

Draft minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of Council

Taunton Deane Borough Council

At a meeting of the Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the Principal Committee Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on Tuesday 20 February 2007 at 6.30 pm.

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Hindley)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Hayward)
Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Beaven, Bishop, Bone, Bowrah, Mrs Bradley, N Cavill, Miss S Cavill, Clark, Coles, Croad, Davies, Denington, Durdan, Edwards, Govier, Guerrier, Hall, Hayward, Henley, C Hill, Mrs Marie Hill, Mrs M J Hill, House, Lees, Mrs Lewin-Harris, Meikle, Morrell, Mullins, Murphy, Paul, Phillips, Prior-Sankey, Slattery, Stuart-Thorn, Vail, Watson, Wedderkopp, Weston, Mrs Whitmarsh, Williams and Mrs Wilson.

1 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 22 January 2007, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

2. Apologies

Councillors Mrs Biscoe, C Cluff, Mrs J Cluff, Floyd, Garner, Leighton, Lisgo, Mrs F Smith and P Smith.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Prior-Sankey, Henley, Govier and Paul all declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council.

4. Car Parking Charges 2007/08

Submitted recommendations from Councillor Bishop, Executive Councillor Planning and Transportation following a meeting of the Traffic Regulation Order Panel held on 1 February 2007.

On the motion of Councillor Bishop it was RESOLVED that:

- (a) the Parking tariffs for 2007/2008 be increased as set out in the Appendix attached to the report and
- (b) the Taunton Deane Borough (Off-Street Parking Places) (No 30 Amendment) Order 2006 as set out in the report submitted be confirmed.

5. Recommendations to Council from the Executive

(a) General Fund Revenue Estimates 2007/08

The Executive had considered its 2007/08 budget proposals including

- (i) The General Fund Revenue budget proposals for 2007/08 including the proposed Council Tax increase and the Prudential Indicators and
- (ii) Draft figures on the predicted financial position of the Council for the following four years.

It was now a requirement for the Council to prepare not only budgets for the following financial year but also to provide indicative figures for the two years after that. The Medium Term Financial Plan provided an indication of the expected budget gap going forward into 2008/09 and a summary of this position was submitted.

The proposed budget for Taunton Deane would result in a Band D Council Tax of £128.05 an increase of £2.51 (2%) on 2006/2007. This represented an increase of 4.8p per week. The Band D taxpayer would therefore receive all the services provided by the Council in 2007/2008 at a cost of £2.46 per week.

The estimated expenses chargeable to the non parished area of Taunton in 2007/2008 amounted to £27,870.00 an increase of 2% and this formed part of the total net expenditure of the Council.

The Council's Section 151 Officer had confirmed that the Council's reserves were adequate and that the budget estimates used in preparing the 2007/08 budget were sufficiently robust. On the motion of Councillor Williams it was RESOLVED that the budget for General Fund services for 2007/2008 be agreed and that

- (i) the transfer of any potential underspend in 2006/2007 back to General Fund Reserves be agreed;
- (ii) the proposed 2007/2008 budget being an authority expenditure of £13,245,730.00 and Special Expenses of £27,870.00 be agreed in accordance with the Local Government Act 1992;
- (iii) the predicted General Fund Reserve balance at 31 March 2007 of £1,442,400.00 be agreed;
- (iv) the Prudential Indicators for 2007/2008 as set out in the report to the Executive be agreed;

- (v) the revised forecast budget position for 2008/2009 onwards as outlined in the report to the Executive be noted.

(b) Capital Programme 2007/08

Consideration had been given to the proposed General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programmes for the period 2007/2008 to 2010/2011.

For the General Fund the estimated unallocated resources available were £17,000. The proposed new schemes amounted to £145,000 but were self funding leaving the same £17,000 of unallocated capital resources available for future schemes.

For all housing schemes both General Fund and Housing Revenue Account the estimated resources available for 2007/2008 amounted to £6,593k. The proposed capital programme for 2007/2008 amounted to £6,402k. It was proposed that the remaining £191,000 be carried forward to support the Housing Revenue Account Decent Homes capital programme into the future.

