

Executive – 26 February 2009

Present: Councillor Henley (Chairman)
Councillors Brooks, Coles, Horsley, R Lees, Mullins, Mrs Smith and
A Wedderkopp

Officers: Penny James (Chief Executive), Joy Wishlade (Strategic Director),
Shirlene Adam (Strategic Director), Tonya Meers (Legal and
Democratic Services Manager), Ian Franklin (Project Taunton), Mark
Green (Project Taunton) and Richard Bryant (Democratic Services
Manager)

Also present: Councillors Bishop, Mrs Court-Stenning, Farbahi, Ms. Herbert,
House, McMahon, Morrell, Slattery, Mrs Whitmarsh and Williams.
Mr C Haworth of Alder King; Mr A Rothwell of Ashfords

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

20. Apology

Councillor Prior-Sankey.

21. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 4 February 2009, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and were signed.

22. Declarations of Interest

The Chairman declared a personal interest as a Member of Somerset County Council. Councillors Brooks declared personal interests as a Member of Somerset County Council and as a Member of the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Mullins also declared a personal interest as a Member of the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Coles declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillor Mrs Smith declared a personal interest as an employee of Somerset County Council.

23. Growth Point Funding and Housing and Planning Delivery Grant Funding

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the Growth Point (GP) funding and Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG).

These two funding streams were used for the future development of Taunton in both the long and medium term.

The GP funding was a partnership fund with Somerset County Council and was to be used for infrastructure that supported the growth of housing and the subsequent growth in the population.

Although the HPDG was solely a Taunton Deane application, it was felt that it would be useful to consider the two spending streams as a whole.

In 2008/2009 Taunton received £2,740,000 capital and £287,000 revenue funding. Approval for using this funding was given by the Project Taunton Advisory Board and the Executive in 2008, details of which were submitted.

Reported that the Longrun Farm Flood Relief Scheme had not attracted Regional Infrastructure Funding. However, the £850,000 earmarked for the extension of the Park and Ride Scheme would be used for this purpose, as Somerset County Council had received the full funding to complete the project from another source.

The allocation for 2009/2010 was £3,300,000 capital and £301,000 revenue and for 2010/2011 the amounts allocated were £3,900,000 capital and £300,000 revenue. As this was partnership money, it was felt that the Project Taunton Advisory Board was the most appropriate body to give the partnership approval. However, as Taunton Deane was a key partner, approvals were also required from the Project Taunton Steering Group and the Executive.

As far as the HPDG was concerned, the allocation for 2008/2009 to be spent in 2009/2010 was £273,939 revenue and £119,122 capital.

There were many proposals within the current GP bid, but the proposed priorities were:-

- Firepool infrastructure to enable the Firepool development to commence even within the current economic climate;
- Completion of Castle Green and Somerset Square;
- Urban Extension Master Planning; and
- Funding of the Project Taunton Delivery Team.

The priorities for the HPDG were:-

- Funding for Planning staff to give sufficient capacity for the work preparing for the growth of Taunton;
- Further studies, such as the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document and the Retail Capacity Study, to enable the future growth of Taunton;
- Funding for Taunton Deane's costs in delivering Project Taunton; and

- Urban Extension Master Planning.

A list of the spend under these activities split between GP funding and the HPDG was submitted for the information of Members.

During the discussion of this item Members expressed the wish that if there was sufficient flexibility in the use of the GP funding and the HPDG, then the improvement of High Street, Taunton towards the overall economic development of the town should be considered as a priority.

Resolved that:-

- (1) The priorities and the 2009/2010 spending plan for both the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant and Growth Points Funding be approved; and
- (2) Full Council be recommended to approve the addition to the Capital Programme of the capital elements of the spending plan.

24. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

Resolved that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to Clause 7 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information to the public.

25. **Selection of a Development Partner for Firepool, Taunton**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposed appointment of a development partner to develop the Firepool Site in Taunton.

The Council had agreed to procure a development partner for the Firepool site in August 2006. The European Procurement Rules applied to this process.

Following legal advice, Taunton Deane had elected to use the Competitive Dialogue procedure. This route enabled the Council to identify potential solutions which met its requirements before inviting a final shortlist of candidates to submit tenders.

Tenders had been submitted and, following a thorough evaluation towards the end of last year, a development partner had been recommended (Minute No 203/2008 refers).

Reported that since then, the world-wide economic situation had remained turbulent and the selected bidder had withdrawn from the process. However, discussions had continued with the reserve bidder (details of which were submitted), and the position had been reached where it was now possible to make a further recommendation to the Executive.

Resolved that:-

- (1) the selection of the company named in the report as the preferred development partner to develop the Firepool Site in Taunton on the terms set out in the Development Agreement be approved; and
- (2) the Executive Councillor for Economic Development (Councillor Horsley), in consultation with the Chairman of the Project Taunton Steering Group (Councillor Williams) and the Strategic Director (Joy Wishlade) be authorised to approve the final Contract and exchange.

(The meeting ended at 7.31 p.m.)