

Full Council Meeting – 23 February 2017

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. Creating a New Council

Public Consultation

- 1.1 A series of roadshows have been held to enable people to ask questions, voice opinions and get the information they need about the new Council proposal. These have been of mixed success from location to location but have at least provided yet another outlet for people to visit and raise awareness of our proposals.
- 1.2 In addition, we have conducted a number of targeted presentations by inviting Town Councils, Parish Councils and community groups to sessions that set out the basis of our proposals followed by a question and answer session. These again have seen varied attendance considering the number of specific invitations sent out.
- 1.3 The consultation period runs until the 28 February 2017 and at present we have 353 responses from the community and a further 13 written submissions from partners and stakeholders including Somerset County Council, Mendip, Sedgemoor and South Somerset District Councils, Parish Councils and Knightstone HA, with several more on the way.
- 1.4 All responses will be listed and submitted to the Secretary of State for consideration as part of the evidence base before a final decision is made by the Secretary of State. We are aiming to make our formal submission for consideration by late April 2017.

2. Budget

- 2.1 As considered earlier at this meeting, besides setting a balanced budget without using General Fund Reserves we are planning to maintain ambitious investment plans despite a continuing squeeze in funding as follows.
- 2.2 Pledging to invest in growth and development schemes to boost the local economy, using money generated by new housing – the New Homes Bonus.
- 2.3 Up to £16,600,000 has been promised for growth and development funding over five years and this commitment will continue despite pressures on public finance.
- 2.4 The spending would be spread across the five years and include:-
 - Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation (£3,000,000);
 - Major Transport Schemes (£2,500,000);

- Town Centre Regeneration (£2,500,000);
 - Employment site enabling and promoting enterprise and innovation (£4,000,000);
 - Marketing, promotion and inward investment (£500,000);
 - Supporting urban extension delivery (£4,000,000); and
 - Preparation of Local Development Orders (£100,000).
- 2.5 Part of the planned funding will be used to bring forward the planned major employment site adjacent to Junction 25 on the M5. It is anticipated this site alone will generate 4,000 jobs - a major boost to the Taunton Deane economy.
- 2.6 This, despite the fact that Taunton Deane Borough Council has seen its core funding cut by 37% over the past three years and the coming year – 2017/2018 – will see further substantial reductions. In all, over the years between 2013/2014 and 2019/2020 funding will have reduced by some £3,300,000 which is a cut of 55% (61% in real terms).
- 2.7 General Revenue Support funding through the Revenue Support Grant, Rural Services Grant and Transitional Grant in 2017/2018 is reduced by £596,000 (47%) compared to the previous year.
- 2.8 Pension costs are also due to increase by some £450,000 in the General Fund due to pressures in the uncertain financial markets.
- 2.9 All the above added pressures on top of a really tight budget but, notwithstanding these cost restraints, we can all take pride in the fact that throughout the recession and continuing reductions in funding, we are still maintaining the desirable front line services so valued by our community.
- 2.5 As an illustration of this see Appendix A showing how the cost of administration and back office services have decreased but delivery of our community services have been maintained and recently slightly increased. No mean achievement in these very difficult times.

3. The Future of The Deane House

- 3.1 On 6 January 2017, Councillors agreed to recommendations to progress with the project to create fit for purpose office accommodation for staff and Members and to let surplus space.
- 3.2 As a Council we no longer need the space we required when The Deane House was built 30 years ago. In fact, we only require about one third of the space we did. This is in line with many local authorities and private sector businesses across the country who have rationalised their accommodation to embrace modern ways of working. The Deane House project is a very visible symbol to staff and others that the way we work will radically change.

- 3.3 Avon and Somerset Police confirmed The Deane House as its preferred location for Taunton's local Policing and Response Teams after identifying Taunton Police Station for closure as part of its estates strategy. The Police will move into a substantial part of The Deane House to create a new Taunton Police Station with Enquiry Office but there would still be room for partners in the public or private sector. This well and truly defeats the myth that Taunton has lost its Police Station. It never has been without a Police Station and this now guarantees it for the foreseeable future.
- 3.4 The aim is to fully let the remaining floor space and that will deliver a £2,400,000 saving on Taunton Deane's planned cost of running the building over a period of 10 years. We will also be protecting a valuable asset for generations to come as not only will we be keeping it as a capital asset (saving the family silver) but we will be maintaining it as well as preserving its value.

4. Phase 2 Rural High Speed Broadband

- 4.1 The information below was taken off Gigaclear web site when investigating availability in my home village. If rural, do check your own availability, it is simple to do just by entering a postcode:-

"Gigaclear and Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) are working together to bring the UK's fastest broadband to your community. Gigaclear will be installing a new, pure fibre-to-the-premises broadband network in your area over the next 3 years bringing speeds from 50Mbps up to 1000Mbps to properties in the area. Currently, Gigaclear and CDS are finalising the coverage area and the rollout schedule which should be confirmed during March/April 2017. In the meantime, you may register your interest by clicking the button below. This does not commit you to anything, it just allows Gigaclear, who will be building the network, to keep you informed on progress with the rollout."

<https://www.gigaclear.com/postcode-checker/>

- 4.2 If of interest, please do try the link to the post code checker above for your own property and check the position in respect of your home or business, please also do register an interest.....it is without commitment!

5. Garden Town Status

- 5.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council's bid for Garden Town Status was unveiled on 3 January 2017 and recognises Taunton Deane's strategy to deliver major regeneration in the town centre, new sustainable communities, improved transport and supporting infrastructure, marrying development with access to green spaces.
- 5.2 Taunton Deane has been awarded the substantial sum of £350,000 to cover the master planning costs and identify the important infrastructure requirements. This will be a major benefit in seeking capital funding from the

£2.3 billion announced by the Government to support the creation of Garden Towns and Villages.

- 5.3 Development will centre on urban extensions already identified – Monkton Heathfield, Comeytrowe/Trull and Staplegrove.
- 5.4 Planning for the new communities has identified opportunities to improve access to the surrounding countryside and link green space to housing/ employment sites through country parks, community woodland and recreation areas.
- 5.5 The Council has been working closely with partners, including Somerset County Council, on the bid and news of its success has been widely welcomed. Garden Town status will contribute to the support we need to deliver the vision and supporting infrastructure. This is a huge recognition of Taunton, its aims and its place as a key player in the South West.

