE	
Enforcement/ Prosecutions	Environmental	
	Housing	1
	Planning enforcement	1
	Statutory and other nuisance	1
Governance	Constitution	2
	Corporate/Policy advice	1
Housing	General advice on all aspects of housing including policy and tenancy agreements	4
	Homelessness	
Information and Complaints	Legal advice on FOIA, DPA SAR and EIR requests and policies	
	Corporate complaints and Ombudsman investigations	
Licensing	Advice	
	Attendance at licensing committee and sub-committees	1
	Advice and conduct of proceedings in relation to negligence	1

Litigation	Commercial litigation	1
	Debt recovery	1
Litigation contd.	Housing/property repossessions & advice	10
	Judicial review and defending civil claims	1
	Personal Injury	
	Statutory appeals	1
	Trespass	3
Planning	Advice on town and country planning matters	5
	Lawful Development Certificates (CLUEDs and CLOPUDs)	5
	Compulsory purchase	1
	Conservation Areas (Order and enforcement) plus Article 4 Directions	
	Other orders etc. under the Localism Act 2011	
	Public Inquiries and Appeals	
	Section 106 Planning Obligations, Enforcement Notices and Stop Notices	8
	Tree Preservation Orders	
Property	Agreements	6
	Leases	5
	Licences	1
	Property law advice	10
	Purchases	
	Right to buy	23
	Sales	6
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>109</b>

## 2. Electoral Services

- 2.1 In addition to the ongoing Electoral Register Canvass work and starting to prepare for the 2017 Somerset County Council Elections, as you will be aware, there is a by-election to be held in the Blackdown Ward to be held on 15 December, 2016.

### **3. Democratic Services**

- 3.1 This is a busy time of year with the team supporting key functions such as the Remembrance Commemorations in November and an increasingly hectic time for the Mayor in the build up to Christmas. In addition, hopefully many of you will have attended our function immediately before the Council meeting at the Somerset County Cricket Club to celebrate our successful local Olympian and Para-Olympian.
- 3.2 On the staff side, I am pleased to confirm that the vacant Democratic Services Officer position has been filled by Clare Rendell who took up the position early in December. I should also like to congratulate Emily McGuinness, the Democratic Services Co-ordinator who has been successful in obtaining one of the new Senior Transformation Project Lead roles. This does mean that arrangements will need to be put in respect of the Democratic Services Team to cover for this temporary transfer.

### **4. Corporate Services**

#### **4.1 Corporate Strategy and Performance**

- Quarter 2 performance reports were presented to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and the Executive during October and November.
- Complaints handling training workshops were delivered in October for the Housing and Property services.
- A 'For information' report is to be provided to Corporate Scrutiny Members to consider on 8 December concerning complaints handling performance. Outcomes from Corporate Scrutiny are to be reported to Council at a later date.
- Renewal of Taunton Deane Members' Data Protection registrations are being prepared in advance of the December renewal.

#### **4.2 Customer Contact Service**

- A Service Level Agreement is in place with Somerset County Council (SCC) for a 12 month contract from 1 December.
- A meeting has been held with SCC to discuss the Interim Customer Relationship Management system, details will be reported on completion of the protocol.

#### **4.3 Facilities Management (FM)**

- Pool Vehicles – FM staff have been heavily involved in the implementation from 1 October 2016 of the Pool Vehicle Scheme roll out, setting up a new

process for Licence checking of staff, training of the Business Support Teams to manage their respective 'service' vehicles and generally working hard to make it all happen for the authority, both at The Deane House and West Somerset House.

- Accommodation moves – We have co-ordinated the Southwest One (SWO) returning services back to The Deane House. Returning staff and some that have not worked for the Council directly have been welcomed to The Deane House and I have been pleased to attend a welcome session and meet those involved.
- Deane DLO New site – We have been producing ID cards for all the DLO staff ready for occupation of the new site in December. We have also been involved in setting up fire procedures for this site in conjunction with the on-site manager.
- Staff Car Parking – We are currently working with HR and the Joint Management Team to resolve the current overcrowding in the staff car park.

