

Taunton Deane Borough Council

At a meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton on 24 January 2013 at 5.30 pm. (Meeting re-arranged from 22 January 2013)

Present The Mayor (Councillor Hall)
Councillors Mrs Adkins, Beaven, Bishop, Bowrah, Brooks, Cavill, Coles, Denington, D Durdan, Farbahi, Mrs Floyd, Gaines, Hayward, Mrs Hill, Horsley, Hunt, R Lees, Meikle, Morrell, Nottrodt, Ms Palmer, D Reed, Mrs Reed, Gill Slattery, T Slattery, Mrs Smith, Mrs Stock-Williams, Stone, Tooze, Mrs Warmington, Watson, Mrs Waymouth, A Wedderkopp, D Wedderkopp, Williams and Wren

1. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 11 December 2012, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

2. Apologies

The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Ms Lisgo) and Councillors Mrs Allgrove, Edwards, A Govier, Mrs Govier, Henley, Mrs Herbert, Miss James, Mrs Lees, Mullins, Prior-Sankey, Ross and P Smith.

3. Declaration of Interests

Councillors Brooks, Prior-Sankey and Mrs Waymouth declared personal interests as Members of Somerset County Council. Councillors Mrs Hill and Mrs Smith declared personal interests as employees of Somerset County Council. Councillor Wren declared personal interests as an employee of Natural England and as Clerk to Milverton Parish Council. Councillor Hayward declared a personal interest as one of the Council's representatives on the Somerset Waste Board. Councillor Nottrodt declared a personal interest as a Director of Southwest One. Councillor Tooze declared a personal interest as an employee of the UK Hydrographic Office. Councillors D Durdan and Stone declared prejudicial interests as Tone Leisure Board representatives. Councillor Gill Slattery declared personal interests as a member of the Board of Governors at Somerset College and a Patron of the Supporters of Taunton Women's Aid. Councillor Farbahi declared a personal interest as a local owner of land in Taunton Deane.

4. Contract Procedure Rules

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the Contract Standing Orders which had not been updated since 2006 and therefore did not reflect the current partnership with Southwest One.

An audit carried out by the South West Audit Partnership had recommended changes to the Standing Orders to reflect these changes and to ensure that they were up to date.

The Monitoring Officer had therefore reviewed the procedure rules and had proposed a number of changes which had subsequently been approved by both the Constitutional Sub-Committee and the Corporate Governance Committee.

On the motion of Councillor D Reed, it was

Resolved that the Contract Procedure Rules, as set out in the Appendix A to these Minutes, be approved.

5. **Members' Allowances 2013/2014**

Submitted report previously circulated of the Members' Allowances Panel following its annual review of Members' Allowances. A copy of the report and recommendations had been circulated to all Councillors.

Details of the Members' Allowances Scheme that had been recommended by the independent Panel were submitted. The Panel had once again recommended increases to the Special Responsibility Allowance paid to the two Scrutiny Committee Chairmen and had also recommended that the rate paid to carers of Councillor's dependents be increased from £6.08 per hour to £6.19 per hour.

The Panel would be keeping under review the situation relating to the proposal by the coalition Government to scrap Pensions for Councillors and would re-visit whether an allowance should be paid to the Chairman of the new Standards Committee in 12 months time once the extent of the Chairman's responsibilities became clear.

Moved by Councillor Horsley and seconded by Councillor Denington, that the following be agreed:-

Summary of Recommendations

- No increase to the Basic Allowance;
- No increase to Special Responsibility Allowances;
- No increase in the Mayor or Deputy Mayor Allowance;
- To increase the rate paid to carers of Councillor's dependents from £6.08 per hour to £6.19 per hour, to reflect the National Minimum Wage.

The motion was put and was carried.

6. Recommendations to Council from the Executive

(a) Council Tax Base 2013/2014

Consideration had recently been given to the Council Tax Base for the Borough and for each Parish for the 2013/2014 financial year.

The Tax Base had to be calculated for each financial year and was used to determine the Band D Council Tax for the year.

The Council Tax Base was an estimate of the number of Council Tax dwellings in a billing authority's area. The calculation this year also reflected the recently approved changes relating to Class A Exemptions, Class C Exemptions, Long term empty properties premium and removal of Second Homes discount.

