

## **Executive – 5 December 2012**

Present: Councillor Williams (Chairman)  
Councillors Mrs Adkins, Cavill, Mrs Herbert, Hayward, Mrs Stock-Williams  
and Mrs Warmington

Officers: Penny James (Chief Executive), Shirlene Adam (Strategic Director),  
Richard Sealy (Corporate and Client Services Manager), Maggie Hammond  
(Strategic Finance Manager), Paul Fitzgerald (Financial Services Manager,  
Southwest One), Dan Webb (Performance Lead), Tonya Meers (Legal and  
Democratic Services Manager) and Richard Bryant (Democratic Services  
Manager and Corporate Support Lead).

Also present: Councillors Coles, Horsley and A Wedderkopp.

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm.)

### **87. Apology**

Councillor Edwards.

### **88. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive held on 14 November 2012, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read and were signed.

### **89. Revenues and Benefits Service Feasibility Study**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the feasibility of bringing the Revenues and Benefits service back in-house in response to the forthcoming changes which were likely through the Government's proposals for Welfare Reform and the localisation of Business Rates.

The Government was currently implementing significant changes for Benefits and Local Taxation which included:-

- introducing a new local Council Tax Support Scheme from April 2013 (to replace Council Tax Benefit);
- no longer considering new Housing Benefit claims from working age people. Such claims would be taken on by the Department of Work and Pensions under Universal Credit;
- from early 2014 the phased migration of existing Housing Benefit claims from working age people;
- from Autumn 2014 the phased take on of housing support under Pension Credit for those of pensionable age;
- greater local flexibility for Council Tax discounts and exemptions; and
- partial localisation of Business Rates.

These changes would take place over the next four years during which it was anticipated there would be significant changes in workload for the Revenues and

Benefits service coupled with an overall cut in the Government grant that was received to administer benefits.

It was clear these legislative changes would require the Council to make significant changes to the Revenues and Benefits service and consequently to the contractual arrangements that existed with Southwest One for providing these services.

Three key objectives for the Council as to how the legislative changes in the Revenues and Benefits service should be carried out had been identified. These were:-

- i) To minimise the cost to the Authority and the impact on customers of implementing the changes to the Benefits and Local Taxation Regulations;
- ii) To maximise the Council's flexibility to manage the Revenues and Benefits service resources through the period of significant change; and
- iii) Look to reduce the costs to the Council of delivering the Revenues and Benefits service.

There were two broad options for accommodating these changes within the contract with Southwest One which had been tested against these objectives. These were:-

Option 1 - Changing the pricing model within the contract to provide a pricing structure that could keep pace with a rapidly changing environment and varying workloads, while ensuring we maintained service delivery; or

Option 2 - Return the Revenues and Benefits service to in-house service provision through the service termination provisions built into the contract.

Both options had been discussed with Southwest One. In the absence of being able to identify a realistic, flexible pricing structure, which would allow the Council to keep the service in Southwest One and vary the price to accommodate the, as yet, unknown fluctuations in workload and grant funding, it had been agreed that Option 2 would be the most effective solution to allow Taunton Deane to meet the objectives outlined above.

As a result a detailed study into the feasibility of bringing the service back in-house had been undertaken which had considered the financial, contractual and staffing implications of terminating the Revenues and Benefits service.

Agreement in principle with Southwest One about the key changes required and discussions were continuing to agree the fine detail. The results were outlined below:-

### **Financial implications**

The financial changes required and the implications of these changes had been examined in detail and a summary of the financial implications of terminating the Revenues and Benefits service was set out in the confidential appendix attached to the report.

It had been concluded that it would be feasible to make this change from a financial perspective and to do so would not be prejudicial to the Council's overall budget position.

### **Contractual implications**

Reported that the contract with Southwest One had been reviewed and specialist legal advice had been taken to identify the contractual changes required and the implications of changing the contract. A summary of the contractual implications was set out in the confidential appendix attached to the report.

It had been concluded that it was feasible to terminate the Revenues and Benefits service within the terms of the contract and to amend the contract to reflect this change.

### **Implications for staff**

There were currently 39 Taunton Deane staff seconded to the Revenues and Benefits service within Southwest One. If it was decided to terminate the service these staff would de-second in accordance with the terms of the Staffing Agreement. They would lose their right to 'assured employment' at the point that their secondments ended.

In addition Southwest One currently employed nine 'direct-hire' staff within Revenues and Benefits. The TUPE Regulations 2006 would apply to direct-hire staff in the service at the point of transfer.