Moved by Councillor Weston, seconded by Councillor Croad that the recommended Capital Programme be amended as follows. The Council allocate £100,000.00 towards capital items to improve the Taunton Deane bus service infrastructure subject to discussion and agreement regarding the best use of this money with the County Council, the relevant providers and representatives of local bus users.

The amendment was put and was lost.

On the motion of Councillor Williams it was RESOLVED that both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account capital programme be agreed.

(c) Council Tax Setting 2007/2008

The Council were required to make an annual determination which set its gross expenditure (including the Housing Revenue Account and balances brought forward) and gross income (also including the Housing Revenue account and balances brought forward) with the difference as its budget requirement.

The estimated expenses chargeable to the non parished area of Taunton in 2007/2008 amounted to £27,870 and this formed part of the total net expenditure of the Council. Details had also been received of the parish precepts levied and the appropriate Council Tax at Band D.

The estimated balance on the Council Tax Collection Fund was a deficit of £45,136, Taunton Deane's share of this amounted to £4,830 and this was reflected in the revenue estimates.

The Council's budget requirement included parish precepts and non parished special expenses was £13,630,000. This amount was then reduced by the amount notified in respect of the Borough's Revenue Support Grant amounting to £1,172,035 and the Non Domestic Rates distribution from the pool amounting to £6,983,855.

The net amount having taken the Collection Fund position into account of £5,478,940 was used to calculate the Council Tax at Band D reflecting the parish precepts by dividing it by the total of the Council Tax Base as approved by the Executive in December 2006.

The Council Tax for the Borough (excluding parish precepts and special expenses for the non parished area) was £128.05 an increase of £2.51 (2%) compared to the 2006/2007 Council Tax. Since the meeting of the Executive final notification of all parish precepts had been received. Also since the meeting figures in relation to the Police and Fire Authorities precepts and the likely level of the Council Tax for Somerset County Council had been received. On the motion of Councillor Williams it was RESOLVED:-

That it be noted that at its meeting on 6 December 2006 the Executive calculated the following amounts for the year 2007/08 in accordance with the regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended):-

- (1) 39,786.35 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its Council Tax base for the year.

(2)

Ash Priors	74.00	Neroche	246.02
Ashbrittle	88.39	North Curry	717.91
Bathealton	80.85	Norton Fitzwarren	696.58
Bishops Hull	1,079.90	Nynehead	153.26
Bishops Lydeard /Cothelstone	1,919.98	Oake	329.74
Bradford on Tone	278.16	Otterford	166.26
Burrowbridge	203.46	Pitminster	454.24
Cheddon	643.95	Ruishton/	620.40

Fitzpaine		Thornfalcon	
Chipstable	119.73	Sampfard Arundel	131.54
Churchstanton	308.21	Staplegrove	711.86
Combe Florey	122.31	Stawley	120.43
Comeytrowe	2,088.55	Stoke St Gregory	384.75
Corfe	130.15	Stoke St Mary	210.55
Creech St Michael	943.89	Taunton	15,914.40
Durston	57.64	Trull	1,022.07
Fitzhead	123.31	Wellington	4,576.12
Halse	143.54	Wellington (Without)	297.40
Hatch Beauchamp	256.79	West Bagborough	157.33
Kingston St Mary	460.80	West Buckland	405.03
Langford Budville	215.56	West Hatch	141.36
Lydeard St Lawrence/ Tolland	198.30	West Monkton	1,111.64
Milverton	593.29	Wiveliscombe	1,086.71

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

That the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2007/08 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

- (a) £69,913,650 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) of the Act.
(Gross Expenditure including amount required for working balance).
- (b) £55,398,650 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act.
(Gross Income including reserves to be

used to meet Gross Expenditure).

(c) £13,630,000

being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.

(d) £8,151,060

being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant, additional grant or SSA reduction grant (increased by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its Collection Fund to its General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (*Council Tax Surplus*) and increased by the amount of any sum which the Council estimates will be transferred from its Collection Fund to its General Fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charge) directions under Sec. 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 made on 7 February 1994 (*Community Charge Surplus*).