In addition, a reduction for the cost of Council Tax Support had been included in the Tax Base as required by the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012.

This reduction had the effect of reducing Council Tax income for Taunton Deane and the major precepting authorities. The Government had announced in mid-December that this reduction in funding for the "cost" of Council Tax Support should also be attributed to Parish Precepts and Special Expenses.

Within the Provisional Finance Settlement for the Council, the Government had included funding for Council Tax Support that included a proportion related to Parishes and Special Expenses. It was therefore proposed to pass on a proportion of this funding to Parishes and Special Expenses to reflect their reduction in funding as a result of Council Tax Support, even though there was no legal requirement to do so.

A relevant share of funding has been calculated based on the Tax Base reduction attributable to Council Tax Support in each parish multiplied by their 2012/2013 Band D Charge. This had produced the following funding requirement:-

| | | |
|---|--------------|----------------|
| | £ | £ |
| Total Funding within Provisional Settlement | | 638,270 |
| Less: | | |
| Allocation to Parish and Town Councils | 42,260 | |
| Allocation to Unparished Area Budget | <u>6,500</u> | |
| Relevant Share for Parishes and Unparished Area | | <u>48,760</u> |
| Amount retained by TDBC to offset Council Tax reduction | | <u>589,510</u> |

The Parishes had been notified of the expected funding allocation and were setting their precepts taking into account this additional allocation.

The non-collection rate (or provision for losses on collection) had been estimated at 1.75%. This was an increase compared to 2012/2013 (1.0%) and reflected increased risks under the local Council Tax Support system, other welfare reforms and continuing wider economic pressures on household incomes.

The recommended Tax Base for 2013/2014 was 37,280.60 Band D Equivalents. This was lower than the Base for 2012/2013 (41,216.39) mainly reflecting the introduction of Council Tax Support discounts within the calculations (-4,314.03).

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

Resolved that:-

- (a) The calculation of the 2013/14 Council Tax Base for the whole and parts of the area be approved;
- (b) In accordance with the Local Authority (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by Taunton Deane Borough Council as its 2013/2014 Tax Base for the whole area for the year shall be **37,280.60** and for the parts of the area listed below shall be:-

| Parish Area | Tax Base | Parish Area | Tax Base |
|---------------------------------|----------|----------------------|-----------|
| Ash Priors | 81.46 | Neroche | 239.15 |
| Ashbrittle | 86.74 | North Curry | 692.23 |
| Bathealton | 84.83 | Norton Fitzwarren | 903.16 |
| Bishops Hull | 1,052.00 | Nynehead | 165.34 |
| Bishops Lydeard/Cothelstone | 1,021.90 | Oake | 317.34 |
| Bradford on Tone | 285.01 | Otterford | 165.11 |
| Burrowbridge | 196.21 | Pitminster | 435.08 |
| Cheddon Fitzpaine | 598.80 | Ruishton/Thornfalcon | 574.63 |
| Chipstable | 129.81 | Sampfurd Arundel | 121.94 |
| Churchstanton | 342.98 | Staplegrave | 708.57 |
| Combe Florey | 116.50 | Stawley | 132.17 |
| Comeytrove | 1,967.11 | Stoke St Gregory | 356.14 |
| Corfe | 132.02 | Stoke St Mary | 198.25 |
| Cotford St Luke | 752.62 | Taunton | 14,115.83 |
| Creech St Michael | 937.95 | Trull | 992.02 |
| Durstun | 58.64 | Wellington | 4,290.56 |
| Fitzhead | 113.55 | Wellington (Without) | 293.61 |
| Halse | 139.03 | West Bagborough | 154.78 |
| Hatch Beauchamp | 249.16 | West Buckland | 424.77 |
| Kingston St Mary | 424.73 | West Hatch | 136.11 |
| Langford Budville | 225.54 | West Monkton | 1,077.78 |
| Lydeard St Lawrence/ Tolland | 199.03 | Wiveliscombe | 1,027.90 |

| Parish Area | Tax Base | Parish Area | Tax Base |
|-------------|----------|--------------------|------------------|
| Milverton | 562.51 | Grand Total | 37,280.60 |

(c) The policy to pass on the relevant share of funding to Parishes and the Unparished Area on the basis described above as a result of the Tax Base reduction attributable to Council Tax Support be approved; and

(d) The authority to approve the Council Tax Base in future years be delegated to the Executive.