#### 4.4 HR and Organisational Development

- Return of SWO services – The process of support to returning secondees is continuing and management of the TUPE transfer process for SWO directly hired and one SCC employee is being implemented. Managers are being supported to develop their new structures to accommodate staff and the process to ensure that correct IT access/ payroll processes have been completed. Delivery of HR induction to secondees/ transferees continues.
- The recruitment service returned in house from 1 December 2016 with knowledge transfer completed and internal processes reviewed. One secondee has returned from SWO to support this service.
- Deane DLO Move to Wellington – Managers are being supported with implementing the changes to staff travel and work locations. Training has been delivered to managers on the new depot and systems of working
- Agency workers – A report was presented to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 17 November 2016. Additional work is being done in response to queries raised by Members. A report is to go back to Scrutiny early next year with recommendations for the Executive to consider on how to reduce spend and number of workers.
- New Payroll and HR system – The team have attended 7 days on site training. Build of the new system is currently underway and the data migration is on target for early January.

- Absence – Quarter 2. The performance indicator was 3.45 days against the 6.9 days per annum predicted – This is lower than the same period last year but Quarters 3 and 4 normally has the highest absence rates due to winter ailments. We have had a number of employees on long-term absence return to work recently and currently have 17 long term sick cases which we are supporting.
- The HR team are in the process of sorting out the annual flu vaccination programme (135 employees).
- Transformation Project – Attendance at Ignite sessions to understand HR and Organisational Development work stream and project requirements has taken place.

#### 4.5 **ICT and Information**

- Westpark Depot Move – The communications link to The Deane House and the new Cloud Hosted Phone system are now in place, with configuration currently underway. Desktop computers have been installed; telephones were installed on 30 November. Currently on target for staff to move in as planned.
- SWO Service Exit – Taunton Deane ICT Secondees returned to The Deane House during the week commencing 21 November 2016 and the Service Desk transferred from SWO on 24 November. Stabilisation of service is underway during the non-critical change freeze.
- Public Services Network (PSN) – Preparation is underway for the annual PSN audit in January
- ICT Strategy – The final version is now being taken through the approvals process – a meeting is scheduled for 8 December to discuss this further

#### 4.6 **SWO Exit and SAP Replacement**

- The SWO Services which returned to The Deane House on 1 December 2016 are:-
  - ICT including the Helpdesk.
  - Customer Contact is being delivered by SCC as a shared service for a 12 month temporary period.
  - Finance: Accounts Payable, Master Data, Accounts Receivable, Cashiers/Control Team.
  - HR Recruitment.
  - Transactional Procurement is being delivered until 31 March 2017 by Avon and Somerset Police.
- The Corporate Scrutiny Committee received an update report on 17 November 2016 on the progress being made

- Staffing: De-secondments and TUPE transfers completed; Knowledge/skills transfer completed; and Taunton Deane now 'self-sufficient'; welcome meetings and inductions commenced/completed as reported above.
- At this time costs have been well controlled within the allocated budget and officers are to be congratulated for their diligence in handling this difficult process
- Taunton Deane is no longer a shareholder of SWO or have a Director on the Board of the Joint Venture Company with effect from 1 December 2016. The cash value of the Council's shareholding has been returned to the Council.
- SAP replacement is well underway for implementation by 31 March 2017: Finance/Procurement; HR; Website; Temporary Customer Relationship Management System (used by Customer Contact). The progress being made with these systems is as per the report to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee in November.
- Payroll provision by SWO ends on 31 March 2017 and the third party payroll contract is in place with MHR (Midland HR).