Any termination of the service would be a significant change for staff. Therefore a formal consultation exercise had been conducted with the potentially affected staff, the results of which were reported.

The Chairman read out a statement from the staff who had stated that "they were supportive of the recommendations contained in the report. If it was decided to terminate the Revenues and Benefits part of the contract with Southwest One, all staff would be keen to ensure a smooth transition back to Taunton Deane. Maintaining excellent service for the Council's customers would remain top priority as delivery took place against the challenges of the Welfare Reform and Localisation agendas".

Should the Council support the recommendation to return the services to Taunton Deane, a full change and transition plan would be developed in conjunction with Southwest One to support staff during the transfer.

In addition, the Retained HR Manager was keeping the union regularly briefed on progress via the Unison Change Forum. Unison had been involved in the staff consultation exercise and its comments were reported.

Southwest One was keeping their direct-hire staff within the Revenues and Benefits Service briefed through the Southwest One Staff Council.

Further reported that any significant change to the Southwest One contract could have potentially significant implications for the ongoing viability of the partnership as a

whole. As such, all of the partners had been engaged and the reasons for seeking the proposed change had been explained to them.

Revenues and Benefits was however a service which was only delivered by Southwest One for Taunton Deane and consequently its removal from the contract was unlikely to impact on service delivery by Southwest One to the other partners.

Having concluded that it would be feasible to bring the Revenues and Benefits service back to Taunton Deane it was felt that this should ideally take place on 1 April 2013.

If the decision to proceed was taken by the Council, the next steps would be:-

- to finalise and agree the contract and financial changes with Southwest One; and
- to draft and jointly implement with Southwest One an exit plan which would include a detailed change and transition plan to support staff through the transfer process.

A provisional high level timetable for exit was submitted for the information of Members.

Reported that this issue had been considered by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 26 November 2012 who supported the findings of the feasibility study.

**Resolved** that Full Council be recommended to:-

- i) Approve in principle the termination of the Revenues and Benefits element of the Southwest One contract; and
- ii) Delegate authority to the Group Leaders, Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer, the Solicitor to the Council and the Corporate and Client Services Manager to decide when to issue the formal termination notice for the Revenues and Benefits service once agreement had been reached with Southwest One regarding the financial and contractual changes required to the contract.

## 90. **Earmarked Reserves Review**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the review of a number of earmarked reserves held by the Council for various purposes.

The level of earmarked General Fund reserves as at 31 March 2011 was £7,072,000. This included money set aside for specific revenue purposes, but did not include the £3,336,000 in General Fund balances.

The Strategic Finance Manager had recently reviewed the earmarked reserves to ensure that the level of each reserve was adequate and that the purpose for which the funds were set aside still applied.

As a result of this review, there were various earmarked reserves, totalling £298,819.52, that were no longer required. Details of these reserves were submitted for the information of Members.

This matter had been discussed by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 26 November 2012. Although the Committee agreed with the recommendation to transfer the above reserves into their corresponding general fund, Members asked for a further report to be submitted on the specific earmarked reserves listed below:-

- CEO Initiatives;
- Self Insurance Fund;
- Youth Homelessness Fund;
- Performance and Client Consultancy; and
- Growth and Regeneration Service Costs.

**Resolved** that Full Council be recommended to transfer £59,167.44 of surplus earmarked reserves to the General Fund Reserve and £239,652.08 to the Housing Revenue Account Reserve in the 2012/2013 financial year.

#### 91. **Fees and Charges 2013/2014**

Considered report previously circulated, which set out the proposed fees and charges for 2013/2014 for the following services:-

- Cemeteries and Crematorium – It was proposed to increase the main cremation fee by £18 to £608 and make minor increases for other charges within the service. It was estimated that this would generate additional income of £39,600;
- Waste Services – The Somerset Waste Partnership was keen to harmonise the charges for garden waste, bulky waste and bin delivery across the County. To do so would require Taunton Deane to make slight increases to the charges for garden waste bins (£42.50 to £45) and bulky waste collection (£36.50 to £38.15). To be prudent and allow for loss of take up of this service it was assumed that there would be no additional income as a result of these changes;
- Land Charges – It was proposed to keep Land Charges fees the same as the current year. This was in line with Government expectations that the service should break even;
- Housing – The proposal was to increase charges by 2.6% (September Retail Price Index (RPI)) with two exceptions:-
  - 1) Garage rents for private tenants and owner occupiers had been increased by 5%; and
  - 2) Hire charges for the sheltered scheme meeting halls and hire charges for sheltered scheme guest rooms had not been increased, although they

had been rounded up to the nearest 10p. This was to increase take up of the facilities.