6. Coal Orchard and Taunton Town Centre Enhancement

- 6.1 No doubt full details will be in Councillor Edwards' report but I would add I am pleased to know the following are being progressed.
- 6.2 Coal Orchard – Determination of the planning application is anticipated by the March Planning Committee for this important town centre site and its development is an important link between Firepool and the existing retail area of the town centre.
- 6.3 Plans have been drawn up for the existing town centre enhancement that shows further pedestrianisation of some streets. This has been the subject of an initial public consultation process but is now scheduled for full pre-application consultation as recently announced. This will be the opportunity for traders and the public to have their say on these exciting proposals to enhance the retail area and improve the environment for our shoppers and visitors.
- 6.4 We now have free Wifi in the Town Centres of Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe which increases the connectivity of these three places. Search for Moretaunton, MoreWellington or MoreWivey when you are visiting these towns. The W-fi will link to existing local sites to help traders and consumers alike.
- 6.5 By Christmas 2017 we should be seeing major changes in our car parking charging and promotion. The introduction of "Pay on Exit" from our major car parks and "Vehicle Message Signing" to assist with the location of parking spaces on the approach to the centre. These are much needed improvements that are regarded as essential by the retailers to improve the visitor experience. Yet more planning and investing for the future.

7. Firepool

- 7.1 We have been working closely with our partners and their architects in order to provide a viable and deliverable scheme that responds to the concerns raised previously.
- 7.2 The scheme now being finalised will contain a very similar mix and quantum of uses as proposed previously but with key changes in relation to format and quality of car parking and the introduction of activity along both sides of the central pedestrian boulevard through the site, connecting Firepool to the Railway Station and the existing Town Centre.
- 7.3 A fresh planning application is anticipated in the coming weeks, which will be subject to full consideration

And finally.....

I had the pleasure of being invited to a Conquest Riding Centre launch of a new promotional video. They are an organisation that exists purely on public donations and what a fantastic amount of good they do. Anyone attending and hearing direct from parents and users of the Conquest Centre could not fail to be moved by the impact they have on people's lives and the fulfilment it brings to those being helped or the helpers. A fantastic organisation that we can be proud to have here in Taunton Deane.

Councillor John Williams

Council Meeting – 23 February 2017

Report of Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

The strategic vision for Taunton Deane's most disadvantaged areas, is that residents lives will improve significantly and that these priority areas will look better, feel safer and in the future place a more proportionate demand on public services. These services will be delivered in urban areas through co-ordinated, frontline, problem-solving, multiagency teams of individuals providing early help and based together in these areas. Rural parishes with more scattered communities will be helped to access services through community centres and local village agents identifying, signposting and supporting isolated residents to get the help they need. Urban priority areas need excellent education and health facilities close by which are then accessible to all, if we are to build independence, resilience and raise aspirations in individuals, families and communities, to sustain improvements and reduce the need and costs of intervention in the future.

1. The Policing and Crime Act 2017

- 1.1 The Policing and Crime Act received Royal Assent on Tuesday, 31 January 2017. This further reforms policing and enables important changes to the governance of fire and rescue services. The changes should build capability, improve efficiency, increase public confidence and further enhance local accountability.
- 1.2 The main provisions will overhaul Police complaints and disciplinary systems to increase accountability; will further safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation; and ensure emergency services work together to improve their services.
- 1.3 Where a local case is made, Crime Commissioners may take on responsibility for Fire and Rescue Services. Avon and Somerset Police will be sharing their headquarters at Portishead with Avon Fire and Rescue Service from July although governance arrangements still remain separate (they are the only coterminous Fire Authority).
- 1.4 For more details please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/policing-and-crime-bill>.

2. New Text Number to help combat Rural Crime - 81819

- 2.1 Avon and Somerset Police are trialling a new text service for three months to help prevent and detect rural crime and are asking rural communities and businesses to help by providing information and intelligence about suspected crime in their area.
- 2.2 The new number will allow the public to text information directly to the Rural Crime Team, who will be able to assess and action the intelligence quickly and efficiently. The number will not be monitored all the time but the team will be looking at it when they are on duty. It therefore should not be used for reporting crimes.

- 2.3 Many people who belong to the Farm Watch Scheme wanted a facility to be able to pass on information and respond to messages quickly, and the new number will allow that.
- 2.4 The Rural Crime Team want to hear from anyone who has information about any suspicious or potentially criminal activity in their area. For example, details of people and/or vehicles seen behaving suspiciously, potentially stolen goods or livestock being offered for sale either to the public or at markets, and to report sightings of stolen vehicles they have put out an alert for. Anyone can use the text if they have information about rural or agricultural crime in their area. It is not just for Farm Watch members.

3. A&SPIRE (Changes for More Effective Policing)

- 3.1 Last autumn, Avon and Somerset Police and the Commissioner started work to match resources more closely with the changing criminal landscape, increasingly complex demands and the aspirations of the new Police and Crime Plan. This work, overseen by the Chief Constable, is now ready to share with partners although it is subject to formal staff consultation. Letters from the Commissioner and Chief Constable have recently been shared with all Council Members.
- 3.2 This has resulted in a new operational framework for the force based on four functional (and nationally recognised) directorates each headed up by a Chief Superintendent. This should also support any future collaboration with other forces.
- 3.3 The Neighbourhood and Partnership Directorate brings together all the frontline community problem solving and early intervention capability of the Police under one umbrella for partners to work more effectively with to tackle challenges within our communities. The proposals achieve efficiencies and savings without the need for any reduction in frontline Police Officers or PCSOs over the next four years.
- 3.4 This directorate is particularly welcomed and has formed around the learning from the Halcon One Team model pioneered and developed with us here in Taunton Deane and adopted elsewhere across the force as best practice by Neighbourhood Teams who want to work most effectively with partners in challenging areas.
- 3.5 Chief Superintendent Ian Wylie who heads up this directorate spent two years as our Superintendent and was a great supporter of One Team working as is his successor Superintendent Mike Prior. We look forward to welcoming the Police when they relocate Taunton Police Station to The Deane House which will be fully refurbished by next Spring.