## **5. Transformation Project**

- 5.1 Additional resourcing has been put in place to enable us to deliver the next stage of the programme. This has seen Richard Sealy move to the role of Assistant Director – Transformation and I congratulate him on this appointment.
- 5.2 Richard's substantive role of Assistant Director – Corporate Services has been filled by Paul Carter who has recently returned from a Head of Service role in SWO and I welcome him to the team. We have also put in place a number of Senior Transformation Project Lead roles, which are being filled by secondments or returnees from SWO, and welcome Emily McGuinness, Paul Harding, Ruth James, Liam Canham and Karen Winter to the team.
- 5.3 Preparation is well underway to commence the consultation and engagement exercise on 12 December 2016 in relation to the proposal to create a single new Council. Details of the consultation document and how to get involved will be provided to all Members.
- 5.4 Ignite have been engaged to assist us in progressing work to transform the way we work and to deliver the new operating model. Detailed work will shortly start with services across the organisation to understand the activities undertaken by both Councils. This exercise will build on the work undertaken earlier in the year to develop the High Level Business Case and will help us to enhance and refine the business case.

- 5.5 Communications have been undertaken with all staff to update them on progress.

## **6. Finance and Procurement**

- 6.1 Budgeting – It is that time of year where the Council’s budget plans for the next financial year start to take shape. The vast majority of the detailed estimates work has been completed by the Finance Team and budget holders. A huge amount of work goes into preparing financial forecasts, calculating fees and charges, supporting Managers and portfolio holders to identify cost pressures and savings options.
- 6.2 A Budget Update and Initial Savings Options report was presented to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 8 December 2016, summarising the latest “Budget Gap” forecast for 2017/2018 and setting out a range of savings options being considered to address the shortfall next year. Fees and charges proposals were also presented to Corporate Scrutiny at the same meeting for review and comment, and the recommended fees are on the agenda this evening.
- 6.3 Business Rates - A particular challenge again this year is the preparation of our Business Rates funding forecasts. This is always a complex area and is further complicated this year with the national 2017 Revaluation exercise. The overall effect of the Revaluation, together with changes to Small Business Rates relief, has significantly reduced the amount of Business Rates due to be collected within Taunton Deane.
- 6.4 Entitlement to Small Business Rates relief has increased significantly from next year. Overall this is good news for rate payers – there will always be ‘winners and losers’ – but also has an impact on the Council’s funding. The Assistant Director - Resources has recently circulated a briefing note to all Councillors providing further information regarding business rates for 2017/2018.
- 6.5 Budget Monitoring - The outcome of the mid-year review of financial performance for the Council was reported to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 20 October 2016. This reported a reasonable position at this stage with both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account ‘on track’ with forecasts remaining within budget for the year. For the detail on this please refer to the Scrutiny report.
- 6.6 New Finance System - The project to implement a new finance system for the Council – E5 Financials provided by Advanced Business Solutions – is progressing well. The project team and key staff across Council services are working through the design and set up of the new system, ready for full testing in the New Year. Services are also being encouraged to undertake good housekeeping, such as data cleansing and clearing ‘old’ items, to ensuring the transition from the SAP to the new system runs smoothly. Thanks go to the team and Advanced for good progress to date, and I am pleased that the

project remains on track overall. This is a credit to the very hard work from all those involved.

- 6.7 Services Returned from SWO - As councillors will be aware from previous reports, a number of services have returned to the Council from SWO with effect from 1 December 2016. Within Finance and Procurement, this includes Accounts Payable – the team that deals with payments to suppliers and other payees, Cashiers and Control Team, procurement transactional processing, and System Admin/Master Data for the financial system.