It was estimated that this would generate additional income of £34,600 for the Housing Revenue Account;

- Deane Helpline - The Deane Helpline fees would be increased by September RPI. It was estimated that the Deane Helpline charges would generate additional income of an estimated £34,000. The additional income would not however add income to the budget due to a current under achievement of budget.
- Licensing – Many licensing fees were set by the Government so increases under local arrangements were not possible.

Where there was local flexibility to set fees, work had taken place to ensure that the Council's costs in administering and enforcing such licenses were adequately met from the subsequent income received, that fees were reasonable and any not paid on time were fully pursued.

Noted that great care had to be taken to set an appropriate rate as many of the licensing fees and charges were deliberately balanced. If rates went up too much, this could easily suppress the market and lead to an overall reduction in income. It could also encourage more illegal and therefore unregulated trading resulting in greater risks to public safety.

It was recommended that licensing fees were increased as set out in the report. All fees, except taxi fees, that were set under local powers were proposed to increase by an inflation factor of 3% which was likely to generate an additional income of £2,500.

Further reported that following a challenge from the taxi trade a highly detailed analysis of the projected costs and income of the taxi licensing regime had been undertaken. This had shown that efficiencies in the computer system and procedures were expected to reduce the process time for all application types and reduce the amount of time taken on the administration and enforcement for the regime.

The results had also shown that the estimation of costs in some areas were higher than the current fees charged. For the next financial year it was recommended that fees were re-set at the levels identified by the analysis to achieve the updated assessment of reasonable cost recovery.

Whilst the proposed changes would lead to some fees increasing and some decreasing, the overall level of income from taxi licensing was expected to be similar to current levels.

It was intended that over the next year the same level of analysis would also be applied to all other licensing fees where local flexibility existed so that both Members and service users could continue to be satisfied that fees were reasonable and in compliance with the appropriate legislation.

- Planning – It was proposed to increase pre-application advice and charges which would generate additional income of an estimated £4,000;
- Car Parking Charges – The fees and charges relating to the Car Park Service would be discussed outside the scope of the report;
- Environmental Health – It was proposed to increase the charges for Pest Control from 1 April 2013 as detailed in the report;
- Recovery of Court Costs – Reasonable costs could be added to debts if recovery was assisted through the Magistrate’s Court. The charge for a summons would remain at £63.50 and the charge for a liability order would remain at £10;
- Charging for Housing Act Notices and Immigration visits - The Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership intended to charge for the service of formal Housing Act 2004 Notices, namely Improvement and Prohibition Notices. A charge which covered the minimum costs involved would be made in respect of the 10 formal Notices a year likely to be required.

The Partnership had also recommended the introduction of charging for Immigration visits to provide evidence that applicants had suitable housing accommodation within the United Kingdom. The charge would be a flat fee of £129 for each of the expected five inspections per year.

This matter had been discussed by the Corporate Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 26 November 2012 when no comments on the proposals had been made.

**Resolved** that Full Council be recommended to approve the proposed fees and charges, for 2013/2014.

## 92. **Financial and Performance Monitoring – Quarter 2 2012/2013**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the update on the financial position and the performance of the Council to the end of Quarter 2 of 2012/2013 (as at 30 September 2012).

The detailed 2012/2013 financial position for Quarter 2 was set out in the report although a high level summary was also included in the Scorecard. The monitoring of the Corporate Strategy, service delivery, performance indicators and budgets was an important part of the overall performance management framework.

The current forecast outturn for the Council’s General Fund services was an under spend of £595,000 for the financial year 2012/2013. The significant variances to the forecast in this quarter were:-

- a) **Car Parking Income:** Under recovery of income of £548,000;
- b) **Council Tax Benefit:** Over recovery by £104,000;

- c) **Somerset Waste Partnership:** Under spend of £107,000.
- d) **Vacancy Factor:** A saving of £65,000.
- e) **Pay Award:** A saving of £69,000.
- f) **Interest Payable:** An under spend of £226,000 was forecast.
- g) **Interest Receivable:** The Council was likely to receive more interest on General Fund investments than originally budgeted for by £244,000.

Details as to why these variances had occurred were submitted.

Reported that the General Fund Reserves balance at the start of the year was £3,337,000.