(b) Business Rates Retention and the National Non-Domestic Rates Return 1 for 2013/2014

The Executive had also recently considered a report concerning the National Non-Domestic Rates Return 1 (NNDR1) for 2013/2014.

This return included the Estimated Net Rate Yield for 2013/2014, which was to be used for budget setting purposes, and would determine the budget amount for Business Rates income kept by Taunton Deane Borough Council, Somerset County Council and Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Authority under the new Business Rates Retention system, which was to be introduced in April 2013.

The NNDR1 was essentially the net Business Rates income forecast for 2013/2014. The forecast took into account the Rateable Value of the number of hereditaments (business premises) as at 30 September 2012. This provided the Gross Calculated Rate Yield which was then reduced/offset by the cost of collection and an allowance for bad debts.

A further relevant adjustment related to Renewable Energy Schemes whereby 100% of Business Rates yield – for schemes that commenced on or after 1 April 2013, or the amount of increase in yield for existing schemes on or after 1 April 2013 – could be retained wholly by the Council. However, for budget purposes in 2013/2014 this was assumed to be nil.

These calculations provided the Net Rate Yield before transitional arrangements and rate retention.

The key information needed for Business Rates retention and budget setting was the Net Rate Yield excluding transitional arrangements. This had been estimated at £38,695,316 for 2013/2014.

Under the Business Rates Retention Draft Regulations the Net Rate Yield would be shared as follows:-

| | % | £ |
|---|----|------------|
| Share paid to Central Government | 50 | 19,347,658 |
| Share retained by Taunton Deane Borough Council | 40 | 15,478,126 |
| Share passed to Somerset County Council | 9 | 3,482,578 |

| | | |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Share passed to Devon and Somerset Fire Authority | 1 | 386,953 |
| Net Rate Yield | | 38,695,316 |

In accordance with the Provisional Finance Settlement for 2013/2014, a large proportion of the share retained by Taunton Deane would be paid to the Government in the form of a Tariff, to fund a system of tariffs and top ups.

The final amount to be retained by the Council would be in accordance with the Council's Start-up Funding Assessment for 2013/2014, as issued with the Finance Settlement.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

Resolved that:-

- (a) The NNDR1 Return, attached to these minutes as Appendix B, with a Net Rate Yield of £38,695,316 for 2013/2014 excluding transitional arrangements be approved;
- (b) The authority to approve the NNDR1 and Net Rate Yield in future years be delegated to the Executive; and
- (c) Authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer to amend the NNDR1 prior to submission on 31 January 2013, if notice of any further changes to the Regulations by the Government were received that required such amendment.

(c) Corporate Business Plan 2013/2014 to 2015/2016

Consideration of this recommendation was deferred to a future meeting of Full Council.

(d) Introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy in Taunton Deane

Full Council had previously agreed to progress the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in Taunton Deane and had approved a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (PDCS) for consultation.

Consultation on the PDCS, which took place during the summer, had resulted in approximately 20 responses being received, mostly from developers and agents.

The next stage in the process was to publish a Draft Charging Schedule (DCS), taking account of the comments which had been received. There would be a further opportunity for people to make representations prior to the Schedule being submitted for independent Examination. The CIL could then be adopted, providing a mechanism to collect contributions towards the provision of strategic infrastructure.

As a result of the consultation responses, a number of changes had been incorporated into the Charging Schedule prior to its publication as the 'Draft'

that would eventually be submitted for examination.

When this matter was considered by the Executive, the intention of publishing a policy for payment of CIL by installments was noted. However, the wording of this policy was still being refined.

The proposed CIL rates had been derived from viability assessments that allowed for the proportion of affordable housing set out in the adopted Core Strategy (25%). The affordable housing was assumed to be 45% social rent, 15% affordable rent and 40% intermediate. This would provide some reassurance that the introduction of CIL would not put the delivery of affordable housing at risk.

On the motion of Councillor Williams, it was

Resolved that:-

- (a) The Draft Charging Schedule – a copy of which is attached to these minutes as Appendix C – and the proposed Charging Zones be approved for public consultation; and
- (b) Any technical changes to the Installment Policy be signed off by the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and Shadow Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation, prior to the consultation commencing.

(The meeting ended at 6.14 p.m.)