4. 101

- 4.1 This non-emergency Police telephone line has improved a lot and the majority of people 'phoning the Police now use it with less than four percent abandoning their call (this has dropped from ten percent over the last twelve months and continues to reduce).
- 4.2 There is still misuse of both numbers (999 and 101). The Commissioner gave a recent example of a mother who rang 101 as she was trying and failing to get her

seven year old son to have a bath; and a drunk who rang both numbers seventy times in one night; both unnecessarily tying up the switchboard.

5. Fraud and Cyber Crime

- 5.1 We are as likely to be a victim of online/ cyber crime as nearly all other types of crime added together. Those who try to defraud us are professional criminals and very plausible. We need to be very sceptical when we are contacted by email or telephone. This can be worrying and off putting for those less familiar with using information technology which can be a fantastic tool and a wonderful companion. It is something we must be mindful of.
- 5.2 The most recent profile of fraud and cyber-crime offences in the Avon and Somerset Area has seen a ten percent increase over the previous six months. This equates to over five thousand reports of crimes to Action Fraud, with an estimated economic loss to victims of £9,500,000. The majority of victims were female and aged between 50 to 69 years of age. Avon and Somerset is ranked as the twelfth highest force for reported frauds (up one place from the last reporting period).
- 5.3 Avon and Somerset Police have been looking into operational options to address this and in April are introducing a model of vulnerable victim safeguarding which has been used by Sussex Police Force for a number of years and evaluated by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies. It is now identified as best practice in the delivery of protective services for vulnerable victims of fraud.
- 5.4 Two new roles have been created using Police staff investigators (so not Police Officers) to sit within the Economic Crime Team. These investigators will have access to the Action Fraud data on a daily basis and will assess victims against a vulnerability matrix to identify their need for enhanced protective support. These victims will then be referred to the local Neighbourhood Teams, who will make or facilitate home visits to give specialist prevention and educational support. A training programme for Beat Team Officers is underway for staff who will be carrying out these visits.
- 5.5 Prevention is the only really practical way to defeat fraud and online (cyber) crime. Avon and Somerset Police undertake preventative and educational anti-fraud activity on a rolling basis in partnership with <https://www.getsafeonline.org> (where lots of good advice can be found) and by using Police support volunteers to visit the most vulnerable.
- 5.6 Action Fraud www.actionfraud.police.uk is the UK's Fraud and Cyber Crime Report Centre. You can also sign up to Action Fraud Alert for news of current online scams in your area.
- 5.7 Last week saw the official opening of the new National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) in London which is a dedicated part of GCHQ. It will provide a single authority on cyber security offering advice, guidance and support to the Government and British businesses large and small. It aims to transform our cyber defence and deterrence capability. Nearly all our critical services connected to the Internet and benefit from being more dynamic, more cost-effective and more responsive but this comes with vulnerabilities which must be properly guarded

against. The guidance the NCSC delivers will underpin our online prosperity for the future.

6. Facebook Live Events with the Commissioner and Chief Constable

- 6.1 The Commissioner began bi-monthly Facebook live videos between herself and the Chief Constable in September last year. The first video had over 3,100 views and reached 9,800 people. Topics included hate crime, recruitment and mental health.
- 6.2 The second live video in November included discussions on Police Officer assaults, domestic abuse, modern slavery and Police Stations and had over 4,200 views.
- 6.3 The latest Facebook Live event took place in January and included discussions on use of tasers, body worn video cameras, fraud and rural crime and so far has had 2,300 views. These are informative and are listed under 'videos' on 'Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner' Facebook page.

7. Safely Passing Cyclists in a Car

- 7.1 Allowing one and a half metres or more space to pass a cyclist in a car is considered safe and the Police are watching out for motorists who pass by too closely or quickly and do not allow cyclists enough room.

8. Somerset Businesses Against Crime

- 8.1 Somerset Businesses Against Crime (SBAC) is a well established Taunton based organisation supporting local businesses in Bridgwater and Taunton to reduce crime and keep communities safe. It provides a radio link and offender management system to share information on offenders and suspects. It is paid for by contributions from the businesses.
- 8.2 The radio system has been updated over the past two years to digital with support from the businesses, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Taunton Unparished Area Fund. There were some initial teething problems and these were identified through an independent review commissioned by SBAC, funded by us which recommended some small enhancements which SBAC have since implemented. The new system is working well.
- 8.3 The radio system has also had the benefit of being monitored by Sedgemoor District Council's CCTV Team but this will cease from April because Sedgemoor are intending to set up their own Business Crime Reduction Partnership.
- 8.4 SBAC consulted its business members on their views of the service provided to them and informed partners and interested parties (such as we are at Taunton Deane) about the impending change. All the businesses were satisfied with the work of SBAC and the radio link and none wished to move over to another Business Crime Reduction Partnership. On the strength of its business member support, SBAC are currently looking at options for the monitoring of the radio link and the evidence capturing which is provided by CCTV.

- 8.5 SBAC is a Safer Business Accredited Business Crime Reduction Partnership, one of only six in the South West region, and is involved with a number of activities that bring benefits to the community. These include the Food Bank, the Dementia Friendly Taunton Campaign and the Taunton Deane Domestic Abuse Forum.

9. Public Space Protection Order in Wellington

- 9.1 Following consultation and with the support of Wellington Town Council and the Police, the Portfolio Holder has signed this off on behalf of the Council as authorised by Full Council last July.
- 9.2 New signs will go up by May to replace the existing ones. The area covered has slightly increased and new psychoactive substances are also prohibited.

10. Health Prevention Matters

- 10.1 This training is to help elected Members understand more about health within their communities and what they can do to make a difference in this role.

It is more than just the absence of disease and looks at the social determinants of health, health inequalities, some of the underlying causes of these and national policies aimed at preventing ill health and tackling these inequalities.

The training considers the role Councils have in tackling health inequalities and how to help prevent ill health through Council services which impact on health and wellbeing. The advantages of a 'health in all policies' approach across Council services and the importance of strategies and plans a Council has in place to influence and implement these.