Likely movements in the current year were reported which meant that the projected balance at the end of the current financial year was £3,168,000 based on budget approvals, before considering any potential over or under spend in the current year.

Noted that budgets and forecasts were based on known information and the best estimates of future spending and income of the Council. The income and expenditure of the Council over the financial year was estimated by the budget holders in the Council and then reported through the budget monitoring process. During this process, risks were identified which could affect the financial projections but the likelihood and/or amount were uncertain. Details of a number of risks identified during the Quarter 2 process were provided.

Further reported that the current forecast outturn for the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was an under spend of £827,950 for the current financial year, before any increase in the budgeted allowance for repayment of capital debt or increased investment in housing standards and growth.

The significant variances to the forecast in this quarter were:-

- a) **Interest Payable:** The forecast under spend was estimated to be £928,100. This was because the actual rate of interest payable rate on the new self-financing loan was not confirmed until after the budget was set, and was eventually obtained at a much lower rate than previously anticipated.
- b) **Interest Receivable:** The forecast over spend was estimated to be £110,250, due to receiving less interest on HRA investments than originally budgeted for.

However, it was anticipated that this net under spend of £817,850 should be retained and approval sought to reinvest this into the Social Housing Development Fund.

The HRA General Reserves "working balance" at the start of the year was £1,355,000. The projected balance at the end of the current financial year was currently £1,843,000 taking into account planned transfers to/from reserves within the original budget.



The year end outturn position for the Deane DLO Trading Account was likely to be an under spend of approximately £161,000. This is mainly due to a forecast under spend on contractor and agency costs, plus a reduction in Southwest One contract payments due to the return of the budget for Stores Staff to DLO.

Noted that there were no variances to the Deane Helpline Trading Account to report.

The current forecast outturn for the Council's General Fund Capital Programme was Net Expenditure of £5,722,000, compared to the budget of £6,634,000. The forecast under spend is therefore £912,000 (13.75%) for the financial year, which related entirely to slippage on projects into 2013/2014.

The forecast variances for the year were in the following areas:-

- a) **Project Taunton – Castle Green;**
- b) **Grants to Registered Social Landlords;**
- c) **DLO System;**
- d) **Project Taunton – Longrun Meadow Bridge C; and**
- e) **PC Refresh Project**

Details as to why these variances had occurred were submitted. The main areas of risk and uncertainty in the General Fund capital programme were submitted for information.

The current forecast outturn for the Council's Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme was net expenditure of £5,192,000 against a budget of £5,500,000. This comprised a number of variations across a range of 'Major Works' programmes.

The main areas of risk and uncertainty in the Housing Revenue Account capital programme were detailed in the report and related to Cladding, Fascias and Soffits, Disability Discrimination Act Work and Heating.

Analysis of the overall performance of the Council had revealed that 60% of all performance measures were on target. This was a slightly worse position compared to the previous quarter (Quarter 1 was 65%) as although there were fewer 'Red' alerts, there were 11 more 'Amber' alerts (indicating 'some concern' in these areas). A summary / overview of the Quarter 2 scorecard was shown in the table below:-

Section	No. of measures	☺ Green	☹ Amber	☹ Red	N/A	Trend (from last quarter)
1) Corporate Strategy Aims	18	13 (72%)	3 (17%)		2 (11%)	↓
2) Service Delivery	15	9 (60%)	5 (33%)	1 (7%)		↓
3) Managing Finances	12	7 (58%)	3 (25%)	2 (17%)		↔
4) Key Projects	6	3	3			↓

		(50%)	(50%)			
5) Key Partnerships	8	6 (75%)	2 (25%)			↑
6) People	6	2 (33%)	3 (50%)		1 (17%)	↔
7) Corporate Management	10	5 (50%)	5 (50%)			↑
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>45 (60%)</b>	<b>24 (32%)</b>	<b>3 (4%)</b>	<b>3 (4%)</b>	↓

**KEY:**

↑ = Improving (ie more Green, less Amber &/or Red alerts)

↓ = Worsening (ie less Green, more Amber &/or Red)

↔ = No change

The current corporate performance scorecard had been introduced in 2009/2010 and had remained largely unchanged since then. Once the new Corporate Business Plan was approved, the Corporate Management Team would conduct a full review of the scorecard and recommended changes would then be discussed with Members in workshops before the end of the financial year.

It was envisaged that a refreshed corporate scorecard would be implemented from the Quarter 1 report in the 2013/2014 financial year.