## **7. Revenues and Benefits**

- 7.1 As Members will be aware, the Valuation Office Agency have released the draft rating list for the revaluation of Business Rates from 1 April 2017. While the gross Rateable Value (RV) for Taunton Deane Borough Council has slightly reduced, the Government have signalled they will adjust our position to ensure, as far as is practicable, that our retained income is the same after revaluation as immediately before. The Revenues Team is carrying out extensive work in mapping the changes not only through the amended RV, but also the impact of appeals, transitional relief and mandatory and discretionary relief.
- 7.2 At the end of October 2016 we had collected 71.63% of Council Tax due for 2016/2017 which was 0.33% below our target of 71.96%. Similarly Business Rates collection of 68.83% was slightly under target, although we remain confident this will improve to allow us to collect 98.5% by 31 March 2017.
- 7.3 The Benefits Team have been extremely busy in assisting people claiming Universal Credit under the “Full Service” arrangements launched in the last week of October. Currently, over 200 Taunton Deane residents have claimed Universal Credit under the full service, while a further 799 remain on the former “live” service. Significant work has been undertaken in supporting full service customers. There has been extensive liaison between the Benefits Service and the Department of Work and Pensions to understand and learn from any problems customers encounter, thereby improving the service as it expands.
- 7.4 The number of people affected in Taunton Deane by the reduction in the Benefits Cap in November from £26,000 to £20,000 has decreased from our initial estimate of 150 to less than 100. However, 24 customers will lose more than £100 a week in Housing Benefit. For those customers remaining on Housing Benefit we continue to perform well, with the average time to reassess claims following notification of a change at less than 7.5 days.
- 7.5 Finally, I am very pleased to report a recent external audit has shown no errors in our Housing Benefit subsidy claim for 2015/2016. Given the value of the claim was more than £31,800,000; this is a great result and a very positive outcome from a lot of hard work throughout the year. Officers are to be congratulated for their diligence.

I will take this opportunity to wish fellow Members and all employees of the One Team my very best wishes for the holiday season and every good wish for the coming year. Many thanks to all who have worked so hard and diligently for the benefit of the people of Taunton Deane and West Somerset.

Councillor Richard Parrish

# Council Meeting – 13 December 2016

## Report of Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

*The strategic vision for Taunton Deane's most disadvantaged areas, is that residents 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 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 close by which are then accessible to all, if we are to build independence, resilience and raise aspirations in individuals, families and communities, to sustain improvements and continue to reduce the need and costs of intervention in the future.*

### 1. Mental Health and Wellbeing

- 1.1 Although we are a District Council and many of the responsibilities for supporting adults and children with poor mental health sit with other agencies, we very much recognise the importance and benefits of supporting people with mental health problems. As a landlord responsible for nearly 6,000 social housing units, we have committed investment into our thirty year Housing Business Plan to provide additional support to those who struggle with poor mental health. We currently commission MIND to undertake this work as part of our One Team approach which allows us to identify and support people who may be isolated and struggle with different issues and to provide this additional support where possible.
- 1.2 The money management support we have commissioned for several years in our One Team areas from Citizens Advice Taunton also helps alleviate debt problems which we recognise are often closely linked with poor mental health. We very much support Mind's campaign to support positive mental health in communities.
- 1.3 As part of our safeguarding responsibility we have also put in place guidance for our staff on how to respond and support people who may express suicidal thoughts.

### 2. Anti-Social Behaviour Partnerships

- 2.1 The Somerset West Police Inspector has changed the format and frequency of the six weekly Anti-Social Behaviour Steering Meetings held with partners over the last ten years or so.
- 2.2 The two steering meetings covering Taunton Deane and West Somerset will now combine with the Taunton Priorities meeting into one fortnightly meeting renamed Taunton, Wellington and West Somerset Priorities. The two hour meeting will be split in half allowing discussion for both areas.

### 3. Team Around the School

- 3.1 The new manager for the Taunton Learning Partnership has a wider role supporting school improvement and driving early help through setting up Team Around the School (TAS) hubs at the four secondary schools in Taunton. By adopting a 'One Team' approach within the schools, they aim to support children and their families by focusing on solutions, helping them to become more resilient and self-reliant in order to prevent a child or young person needing more complex/acute support in the future.
- 3.2 The One Teams have had good support from schools within their areas for some time now so this approach is well understood and already valued by the schools. TAS have stated their intention to work together with the One Teams and the North Taunton One Team Coordinator has attended the first TAS at Taunton Academy. The aim is that both processes should complement and add value to each other where they operate in overlapping areas.