It should provide a useful context for the role of an elected Member and what we can do alongside others to improve the health of our communities. Members will have Ward profiles to help them be more aware of health outcomes in their area and examples will be provided of how we might each have an impact.

11. Somerset Prevention Charter

- 11.1 Prevention is key and the case for investing in prevention is now accepted by all and the public sector is collaborating more than ever before to work out how to do this and redesign services accordingly. This is evident in the various transformation plans underway including health, housing, Policing and social care. These are aligned as never before and collectively should achieve much more to improve health and life opportunities with a far wider impact beyond immediate health and supporting changing behaviours which often make for much healthier lifestyles.
- 11.2 The Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board have asked partners including the District Councils to endorse the Somerset Prevention Charter which is full of common sense. With three established One Teams in Taunton Deane, we are already putting many of these principles into practice on the frontline where it really

does start to make a difference. The Charter also reflects the strategic vision of the Taunton Deane Strategic Partnership and it will help us to explore what else we can do to further thread prevention through the services we deliver on behalf of our communities.

12. Countywide Oversight of One Team Working

- 12.1 Safer Somerset Partnership has agreed to provide strategic oversight for the burgeoning One Teams in the County and Assistant Director, Simon Lewis will be taking the Strategic Officer Lead on this alongside the Portfolio Holder.
- 12.2 This fits with both his wider involvement in Health and Wellbeing and seat on the Somerset Safeguarding Board. Local governance and accountability will continue through the Taunton Deane Strategic Partnership with similar arrangements in the other three districts with their One Teams.

Councillor Jane Warmington

Council Meeting – 23 February 2017

Report of Councillor Terry Beale – Housing Services

1. Deane Housing Development

Creechbarrow Road, Taunton

- 1.1 The latest batch of units have been handed over including Seabrook House the new block for the actively elderly. These new homes comprise 15 one and two bedroom flats with the five ground floor units being wheelchair accessible. This is a fine example of the high standard of housing we are delivering with the needs and requirements of our older residents at the heart of the design of these new homes.

Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green, Wellington

- 1.2 This development is progressing well. The recent road closure allowed the old public house to be fully demolished and utility work to be done within the road way. We look forward to the units being completed and ready for handover later this year.

Laxton Road, Taunton

- 1.3 The Planning Application is being finalised and we are looking at various ways of developing the site including off site manufacture.

12 Moorland Close, Taunton – Community Centre and 3 units plus 4 unit conversion at 121-123 Outer Circle

- 1.4 A planning application for 12 Moorland Close has been submitted and being verified by Planning at present.
- 1.5 With regard to 121-123 Outer Circle we are waiting confirmation from Planning on the current designated use and subject to their response we will then discuss obtaining approval through the Permitted Development route – where planning permission is not required.

Oake

- 1.6 Discussions are still continuing to determine the way forward for these properties. There are a number of options being examined and costs are being worked up.

Off-Site Manufacture (OSM)

- 1.7 Information is still being gathered on options and costings for OSM. This will feed into officer discussions between Development and Housing Services where solutions to the shared housing /Under 35's issue are being discussed.

Development Pipeline

- 1.8 There is a range of future development options. Financial and feasibility work is started to further inform the decision as to which sites to bring forward next.

2. Welfare Reform

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

- 2.1 The total DHP budget for 2016/2017 was £150,894.00. Up until 9 February 2017 103 DHP's have been awarded to Taunton Deane tenants with a total of £33,943.15 being paid direct onto the rent accounts and a further £3,989.96 committed to come onto rent accounts before the end of the financial year, this equates to 39% of the total DHP spend.
- 2.2 There have been many reasons why DHP's have been awarded to Council tenants, some of these include rent shortfall due to the 'bedroom tax', low income families and help with arrears.
- 2.3 We will continue to provide help and support to those tenants who need it to claim DHP and also any other Benefits they may be entitled to.

Universal Credit

- 2.4 On 20 April 2015 the "live" Universal Credit (UC) service was launched in Taunton Deane. This meant that single newly unemployed people would no longer be able to make claims for separate benefits and would now have to make a claim for UC.
- 2.5 Since 26 October 2016, the Council has moved from the "live" service and is now in the "full" service. The main difference is that now everyone who makes a new claim or those with a qualifying change in circumstances will have to claim UC.
- 2.6 Under the "full" service UC sends an email to Taunton Deane asking us to verify that the claimant is a tenant and also the total amount of rent that they are liable for. From 26 October 2016 until 10 February 2017 we have received 257 requests, we do however know that UC does not always send a verification request so this may not be an accurate number of claims for our tenants.
- 2.7 They also send verifications for those in Temporary Accommodation and those we have been placed in bed and breakfast.
- 2.8 All Housing Officers offer support to tenants who need help to make their online claim, and can sign post those who are able to make the claims themselves but do not have internet access to areas where there is free access.
- 2.9 For vulnerable residents the Housing Benefit Team receive funding from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to help them make their claims. There is also an element of support needed to help people manage their claims online, as they do not receive anything in letter form - it is all by messages in their journal on the online account.
- 2.10 Clearly for some managing an online account when they have very little knowledge of a computer, this can be difficult and very challenging. It is likely therefore that this group of people will call on us to help them through their difficulties.

- 2.11 The DWP are very clear that we are in a “test and learn” phase of UC. The Council reports issues on behalf of our tenants and problems we have with UC to our local DWP Partnership Manager. This then gets reported up the UC chain in the hope that the issues are resolved, before the service is further rolled out to other parts of the country, to avoid other claimants facing the same issues.
- 2.12 Some tenants have had a very easy transition to UC while others seem to have experienced issue after issue, some of the recent problems we have had are:-
- Housing Costs payments not being included in the award;
 - Payments not being made on the correct day;
 - Other benefits or elements of previous benefits being stopped when they should not have been; and
 - Bedroom Tax or Non Dependant Deductions being incorrectly applied.
- 2.13 As UC is a massive culture shift it will take some time to embed. Many residents are not used to paying their own rent as they used to claim Housing Benefit they are now getting used to having to pay monthly and having to budget monthly, which for some will be a challenge.

3. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Service

3.1 **Performance** - Satisfaction with the service remains high. At the end of Quarter 2 92% (target 66%) of tenants who reported ASB in year to date rated the help and advice received as good or excellent. This is a slight reduction since the last update.

3.2 Casework

ASB cases recorded between 28 September 2015 – 26 September 2016 (12 months)

45 new cases were opened during the period:-

Alcohol	5
Domestic Abuse	1
Drugs misuse/Dealing	7
Garden Nuisance	3
Harrasment	12
Hate Crime	1
Noise	12
Physical violence	2
Vehicles	2
Total	45

3.3 **Closed cases** - 21 cases were closed during the period, all cases were resolved.

4. **Repairs and Maintenance**

4.1 The new Deane Depot is now fully operational and functioning and has proved to be a great success.

4.2 There are a significant amount of projects continuing within the Directorate and some of these have been modified and combined. I do not intend to go into detail but suffice it to say the below represents the current progress of the Project Route Map:-

- From the original 'Route Map' of 30 Projects:
 - 12 Completed on Target;
 - 2 Completed out of Target;
 - 4 on Target to Complete;
 - 11 Delayed or combined with new Targets;
 - 1 on Hold Pending Transformation; and
 - 2 Additional Projects are on Target.

4.3 The new arrangement to bring the Gas Servicing and Maintenance Teams In-House is progressing with TUPE moving forward and equipment being sourced.

Councillor Terry Beale

Council Meeting – 23 February 2017

Report of Councillor Patrick Berry – Environmental Services

1. Environmental Health and Licensing IT

- 1.1 The Environmental Health Team along with the Licensing Team currently use different IT systems neither of which is suitable for efficiency and will need replacement soon. There is a need for mobile on-line devices which allow on-site input and would easily allow reports and letters to be generated and emailed to customers. These would support the Transformation Project and its aims of a paperless system. An investigation into possible software replacements is continuing in close cooperation with the Transformation Team.

Environmental Health

- 1.2 Food inspections: These are up to date with all inspections on track to complete our food inspections for the year 2016/2017. The team have taken part in campaigns such as the Food Standards Agency 'Freezer Fairy' over Christmas. Officers have also dealt with complaints regarding rat infestations at two premises on East Reach, Taunton over the Christmas and New Year period. Pest control contracts are now in place at these premises and voluntary closures were agreed for both premises.
- 1.3 The Pest Control Service can now be provided in both Taunton Deane and West Somerset, for both domestic treatments and contracts for rats, mice and wasps.
- 1.4 Private Water Supplies: Our fees and charges have been reviewed for 2017/2018. Our risk assessment work is up to date and annual returns to be sent to the Drinking Water Inspectorate.
- 1.5 Air Quality – Our Annual Status Reports have been submitted to the Department of Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs regarding Air Quality in the district. Officers continue to monitor air quality across Taunton Deane and West Somerset with the main contributing factor to air quality being traffic.
- 1.6 Safety Advisory Groups (SAG's) – The team is able to provide specific safety advice to event organisers. Several large events will be taking place this year including UB40 at Taunton Racecourse, Somerset Rocks in Vivary Park and International T20 cricket at the County Ground. The Team has carried out a review of the SAG terms of reference and management of the group. A County-wide SAG review has also taken place looking at arrangements in other authorities. Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils now have a more formal approach to event safety to ensure that guidelines are followed

and that event safety is promoted across both areas. We work closely with the Licensing Team, Police, Fire, SW Ambulance and Highways.

- 1.7 The Team continues to work with the Police on anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues across Taunton and West Somerset. Our officers attend ASB meetings regularly with the Police and other partners to discuss cases that have an Environmental Health involvement.
- 1.8 We are also working closely with partners such as the Somerset Waste Partnership on a town centre litter campaign during 2017 that will be part of a wider campaign in the Somerset County Gazette.
- 1.9 Recent enforcement action includes:- The serving of Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 Notices on properties in Taunton and Wellington for accumulations of rubbish with evidence of associated pest activity.
- 1.10 We are currently investigating noise related complaints across the district and the team have successfully prosecuted under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 for noise from a compressor affecting nearby residential properties.

Licensing

- 1.11 After a lengthy recruitment process, Fern Avis and Bradley Fear were appointed to the vacant Licensing Officer and Licensing Assistant posts respectively. Both joined in January and have made promising starts to their careers in Licensing. They replace Olivia Denis and Sally Atfield who left in October and December 2016 respectively.
- 1.12 95% of all applications completed between the 1 October and 31 December 2016 were completed within a 14 day timescale, meaning the service achieved its performance target for the second quarter running after five unsuccessful quarters. The performance of the service over the last quarter is especially pleasing given a reduction in staffing levels during the period, as explained above.
- 1.13 The Licensing Sub-Committee recently revoked the licence of a taxi driver who was filmed driving dangerously along the A358, before involving himself in a 'road rage' where he pushed another motorist over. The Sub-Committee determined that the driver was not a 'fit and proper person' and therefore his licence should be revoked in 21 days. The driver has yet to appeal the decision.
- 1.14 Plans to refresh the alcohol and entertainment licence, which enables events and other cultural activity in the town, have been rejuvenated following a meeting this month between the Council's Economic Development staff and Licensing along with representatives of the Police and Fire Authority. The Assistant Director of Business Development intends to revise the original draft licence application, following feedback from the Police and Fire Authority and with both sides close to agreement, is hoped a new licence can be in place around late Spring/early Summer.

- 1.15 The Licensing Team and Environmental Health Team Managers have, together with the Internal Health and Safety Manager, established a 'Safety Advisory Group' (SAG) for Taunton Deane and West Somerset. This has been done in order to pull together experts from partner agencies, such as the blue light services, to provide safety advice to events and festival organisers. Similar but less formal groups have been formed previously. The new SAG has formal terms of reference.

2. Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning

- 2.1 The new Contractor, IdVerde, started to deliver the Services on 1 February 2017 in Taunton Deane. The same contractor started to deliver the services in West Somerset on 1 December 2016 and is performing well.
- 2.2 Members will have noticed the staff in their new uniforms and the brand new fleet of street sweepers and cleansing vans collecting litter and cleaning the streets already. Chris Hall and Richard Burge are in regular contact with IdVerde and are monitoring standards carefully.
- 2.3 All cleansing aspects included in the tender have been transferred with IdVerde now responding to fly tipping incidents, toilet cleaning, street sweeping, litter collection and the collection and disposal of dead animals. They are managing all cleansing related customer enquiries on our behalf and their performance will be monitored regularly.
- 2.4 Taunton Deane is still responsible for Abandoned Vehicles and will work with our existing partners to maintain this responsive service.

3. Somerset Waste Partnership

- 3.1 Recycle More: Now that the budget has been approved, work is currently underway to prepare for introduction of enhanced kerbside recycling collection services. The changes will see an increase in materials being recycled, which in turn means changes to collection vehicles and depot infrastructure.
- 3.2 A prototype of a new recycling collection vehicle, which uses an imported chassis but has a body entirely fabricated in the UK, has just started collections in parts of Somerset. The vehicle has significantly increased capacity to collect light and bulky materials, like plastic and cardboard and early feedback is that the crews like it and productivity is improved.
- 3.3 Recycle More will also see the introduction of new ways of working with "in cab" technology bringing real time information about progress of vehicles on rounds, issues encountered with collections and improved awareness of special requirements, such as assisted collection properties.

4. Crematorium

- 4.1 The new Manager, Garry Bowles, has taken up his post and is getting himself up to speed with our facilities. Since he is a new arrival he is looking into the

service we provide with a view to making improvements where they can be offered. However Garry is aware that he has taken over an excellent facility and is already developing a pride in the services.

- 4.2 Burial ground capacity and variety of grounds is one of the first areas that will be investigated. Garry has also indicated an interest in modernising the service's look and branding. Subject to appropriate agreement, the service could be known as Deane Bereavement Service or similar and a new logo will be developed.

5. Somerset Building Control Partnership

- 5.1 Despite an initially difficult start I am pleased to report that the Somerset Building Control Partnership is performing well against the objectives approved by Full Council and in its service delivery.
- 5.2 Whilst we expected the partnership would make the approved savings we did not anticipate further savings against the partner contributions at such an early stage. This has been possible due to many of the budgets that were initially set within the partnership being estimated.
- 5.3 As we set the budget for 2017/2018 the known costs have become clearer and in accordance with the inter-authority agreement the reductions have been passed on to the partners.
- 5.4 Taunton Deane will see a reduction of 12% on their contribution to the partnership in 2017/2018.

Councillor Patrick Berry

Council Meeting – 23 February 2017

Report of Councillor Mark Edwards - Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Culture, Tourism and Communications

Section 1: Business Development

Support for Digital Innovation

- 1.1 Members will recall that the Council hosted the Taunton Digi event at the County Ground in November 2016. Delivered jointly by the Council with Santander Bank and The Claims Consortium Group, the event was attended by around 100 local and national businesses with an interest in the digital revolution.
- 1.2 Since the event we have completed the production of the Taunton Digital Prospectus, giving us a vision and route map of how to grow a digital sector. The Prospectus identifies seven work streams, including strengthening our links with digital businesses, providing good quality business support, and providing the right type of land and premises to meet businesses' needs.
- 1.3 Arguably the most important workstream is around workforce development, and the Prospectus points out that a strong cohort of digital businesses depends upon a ready supply of suitably qualified employees. This area of activity is firmly the remit of the schools and colleges, and it lends significant weight to the need for a dedicated University for Somerset, located in Taunton Deane.
- 1.4 The Prospectus is being overseen by a group of leading local businesses alongside Council officers, and we shall continue to work together to develop this important sector. Contact David Evans, Business Development Manager, if you would like to receive an electronic copy.

Get Business, Get Digital

- 1.5 The Council is working alongside West Somerset and Sedgemoor District Councils on a programme of support for start-up businesses. The programme is being delivered by Cosmic and Business Information Point, which is located in Devon.
- 1.6 Get Business Get Digital offers support to those living and working in the area through one to one advisory sessions and a range of workshops and talks, delivered at locations spread throughout the three Districts. A variety of business and digital support is offered on topics ranging from digital marketing trends to filling out your tax return.

- 1.7 To date in 2017 three workshops have been held in Taunton Deane, two in The Glass Box in Taunton Library and the third at Cotleigh Brewery in Wiveliscombe. 34 businesses have so far attended these workshops.
- 1.8 As an extension to the Get Business Get Digital programme, officers are currently planning a 'Get Digital' week, from 20-24 March 2017. Business workshops will be held in venues across Taunton Deane and West Somerset on each day of the week, each with a different contents.

Taunton Deane Business Awards (TDBA) 2017

- 1.9 The promotion of this year's TDBA continues, and I am pleased to report that the Council and Francis Clark Chartered Accountants are jointly sponsoring the scheme. Sponsorship has also been secured for each of the ten categories of award from all types of business within Taunton Deane.
- 1.10 I would ask Members to encourage businesses to consider applying for an award, as it is an excellent opportunity to celebrate success.
- 1.11 There are ten categories for businesses to enter, from best start up to best provider of Corporate Social Responsibility. Go to www.tauntondeanebusinessawards.co.uk/ for more information.