**Resolved** that the report be noted.

93. **Taunton Deane Borough Council's Grants Panel Recommendations for Voluntary and Community Sector Service Level Agreement payments for financial year 2013/2014**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning a number of recommendations made by the Grants Panel concerning the allocation of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) funding for the 2013/2014 financial year.

Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) provided financial support to a wide range of VCS organisations that helped deliver the Council's Corporate Priorities and met wide ranging community needs.

A total of £582,300 had been released to the VCS in 2012/2013. Funding was awarded to the VCS through five main service areas:-

- Strategy and Performance;
- Community Development;
- Economic Development;
- Housing; and
- Community Leisure.

The Council recognised the vital role the VCS played in providing services and advice to the community. They engaged and empowered local people and reached groups and individuals who might be marginalised or disadvantaged.

With a reduction in levels of service across the County, Taunton Deane recognised that the VCS were playing an increasing role in the delivery of services.

The Grants Panel had been formed to ensure that the Council had an overview of all VCS spending across the authority. The allocation of funding was proposed by the relevant Service Area Managers or Lead Officers and presented to the Grants Panel for discussion in November for the following financial year.

The following tables provided information on VCS funding recommendations for 2013/2014. It was the intention that all organisations due to receive funding would have a robust Service Level Agreement in place from 1 April 2013.

### Strategy and Performance VCS funding

	<b>Commitments 2012/2013</b>	<b>Recommendations 2013/2014</b>
Citizens Advice Bureau	85,900	85,900
Community Council for Somerset	5,700	5,700
Accessible Transport (Taunton Deane Community Transport and Slinky)	9,400	Withdraw
Taunton Voluntary Action	24,900	24,900
North Taunton Partnership	5,000	5,000
Taunton East	5,000	5,000
Wiveliscombe Area Partnership and Wivey Link	32,900	31,900
Small VCS Grants	26,200	22,010
TBA dependant on decision to withdraw Accessible Transport Funding	n/a	9,400
TBA due to reduction in WAP funding		1,000
	<b>195,000</b>	<b>190,810</b>

The Grants Panel had raised the following concerns regarding the funding of the Accessible Transport Service provided by Somerset County Council (SCC):-

- SCC had not been able to provide proof that services were being delivered that benefitted residents of Taunton Deane;
- Community Transport remained a Somerset County Council responsibility; and
- SCC did not request the funding at the beginning of the financial year which raised doubt that there was a need for the funding.

As there were greater priority areas and community needs that could be met through the use of this funding, the Panel had recommended that the funding should

be withdrawn. If this proposal was accepted, an Impact Assessment would be carried to assist Councillors in making their final decision as to whether to withdraw this funding altogether from April 2013.

### Community Development – Community Art Grants

	<b>Commitments 2012/2013</b>	<b>Recommendations 2013/2014</b>
Take Art	5,750	5,750
Actiontrack Performance Company	1,955	1,955
Somerset Art Works	1,380	1,380
Somerset Film	2,415	2,415
SPAEDA	500	500
	<b>12,000</b>	<b>12,000</b>

### Economic Development

	<b>Commitments 2012/2013</b>	<b>Recommendations 2013/2014</b>
Brewhouse	152,000	152,000
Vista (Job Clubs)	12,000	12,000
Taunton Town Centre Company	42,700	TBC 42,700
	<b>206,700</b>	<b>206,700</b>

The Grants Panel had concerns regarding the specified services to be delivered by the Taunton Town Centre Company and the related performance targets which required further clarification from the Economic Development Manager. The Grants Panel was not recommending the approval of this grant until further investigation had taken place.

### Housing – Housing Revenue Account

	<b>Commitments 2012/2013</b>	<b>Recommendations 2013/2014</b>
North Taunton Partnership	10,000	10,000
Link Partnership	10,000	10,000
Tenants Forum	45,000	45,000
Wiveliscombe Area Partnership	Na	1000
	<b>65,000</b>	<b>66,000</b>

## Housing – Homelessness Prevention Grant from the Department of Communities and Local Government

	<b>Commitments 2012/2013</b>	<b>Recommendations 2013/2014</b>
Shelter	Yet to be agreed	TBA
Open Door	12,000	TBA
TDBC Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator Post	15,000	15,000
YMCA, Bridgwater Homes Scheme	50,000	End of SLA
Pathways to Independence Youth Housing Service	n/a	50,000
TAH Outreach Worker	7,500	7,500
CAB – MAAP project	6,000	TBA
	<b>90,500</b>	<b>72,500</b>

The Department for Communities and Local Government had confirmed that the Council was likely to receive an annual grant of £122,280 for the next two years for the prevention of homelessness.