(e) £137.71

$$\frac{(c) - (d)}{9.2.1(1)} = \frac{13,630,000 - 8,151,060}{39,786.35}$$

being the amount calculated at (c) above less the amount at (d) above, all divided by the amount at 9.2.1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year. (*Average Council Tax at Band D for Borough Including Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*).

(f) £384,270

being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act. (*Parish Precepts and Special Expenses*).

(g) £128.05

$$(e) - \frac{(f)}{9.2.1(1)} = \frac{137.71 - 384,270}{39,786.35}$$

being the amount at (e) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (f) above by the amount at 9.2.1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for

dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special items relate.

(Council Tax at Band D for Borough Excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses).

(h)

Ash Priors	131.43	Neroche	141.87
Ashbrittle	142.76	North Curry	146.85
Bathealton	135.47	Norton Fitzwarren	151.82
Bishops Hull	142.87	Nynehead	148.60
Bishops Lydeard/ Colthelstone	146.42	Oake	140.18
Bradford on Tone	145.11	Otterford	128.05
Burrowbridge	151.15	Pitminster	141.92
Cheddon Fitzpaine	137.37	Ruishton/ Thornfalcon	144.17
Chipstable	138.91	Sampford Arundel	161.80
Churchstanton	150.62	Staplegrove	140.83
Combe Florey	142.77	Stawley	139.68
Comeytrowe	137.63	Stoke St Gregory	143.64
Corfe	136.50	Stoke St Mary	140.94
Creech St Michael	143.63	Taunton	129.80
Durston	128.74	Trull	139.79
Fitzhead	148.73	Wellington	144.31
Halse	144.04	Wellington (Without)	143.18
Hatch Beauchamp	141.29	West Bagborough	143.94
Kingston St Mary	141.07	West Buckland	148.42
Langford Budville	148.93	West Hatch	142.55
Lydeard St Lawrence/ Tolland	138.19	West Monkton	139.29
Milverton	139.01	Wiveliscombe	144.25

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (g) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 9.2.1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate. (*Council Taxes at Band D for Borough, Parish and Special Expenses*).

- (i) See overleaf

(a)