#### **4. Compass Disability**

- 4.1 We were very sorry and saddened when we heard that Compass Disability Services new Wellbeing Centre which was about to open was broken into last month and equipment and materials badly damaged or stolen.
- 4.2 This was a setback to their opening this wonderful new community facility, with its hydro pool, sensory playroom, activity room and community café which will hugely benefit Taunton and beyond. This has delayed the planned opening as the charity repairs the damage done and replaces stolen items. They have received several offers of help including from ourselves.
- 4.3 Compass Disability Services are an innovative, enlightened and positive organisation, with the aim of enabling disabled people and their carers to have equality of opportunity and a better quality of life. We consult them for their experience and practical advice.

#### **5. Local Lottery**

- 5.1 The Portfolio Holder was pleased that Community Scrutiny agreed to setting up a local Lottery to support our local voluntary and community groups across Taunton Deane. The aim is to set this up jointly with West Somerset Council who will discuss this later this month.
- 5.2 We are delighted that Taunton Town Football Club are keen to register as a good cause in our local lottery. We are proud of their recent success getting to the second round of the Football Association Cup (where they just lost to Barrow Association Football Club - a full time professional team in the National League).

#### **6. Somerset School Mentors**

- 6.1 The Housing Revenue Account has supported the Somerset Community Foundation (SCF) School Mentoring Scheme 'Raising Aspirations' over the last two years and this is going very well indeed.

- 6.2 By January there will be seventy mentors (and pupil mentees) at Taunton Academy and sixty at Courtfields Community School in Wellington. Mentors represent a number of businesses in Taunton Deane including the Borough Council. Feedback from the pupils (and schools) is very encouraging with comments on how valuable they find it.
- 6.3 The pilot at Crispin's Secondary School in Street shows the scheme is most successful for pupils in years seven to nine (aged between 11 and 14 years) and mentors expect to work with pupils over these three years. SCF will ask pupils in Taunton and Wellington whether they would like to continue beyond this and if not willing volunteers will be asked to stay on and support new students.
- 6.4 The intention was for the scheme to become sustainable and not require funding beyond two years. However, the schools invest a significant resource in carefully matching mentors with pupil mentees, hosting mentor breakfasts, arranging appointments etc. There is also a need for some resource to support the volunteer mentors, recruit and liaise with them and act as intermediary with the school. Taunton Deane would like to continue to support this with matching funding being sought from other business sponsors some of whom provide volunteer mentors. The aim is to have two hundred mentors (and pupil mentees) across the two schools.

## **7. The Value of Link Power**

- 7.1 A recent recruit to the very successful voluntary community workforce based in Halcon is a good example of One Team working and how team members think differently. PC Rowley Craddock introduced someone who had committed a petty theft to Link Power because he thought it would be a good alternative and provide that person with a sense of purpose. Additional support was then offered through i2a to improve the future prospects for paid work and reduce the risk of offending again. The recruit has settled into the team really well and this may be just what is needed at the right time to make a lasting difference and improve someone's opportunities in life.
- 7.2 Link Power are a growing team of willing volunteers who in one week last month cleared a hedge from Moorland Close; erected a new fence for elderly residents in Normandy Drive in Holway; cleared leaves from the drains and gullies across the Ward during the wet weather; completed daily litter cart collections; removed a small tree from Bridgwater Road; returned equipment from the Hollies Children's Centre to the Acorns Children's Centre; completed the apple tree planting on the Lane Estate; and cleared three Troubled Families gardens making room for their children to play outside. All this as well as developing the skills and confidence of the recruits who volunteer.

## **8. Lyngford Park Youth Shelter**

- 8.1 The new youth shelter in Lyngford Park was officially opened at the end of August by Rebecca Vile, who organises the very successful Pride in Priorswood Days which take place once a week during the school holidays. North Taunton One

Team member (and Taunton Deane Community Development Officer) Jayne Hares was behind this and made sure the youngsters in the area had this state of the art shelter with its WiFi to safely hang out in.