Negotiations for the allocation of this grant funding were currently underway. Therefore the proposals at this stage could not be confirmed.

Reported that it was probable that Shelter would cease to function as before in March 2013, with services being reduced to a telephone helpline, or the service being withdrawn altogether. In return for its funding, Shelter had provided a Housing Solicitor to run a court desk service to assist those at risk of becoming homeless and training for Taunton Deane's Housing Officers.

The Housing Service was currently negotiating with other service provider's as to an alternative means of providing advice and assistance to those who were homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

It was likely that the funding for the specific Multi Agency group currently administered by the CAB would be withdrawn and replaced with alternative services as a result of current negotiations.

### Community Development – TDBC Youth Fund

	<b>Commitments 2012/2013</b>	<b>Recommendations 2013/2014</b>
Youth Fund	20,000	20,000 (25,000)
Somerset County Council Youth Windfall		29,495
	<b>20,000</b>	<b>49,495 (54,495)</b>

The 2012/2013 Youth Fund totalled £20,000, made up of £15,000 from the Taunton Unparished Area Fund and £5,000 from the General Fund. 22 applications totalling £63,600 were received for projects spread across the whole of Taunton Deane. However, due to the make up of the fund it was felt by both officers and Members of the Community Scrutiny Committee and the Executive that this gave an unfair advantage to projects from the urban (unparished) areas of Taunton.

Although budgets for the next financial year have not yet been confirmed, it was anticipated that the Youth Fund for 2013/2014 would be made up of the same contributions as this year.

Further reported that SCC had offered to contribute some funds to the Youth Fund next year which had been earmarked for youth club provision in Taunton Town Centre, namely the Chestnut Tree.

As this project had not come to fruition, SCC had gifted this funding to the Youth Fund with the request that priority be given to projects providing youth work on estates and projects which could demonstrate a commitment to future sustainability.

Whilst this one-off windfall was appreciated, it did not address the disproportionate make up on the Youth Fund from Taunton Deane budgets, and the unfair advantage this gave projects from the urban areas of Taunton.

Therefore, the Grants Panel had requested the Executive to consider increasing the contributions to the Youth Fund so that more General Fund money was available, thus helping to ensure that all projects across the district had a fair chance when submitting an application.

Reported that the Somerset Compact requested authorities wherever possible to provide a longer term commitment to the Voluntary and Community Sector to enable it to plan ahead and ensure that their services were sustainable into the future.

As a result of its recent meeting, the Grants Panel had made the following recommendations:-

- That the proposals for the allocation of funding, as listed above, be supported;
- That an Impact Assessment be carried out on the withdrawal of funding from the Somerset County Council Accessible Transport;
- That the General Fund contribution to the Youth Fund be increased from £5,000 to £15,000 to even out the geographical balance of projects that could be supported across Taunton Deane; and
- That all Service Level Agreements be signed for a three year period (wherever possible) and that there was a commitment from Taunton Deane to not consider those particular funding arrangements as budget savings during the three year period.

During the discussion of this matter, the Executive felt the first two recommendations, as drafted, were acceptable. However, with regard to the third recommendation this would need to be considered as part of the Budget setting considerations for the 2013/2014 financial year.

As to the final recommendation, the Executive acknowledged that it would be the ideal situation if all Service Level Agreements could be protected from budget savings during their three year duration. However, in the current economic climate this would be difficult to achieve.

It was noted though that there was already a caveat within all Service Level Agreements that the Council would be able to withdraw or reduce funding with three months written notice at any point during the period of the agreement. This would allow the authority some security in case of it being absolutely necessary to make savings.

**Resolved** that:-

- (1) The proposals for the allocation of funding, as listed above, be supported;
- (2) An Impact Assessment be carried out on the withdrawal of funding from the Somerset County Council Accessible Transport;
- (3) The recommended increase in the General Fund contribution to the Youth Fund be considered during the forthcoming Budget setting process; and
- (4) It be noted that the Executive wished to support the aspiration of entering three year funding agreements and would offer clarity on the level of funding following the Corporate Business Plan process in 2013.

94. **Executive Forward Plan**

Submitted for information the Forward Plan of the Executive over the next few months.

**Resolved** that the Forward Plan be noted.

(The meeting ended at 8.11 pm.)