Valuation Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ash Priors	87.62	102.22	116.82	131.43	160.64	189.84	219.05	262.86
Ashbrittle	95.18	111.03	126.90	142.76	174.49	206.21	237.94	285.52
Bathealton	90.32	105.36	120.42	135.47	165.58	195.68	225.79	270.94
Bishops Hull	95.25	111.12	126.99	142.87	174.62	206.37	238.12	285.74
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	97.62	113.88	130.15	146.42	178.96	211.49	244.04	292.84
Bradford on Tone	96.74	112.86	128.98	145.11	177.36	209.60	241.85	290.22
Burrowbridge	100.77	117.56	134.35	151.15	184.74	218.33	251.92	302.30
Cheddon Fitzpaine	91.58	106.84	122.10	137.37	167.90	198.42	228.95	274.74
Chipstable	92.61	108.04	123.47	138.91	169.78	200.65	231.52	277.82
Churchstanton	100.42	117.14	133.88	150.62	184.10	217.56	251.04	301.24
Combe Florey	95.18	111.04	126.90	142.77	174.50	206.22	237.95	285.54
Comeytrowe	91.76	107.04	122.34	137.63	168.22	198.80	229.39	275.26
Corfe	91.00	106.16	121.33	136.50	166.84	197.17	227.50	273.00
Creech St Michael	95.76	111.71	127.67	143.63	175.55	207.46	239.39	287.26
Durstun	85.83	100.13	114.43	128.74	157.35	185.96	214.57	257.48
Fitzhead	99.16	115.67	132.20	148.73	181.79	214.83	247.89	297.46
Halse	96.03	112.03	128.03	144.04	176.05	208.06	240.07	288.08
Hatch Beauchamp	94.20	109.89	125.59	141.29	172.69	204.08	235.49	282.58
Kingston St Mary	94.05	109.72	125.39	141.07	172.42	203.77	235.12	282.14
Langford Budville	99.29	115.83	132.38	148.93	182.03	215.12	248.22	297.86
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	92.13	107.48	122.83	138.19	168.90	199.61	230.32	276.38
Milverton	92.68	108.11	123.56	139.01	169.91	200.79	231.69	278.02
Neroche	94.58	110.34	126.10	141.87	173.40	204.92	236.45	283.74
North Curry	97.90	114.21	130.53	146.85	179.49	212.12	244.75	293.70
Norton Fitzwarren	101.22	118.08	134.95	151.82	185.56	219.29	253.04	303.64
Nynehead	99.07	115.57	132.09	148.60	181.63	214.64	247.67	297.20
Oake	93.46	109.02	124.60	140.18	171.34	202.48	233.64	280.36
Otterford	85.37	99.59	113.82	128.05	156.51	184.96	213.42	256.10
Pitminster	94.71	110.49	126.27	142.06	173.63	205.20	236.77	284.12
Ruishton/Thornfalcon	96.12	112.13	128.15	144.17	176.21	208.24	240.29	288.34
Sampford Arundel	107.87	125.84	143.82	161.80	197.76	233.71	269.67	323.60
Staplegrove	93.89	109.53	125.18	140.83	172.13	203.42	234.72	281.66
Stawley	93.12	108.64	124.16	139.68	170.72	201.76	232.80	279.36
Stoke St Gregory	95.76	111.72	127.68	143.64	175.56	207.48	239.40	287.28
Stoke St Mary	93.96	109.62	125.28	140.94	172.26	203.58	234.90	281.88
Taunton	86.54	100.95	115.38	129.80	158.65	187.49	216.34	259.60
Trull	93.20	108.72	124.26	139.79	170.86	201.92	232.99	279.58
Wellington	96.37	112.42	128.49	144.55	176.68	208.79	240.92	289.10
Wellington Without	95.46	111.36	127.27	143.18	175.00	206.81	238.64	286.36
West Bagborough	95.96	111.95	127.94	143.94	175.93	207.91	239.90	287.88
West Buckland	98.95	115.43	131.93	148.42	181.41	214.38	247.37	296.84
West Hatch	95.04	110.87	126.71	142.55	174.23	205.90	237.59	285.10
West Monkton	92.86	108.33	123.81	139.29	170.25	201.20	232.15	278.58
Wiveliscombe	96.17	112.19	128.22	144.25	176.31	208.36	240.42	288.50

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (h) above by the number which, in proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which is that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands (Council Tax for Individual Parishes and the Borough)

(b) That it be noted that for the year 2007/08 the Somerset County Council, the Avon and Somerset Police Authority and the Somerset and Devon Fire and Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each categories of dwellings shown below.

Somerset County Council	642.26	749.30	856.35	963.39	1,177.48	1,391.56	1,605.65	1,926.78
Avon & Somerset Police Authority	98.11	114.47	130.82	147.17	179.87	212.58	245.28	294.34
Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue Authority	42.30	49.35	56.40	63.45	77.55	91.65	105.75	126.90