## **9. Public Space Protection Order for Wellington**

- 9.1 Our Community Safety Lead is working with Wellington Town Council to refresh their Designated Public Spaces Order into a Public Space Protection Order as we have done in Taunton.
- 9.2 Following public consultation this is expected to go live in April 2017 (well before October 2017 when it has to be replaced by law under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014).

## **10. Somerset One Teams Information Booklet**

- 10.1 We have recently produced an information booklet agreed upon by the One Teams across Somerset which all Members should have received in their pigeon hole. There are now eight One Teams across the area covered by the Avon and Somerset Police Force.
- 10.2 One Team Co-ordinators meet monthly and the governance is adjusting to support these teams working across a much wider area. Within Taunton Deane, the role of support and challenge remains with the Taunton Deane Strategic Partnership (aka Silver Group) and similar groups in the other districts. The proposal is that the Safer Somerset Partnership made up of key partners is best placed to have an overview and offer wider support (and challenge) whilst appreciating the importance of the bottom up approach.
- 10.3 The booklet helps achieve more consistency across individual One Teams and helps provide clarity for other Somerset organisations.

## **11. Collaboration between Health and Care Services**

- 11.1 The Somerset Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) describes a vision for the future of healthcare in the County which has been developed by the leaders of Somerset's hospital, community and mental health NHS organisations, Somerset County Council and Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (which is made up of the County's General Practitioners (GPs). This is a joint plan and is now out for public consultation.
- 11.2 It promotes much greater collaboration between health and care services. Currently most are separate services including GPs, hospitals, adult social care, mental health and voluntary support groups which present inherent difficulties for patients and their families when faced with a crisis, attempting to join them up and not always succeeding.
- 11.3 The Plan places as much emphasis on prevention as on treatment and holistically treating each person rather than each ailment (which the pioneering Somerset

Symphony Project successfully addresses). Implementation of the Plan should eventually open up opportunities for further joint working with the districts on a range of health prevention matters.

- 11.4 The demands on the NHS and social care are increasing, partly because there are more people who are living longer with more complex health problems such as dementia, diabetes and high blood pressure, but also because of the increasing cost of new medicines and treatments.
- 11.5 Public demand for health and social care services is constantly growing and the only way to manage this is by thinking as one single health and social care system rather than as individual organisations and work with patients, carers and communities.
- 11.6 Health services in Somerset (and elsewhere) are not keeping pace with the changing needs of residents. We are living longer, more of us are overweight, we are less active so generally unfit, smoke less but drink more and succumb to long term diseases which debilitate, but do not necessarily kill us but instead leave us permanently ill. All of these put a huge strain on a disjointed system which was not designed to cope with these and needs redesigning to do so.
- 11.7 The Plan sets out why change is necessary to meet our future needs and radically change the way we are supported to manage our own health, receive treatment and access care. The full Plan and summary document can be found on [www.somerset.gov.uk/stp](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/stp) or [www.somersetccg.nhs.uk](http://www.somersetccg.nhs.uk) Detailed implementation plans are expected to follow to be consulted on in the spring.

## **12. Christmas Tree Decorations**

- 12.1 Taunton's towering Christmas tree has been erected in its traditional position outside the Market House. The thirty foot tree has been donated by Langford Lakes and Taunton Farmers Market which has been trading in the town centre since 1999.
- 12.2 The tree has 2,496 lights on it and has been adorned with decorations specially made using stars that were created as part of the 'Constellation Project' by Go Create and the charity Stand Against Violence to commemorate ten years since the tragic death of Lloyd Fouracre. It looks lovely and new lights and a bow have also been added to the outside of the Market House which is now home to the Taunton Visitor Centre.

*Happy Christmas and Happy New Year to you all. No cards from me again but a donation to Taunton Association for the Homeless this year instead.*

Councillor Jane Warmington