

To consider the following motion to be moved by Councillor Horsley seconded by Councillor Henley.

Taunton Deane Borough Council is charged with looking after the social, economic and environmental well being of its community as per the Local Government Act 2000.

It therefore views the expenditure of a £4.5 billion which is the lowest estimate of the cost of dispatch of UK troops to the Middle East as harmful to the Council Tax Payers of Taunton Deane insofar as it reduces the amount available for central government support of services that local authorities have to provide by way of rate support grant. It also considers that a war against Iraq could divide our ethnic minorities here in Taunton Deane. This could add to the problems of the Crime and Disorder partnership within our Local Community Plan and make the targets harder to attain.

This Council believes the case for war against Iraq isn't proven. There is a genuine fear that that the war against Iraq will a) lead to losses of thousands of innocent lives b) increase the number of refugees which could add to the problem of asylum seekers to this country c) destabilise the Middle East especially the Israeli/Palestinian situation d) increase the probability of acts of terrorism within the United Kingdom and possibly Taunton e) leave a lasting legacy of division between Muslim and Western countries which could take decades to overcome.

In light of the impact of war on the local economy and its consequences especially for those members of the armed forces who are based here in Taunton whom we hope will return unharmed, this Council urges the Government to take every measure to avoid conflict. It urges the Prime Minister to support the containment and disarmament of Saddam Hussein through its use of weapons inspectors and the use of peace-keeping United Nations forces.