That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (a) and (b) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts of council tax for the year 2007/08 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Band	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ash Priors	870.29	1,015.34	1,160.39	1,305.44	1,595.54	1,885.63	2,175.73	2,610.88
Ashbrittle	877.85	1,024.15	1,170.47	1,316.77	1,609.39	1,902.00	2,194.62	2,633.54
Bathealton	872.99	1,018.48	1,163.99	1,309.48	1,600.48	1,891.47	2,182.47	2,618.96
Bishops Hull	877.92	1,024.24	1,170.56	1,316.88	1,609.52	1,902.16	2,194.80	2,633.76
Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone	880.29	1,027.00	1,173.72	1,320.43	1,613.86	1,907.28	2,200.72	2,640.86
Bradford on Tone	879.41	1,025.98	1,172.55	1,319.12	1,612.26	1,905.39	2,198.53	2,638.24
Burrowbridge	883.44	1,030.68	1,177.92	1,325.16	1,619.64	1,914.12	2,208.60	2,650.32
Cheddon Fitzpaine	874.25	1,019.96	1,165.67	1,311.38	1,602.80	1,894.21	2,185.63	2,622.76
Chipstable	875.28	1,021.16	1,167.04	1,312.92	1,604.68	1,896.44	2,188.20	2,625.84
Churchstanton	883.09	1,030.26	1,177.45	1,324.63	1,619.00	1,913.35	2,207.72	2,649.26
Combe Florey	877.85	1,024.16	1,170.47	1,316.78	1,609.40	1,902.01	2,194.63	2,633.56
Comeytrove	874.43	1,020.16	1,165.91	1,311.64	1,603.12	1,894.59	2,186.07	2,623.28
Corfe	873.67	1,019.28	1,164.90	1,310.51	1,601.74	1,892.96	2,184.18	2,621.02
Creech St Michael	878.43	1,024.83	1,171.24	1,317.64	1,610.45	1,903.25	2,196.07	2,635.28
Durston	868.50	1,013.25	1,158.00	1,302.75	1,592.25	1,881.75	2,171.25	2,605.50
Fitzhead	881.83	1,028.79	1,175.77	1,322.74	1,616.69	1,910.62	2,204.57	2,645.48
Halse	878.70	1,025.15	1,171.60	1,318.05	1,610.95	1,903.85	2,196.75	2,636.10
Hatch Beauchamp	876.87	1,023.01	1,169.16	1,315.30	1,607.59	1,899.87	2,192.17	2,630.60
Kingston St Mary	876.72	1,022.84	1,168.96	1,315.08	1,607.32	1,899.56	2,191.80	2,630.16
Langford Budville	881.96	1,028.95	1,175.95	1,322.94	1,616.93	1,910.91	2,204.90	2,645.88
Lydeard St Lawrence/Tolland	874.80	1,020.60	1,166.40	1,312.20	1,603.80	1,895.40	2,187.00	2,624.40
Milverton	875.35	1,021.23	1,167.13	1,313.02	1,604.81	1,896.58	2,188.37	2,626.04
Neroche	877.25	1,023.46	1,169.67	1,315.88	1,608.30	1,900.71	2,193.13	2,631.76
North Curry	880.57	1,027.33	1,174.10	1,320.86	1,614.39	1,907.91	2,201.43	2,641.72
Norton Fitzwarren	883.89	1,031.20	1,178.52	1,325.83	1,620.46	1,915.08	2,209.72	2,651.66
Nynehead	881.74	1,028.69	1,175.66	1,322.61	1,616.53	1,910.43	2,204.35	2,645.22
Oake	876.13	1,022.14	1,168.17	1,314.19	1,606.24	1,898.27	2,190.32	2,628.38
Otterford	868.04	1,012.71	1,157.39	1,302.06	1,591.41	1,880.75	2,170.10	2,604.12
Pitminster	877.38	1,023.61	1,169.84	1,316.07	1,608.53	1,900.99	2,193.45	2,632.14
Ruishton/Thornfolcon	878.79	1,025.25	1,171.72	1,318.18	1,611.11	1,904.03	2,196.97	2,636.36
Sampford Arundel	890.54	1,038.96	1,187.39	1,335.81	1,632.66	1,929.50	2,226.35	2,671.62
Staplegrove	876.56	1,022.65	1,168.75	1,314.84	1,607.03	1,899.21	2,191.40	2,629.68
Stawley	875.79	1,021.76	1,167.73	1,313.69	1,605.62	1,897.55	2,189.48	2,627.38
Stoke St Gregory	878.43	1,024.84	1,171.25	1,317.65	1,610.46	1,903.27	2,196.08	2,635.30
Stoke St Mary	876.63	1,022.74	1,168.85	1,314.95	1,607.16	1,899.37	2,191.58	2,629.90
Taunton	869.21	1,014.07	1,158.95	1,303.81	1,593.55	1,883.28	2,173.02	2,607.62
Trull	875.87	1,021.84	1,167.83	1,313.80	1,605.76	1,897.71	2,189.67	2,627.60