Somerset Leader Programme

- 1.12 Members may be interested to have details of this EU funded programme, which went live in Autumn 2016, offering grants to businesses in the Borough.
- 1.13 Taunton Deane is covered by three Leader programmes, namely, Making it Local (covering the Blackdown Hills), the Western Somerset Programme (which covers all of our Western Wards, Wellington, and the Eastern, Rural Wards around Taunton), and the Somerset Levels and Moors programme. In summary, all of the Borough with the exception of Taunton's Urban Wards is covered. .
- 1.14 Making it Local has £1.4m. <http://makingitlocal.org/index.php>
Western Somerset has £1.48m <http://western.somersetleader.org.uk/>
Somerset Levels and Moors has £1.69m
<http://levelsandmoors.somersetleader.org.uk/>
- 1.15 They are all currently 'live' and receiving applications. Grants of up to £35,000, 40% of eligible costs are available. All three are intended to improve the economy of the rural areas and the quality of life for residents. They have common EU priorities, but put different emphasis on different strands. The priorities are:-
- Support to increase farm productivity;
 - Support for micro and small businesses, including farm diversification;
 - Support for rural tourism;
 - Provision of rural services;

- Support for cultural and heritage activities; and
 - Support for increasing forestry productivity.
- 1.16 Granny Gothards Ice Cream in Stoke St Gregory, Hestercombe House and Gardens and Tilbury Farm in West Bagborough have all received grants. Officers are working with another four Taunton Deane businesses to submit applications.
- 1.17 The three programmes are led by Management Boards, and the Council is represented on each by Councillor Dave Durdan for Levels and Moors and Making it Local and Councillor Peter Watson for Western Somerset.

Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) - Rural Funding Programme

- 1.18 The Government has recently launched the new Rural Development Programme for England funding opportunity for rural infrastructure projects in the Heart of the South West area. Funding is available to support the costs of capital expenditure on rural infrastructure with the aim of creating jobs and growth in the rural economy.
- 1.19 In total £2,100,000 is available for distribution until March 2019, with contributions of between 40% and 100% of eligible costs depending on which sector the applicant is in. Grants between £35,000 and £170,000 are on offer.

Support for Investors

- 1.20 I was pleased to note this month that Aldi has announced its intention to open its first foodstore in Taunton Deane, which will be in Bathpool, on the site of the former J&K Aquatics store. Officers met with the company in 2015 to encourage their investment into Taunton Deane, and have maintained a supportive relationship since.
- 1.21 During the year to date, the Business Development Team has provided direct assistance to 55 prospective inward investors, offering land and property searches, liaison with Planning, recruitment, and other support. In addition, the team has submitted representations on 58 business related Planning Applications.

Junction 25 Employment site Local Development Order Consultation event

- 1.22 Members will be aware that the Council is preparing a Local Development Order (LDO) to bring forward a new 25 hectare Strategic Employment Site to the rear of the Park and Ride facility at Junction 25 of the M5. The Planning service has appointed Peter Brett Associates to draft the LDO, which will be subject to full consultation.
- 1.23 A public and business information event is currently being planned, to be held at The Holiday Inn on Wednesday, 1 March 2017. Officers of the Business Development Team are organising the business event, and I am pleased to

report that, at the time of compiling this report, 70 businesses have signed up to attend.

- 1.24 A report of the events will be provided in my report to the next Full Council meeting.

Taunton Deane Business Directory

- 1.25 In 2015 the Council worked with Burrows publications to produce a Business Directory for Taunton Deane. A printed guide is supplemented by a comprehensive online directory, called "it's local" : <http://www.itslocaltauntondeane.co.uk>. Work is now continuing to replace the guide, which I anticipate being completed in April.
- 1.26 The printed guide presents a useful overview of the Taunton Deane, intended to attract inward investors to the Borough. Copies will be distributed directly to prospective investors as well as via local commercial property agents and other outlets. It has been funded entirely through the sale of advertising space to local businesses, supplemented by editorial provided by the Council. The guide is currently being finalised, and I will ask officers to ensure that every Member is provided with a copy.

Wellington Business Event

- 1.27 Officers are working with businesses in Wellington to organise a business event at the Wellington Rugby Club. The event will be on 20 April 2017 and will include talks and workshops on subjects of relevance to businesses.
- 1.28 Business facing services of the Council will be invited to exhibit alongside other business support organisations, and all businesses in the Wellington area will be welcome.

Arts and Events Grants 2016/2017

- 1.29 During the current financial year the Council allocated £20,000 towards support for Arts organisations and arts events in Taunton Deane. The budget was allocated to the following:-

Taunton Carnival - £300 towards singers and equipment to enable a morning event on Castle Green in advance of the evening procession.

Go Create - £1000 towards Taunton Live which ran over seven days 18 - 24 July 2016.

Brew Food Festival - £1000 towards the organisers, By Invitation Events and Click Your Heels Events, for an inaugural food festival for Taunton.

Wassail Theatre Company -£250 towards research and development for 'BLACKMAN' a new play built around the real life story of a Somerset person that speaks to an important national issue and is produced in Taunton.

Taunton Choral Society - £1000 towards bringing in groups of young people to make choral music more accessible and inclusive to the general population of Taunton.

The Brewhouse - £1500 towards a week of free activities in Somerset Square for young people and their families to engage in arts and cultural activities.

CICCIC - £300 towards a free youth and family music event at Taunton Flower Show.

Somerset WI - £500 towards an embroidered history of Taunton in partnership with the local Heritage Services.

FUSE Performance - £2500 towards a series of outdoor arts events to re-imagine Taunton public spaces, including Flying High Aerial performance, walkabout street theatre, High Five stilts acts, living statues and Lumiere light shows.

Take Art - £5000 towards delivery of a touring scheme to rural communities.

Somerset Art Works - £2325 towards delivery of Somerset Art Weeks and Somerset Open Studios.

SPAEDA - £1000 towards an exhibition and workshops celebrating drawing as part of the Big Draw Festival.

Rural Grants 2016/2017

1.30 During the current financial year the Council has offered financial support towards the following rural projects:-

Point Three CIC Wellington - £1,003 towards the business support elements of the town's Christmas event, namely the events programme, the production of A5 flyers for the event on 19 November 2016, and the production of a walking trail around Wellington businesses.

Stawley Village Shop - £963 towards decorating work.

The King Alfred Burrowbridge - £2000 towards new equipment.

Wivey and 10 Parishes Business Group - £1890 towards a programme of business support projects for 10 parishes businesses.

Wellington Business Association (WBA) - £595 towards a re-drawn town map for the WBA members.

Training and Equipment Grants 2016/2017

During the current financial year four new businesses have been given grants to assist them to buy items of equipment or to enable them to provide training. The businesses were Beat Ales in North Curry, Gina Collins in Taunton, Kerry Walcroft

in Norton Fitzwarren, and Stefano Del Moro toward his new Italian deli store in Wellington.