Wellington	879.04	1,025.54	1,172.06	1,318.56	1,611.58	1,904.58	2,197.60	2,637.12
Wellington Without	878.13	1,024.48	1,170.84	1,317.19	1,609.90	1,902.60	2,195.32	2,634.38
West Bagborough	878.63	1,025.07	1,171.51	1,317.95	1,610.83	1,903.70	2,196.58	2,635.90
West Buckland	881.62	1,028.55	1,175.50	1,322.43	1,616.31	1,910.17	2,204.05	2,644.86
West Hatch	877.71	1,023.99	1,170.28	1,316.56	1,609.13	1,901.69	2,194.27	2,633.12
West Monkton	875.53	1,021.45	1,167.38	1,313.30	1,605.15	1,896.99	2,188.83	2,626.60
Wiveliscombe	878.84	1,025.31	1,171.79	1,318.26	1,611.21	1,904.15	2,197.10	2,636.52

(d) Proposals to refresh the Corporate Management of the Council

Consideration had been given to a number of drivers for change which would require a refresh of the Council's Corporate Management structure. The current arrangements had been looked at together with the proposals for the future. These included the personnel changes including the proposed early retirements/redundancies. A second phase further review of the entire organisation was also proposed.

Although the proposals were within existing budgets and could in large parts be carried out by the Chief Executive under delegated powers elements of the proposals required the agreement of the Council. It was also important that the proposal in its entirety was supported by Members.

It was anticipated that the proposed changes would reflect the external and internal drivers for change. The proposals could be met within existing budget levels and after paying back the initial up front costs would return ongoing budget savings of approximately £61,000 per annum to the Council's General Fund. In addition there would be ongoing savings to the Council's Housing Revenue Account.

The total cost of the proposal was £302,000. The majority of this cost fell in 2006/2007 with the remainder falling in 2007/2008. Savings would start to accrue immediately and would be earmarked for paying back the upfront costs of the General Fund Reserve. This would be fully achieved by 2011/2012 meaning that the proposal had a pay back period of 4.9 years.

It was intended that the proposals would ensure that Corporate Management Team remained fit for future as the Council proceeded through a period of unprecedented change and the local government landscape shifted to reflect the issues arising from the Local Government White Paper. On the motion of Councillor Williams it was RESOLVED that

- (i) the proposals to refresh Corporate Management Team be agreed;
- (ii) the early retirements and voluntary redundancies contained in the proposal for the posts of
 - (a) Head of Housing
 - (b) Head of Environment and Leisure
 - (c) Head of Development be agreed and
- (iii) a Supplementary Estimate of £263,000 from General Fund reserves be agreed.

(This would be fully paid back to the General Fund Reserve by 2011/2012 and thereafter the Council's General Fund budget would benefit by approximately £61,000 a year).

(e) Housing Revenue Account, Revenue Estimates and Rent Levels

Consideration had been given to the proposed Housing Revenue Account for 2007/2008. It also included details of the new rent levels, service charges and other housing related charges such as garage rents. It also provided information on the Deane Helpline trading account and the Deane Building DLO trading account. Following the recent ballot on the future of the housing stock there was a gap between the funding needed to deliver the Decent Homes Standard to the Council's housing stock and the funding available of £1.85m per year. On the motion of Councillor Edwards it was RESOLVED that the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2007/2008 be agreed.

(f) Provision of Information Technology and Development Control

Consideration had been given to the replacement of the current in house software package for planning application recording, monitoring and historic data retention software with an established external software package.

The national planning system was currently undergoing significant changes and unfortunately the existing software was not suitable. The quality of the service which was being provided had declined and Best Value Performance Indicators had fallen. This had resulted in a reduction in Planning Delivery Grant received. The Council had gone from being one of the best performing authorities in the South West to being in the bottom quartile. In view of the problems currently being experienced it was felt necessary to develop an external planning software package. This would not only improve the planning function but would assist greatly in delivery of a number of the Council's corporate priorities. On the motion of Councillor Bishop it was RESOLVED that:-

- (i) the proposal to replace the current in house software application for planning application recording, monitoring and historic data retention be agreed in principle;
- (ii) a Supplementary Estimate from General Fund Reserves of £80,000 be agreed. The ongoing revenue costs would be funded from within existing Development budgets.

6. Taunton Railway Bridge

Councillor Weston referred to a statement made by Councillor Bradley at a recent Health and Leisure Review Panel Meeting that Railtrack had finally accepted responsibility for renewal of pigeon proofing measures at the railway bridge in Taunton and further asked Councillor Mrs Bradley:-

- (a) When was this work estimated to begin;
- (b) What agreement had been made to ensure that the effectiveness of the new measures or equipment was monitored and maintained;
- (c) Whether Railtrack also accepted responsibility for repainting and repairing both bridges to an acceptable ascetic standard.

Councillor Mrs Bradley replied that responsibility for maintenance of the bridge was that of Railtrack who had indicated that although bridges were maintained in a strictly rotational order a plan had been developed to deal cost effectively with the problems being caused by pigeons under this bridge.

7. Reports of the Leader of the Council and Executive Councillors

The following reports were made to the Council on the main items of current and future business:-

- (i) Leader of the Council (Councillor Williams)

Councillor Williams' report covered the following topics.

- Housing Stock Transfer
- Local Government Reorganisation
- Improving Services in Somerset
- Budget setting
- Project Taunton
- Affordable Homes
- Retirement of staff

Councillor Williams drew attention to the forthcoming retirement of long serving Council officers Malcolm Western, Pete Weaver and Tom Noall. Council agreed that these officers had been dedicated and committed to providing excellent services and had made a tremendous contribution to the successful operation of the Council. On behalf of all Members of the Council he wished them every success for the future and thanked them for their dedicated service to the Council.

- (ii) Community Leadership (Councillor Mrs Lewin Harris)

Councillor Mrs Lewin Harris' report focused on the following areas within her portfolio.

- Sustainable Community Strategy
- Area Working
- Corporate Equality Scheme

(iii) Planning Policy and Transportation (Councillor Bishop)

Councillor Bishop submitted his report which drew attention to the following:-

- Regional Spatial Strategy
- A303/A358 South Petherton to M5 Taunton
- Planning Applications Somerset County Cricket Club
- Councillors involvement in planning decisions
- Talking Tomorrow's Taunton Deane

(iv) Environmental Services (Councillor Mrs Bradley)

The report from Councillor Mrs Bradley drew attention to development in the following areas:-

- Smoke free preparations
- Food safety
- Health and Safety
- Environmental Protection
- Waste Recycling
- Somerset Waste Partnership
- Networking

(v) Economic Development Asset Management and Tourism (Councillor N P Cavill)

The report from Councillor Cavill covered:-

- Economic Development
- Rural Economy
- Tourism
- Arts and Creative Services
- Asset Management
- Water Links

(vi) Leisure Arts and Culture (Councillor Clark)

The report from Councillor Clark dealt with activities taking place in the following areas:-

- Village and Community Halls
- Sports and Physical Activity Strategy
- Tennis
- Tone Leisure
- Forthcoming Events

- Sports and Health Development

(vii) Housing Services (Councillor Edwards)

Councillor Edwards' report focused on how the Council had continued to improve the energy efficiency of the privately owned housing stock in the Deane using a combination of grants and the cavity wall insulation council tax rebate scheme.

(viii) Resources (Councillor Hall)

The report from Councillor Hall provided information on the following areas within his portfolio:-

- Personnel
- Corporate Support
- ISiS
- Democratic Services
- Procurement
- Financial Services
- Revenues
- Benefits
- Corporate Property and Information Technology

(ix) Communications (Councillor Leighton)

Councillor Leighton's report was submitted by Councillor Williams in her absence and covered the following areas:-

- Public Relations
- Web Content and Marketing
- Consultation

8. The Wellsprings Centre

A report on the issues that had arisen out of the recovery of the project to build the Wellsprings Centre had been submitted to the Executive at its meeting on 6 December 2006. Although there was no decision to be made by Council on this matter the Executive felt that in view of the importance of this project a report should be submitted to Council for information.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(The meeting ended at 10.17 pm)