Section 2: Destination, Events, Retail Marketing and Visitor Centre

Destination Marketing

- 2.1 The first Visitors Guide for Taunton Deane since 2007 has now been produced by the Marketing Team. Working in collaboration with Giles Adams, the guide has been designed with the day visitor and group market in mind.
- 2.2 20,000 copies have been printed on its first run, half of these will be circulated through Take One Media to outlets across Southern England and South Wales, the remaining half will be distributed to key gateway locations and will also be available from the Visitor Centre.
- 2.3 The Marketing Team attended the South West Group Travel Show with the Museum of Somerset in early February and will be attending the British Tourism and Travel Show with the West Somerset Railway in late March to promote Taunton Deane to group buyers and tour operators. Officers continue to work with Visit Somerset and South West partners on other tourism initiatives and campaigns.
- 2.4 The www.visitsomerset.co.uk/Taunton destination website is currently being refreshed for the new season, this refresh will include foreign language versions of the site (with content provided by the students who have worked in the Visitor Centre).
- 2.5 With the launch of the new Visitors Guide and Town Centre Wi-Fi (which uses our social media platforms as one of the entry screens), the team have rebranded our social media accounts to become Visit Taunton. Facebook currently has over 6,300 likes, Instagram nearly 1,100 followers and Twitter over 5,800 followers, these continue to be used to promote attractions, events, retail, special offers and services available in the Visitor Centre.
- 2.6 The team have also been working with Business Groups and the Town Council of both Wellington and Wiveliscombe to create their own social media channels – Visit Welly and Visit Wivey. These will provide local content of relevance to users of the free Wi-Fi in these town centres.

Events

- 2.7 The Marketing Team have commissioned a new online booking portal for events taking place on our open spaces (this will go live in the early summer) and are now providing the welcome desk for all event enquiries. This new account management style of working should improve the service we provide and encourage more events to take place.
- 2.8 An encouraging events programme for 2017 is coming together with a series

of new events planned in addition to popular favourites. As well as events being promoted in the Visitor Centre and on our destination website and through social media, regular promotional features on key events can be found in What's On Somerset magazine and through sponsorship of "the World Tour of Taunton" programme on Tone FM.

- 2.9 A remodelled Taunton Events Group with a new Terms of Reference will next be meeting on the 17 March 2017. Sub-groups focussing on funding streams and event management plans will be created to help provide further support to event organisers.
- 2.10 Officers have already begun discussions with a number of interested parties on Christmas 2017 and are actively supporting the arrival of the Cricket World Cup in late June in addition to a wide number of other events.

Retail Marketing

- 2.11 The Marketing Team continue to support Taunton Town Centre, with daily promotion of businesses, offers and reasons to come and shop on social media. Best practice on town centres is being developed through membership of the Association of Town Centre Management group.
- 2.12 Regular account management meetings are being held with businesses within the town centre, with a monthly e-newsletter sent out to all town centre contacts.
- 2.13 In addition to the town centre independent retail map produced before Christmas, officers have now produced a leaflet to promote our very wide and varied eating and food venues in the area. Both of these are available from the Visitor Centre.
- 2.14 Promotional spaces in the town centre have been transferred to the Marketing Team from Licensing. Officers intend to refresh the use of these to increase the number of bookings received.

Visitor Centre

- 2.15 The rotunda unit in Vivary Park has now joined the promotional package available for businesses and event organisers to promote themselves in Taunton Town Centre. Various targeted marketing of these units, plus the banner space in Castle Bow has taken place in recent months which has resulted in an increase in bookings.
- 2.16 Lastly the Visitor Centre Team were recent proud recipients of a Bronze award for Visitor Information at the recent South West Tourism Excellence Awards. We congratulate them on their continuing success.

Section 3: Town Centre Regeneration

Coal Orchard Redevelopment

- 3.1 The planning application for a mixed use scheme is currently progressing through the planning process. I understand that this application should now be considered in March by the Planning Committee.
- 3.2 Officers also intend taking a report to the March Executive to examine the Business Case, due diligence and risks, and will be seeking borrowing approvals to be put into place for funding the preferred development option.
- 3.3 The case once approved by Executive will travel on to the next available Council meeting for inclusion within the Council's Budget. In parallel, once the Executive has taken its decision, officers will commence procurement and legal work to create a development agreement against the preferred option.
- 3.4 We have also commenced work on a detailed Business Case for expansion of The Brewhouse Theatre which follows up on the venue study delivered by our partners at Arts Taunton. This work will be carried out in tandem with the ongoing outline planning application.

Wi-Fi in Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe

- 3.5 Wi-fi has now been installed into the central areas of each of the towns. The Wi-fi is targeted at visitors and will be managed in conjunction with the existing websites and organisations in each settlement. This adds to the area's digital connectivity and will be a positive benefit for each town. However it does require optimising and tweaking which is planned for the week commencing 20 February 2017.

Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) – Phase 2

- 3.6 Since the last Council meeting, contracts have been awarded by CDS to enable the further rollout of Broadband service in the area. This contract was awarded to Gigaclear who provide a fibre to the premises solution at ultrafast speed (1MB). This is a great result for those areas that will receive those services. This contract is due for completion by the end of 2019. The detailed maps will be available in the next few months.

Section 4: Asset Management Service General Fund Activities

Asset Management Service General Fund Activities

- 4.1 Having relocated the Asset Management Service to join Property Services on the ground floor of The Deane House this has realised benefits in terms of new ways of working, electronic document management and better and more coordinated working with Property Services, being a key requirement within the structure and transformation within Property and Development.

Estate Management Work

- 4.2 A number of significant changes are now taking place within the Estates Team to ensure we act more commercially and at the same time provide an improved customer service. Within the existing service consultant budget, some work is now being externalised to help in terms of capacity and providing for a different skill set. The annual asset valuation exercise has been outsourced along with a small number of other projects but this trend is likely to continue.
- 4.3 Progress on key projects continues to be reported weekly to the Leader, Portfolio Holder and Senior Officers and this new arrangement is working well in providing greater visibility and accountability.
- 4.4 A new Case Management Register is now operating which tracks circa 250 live projects across different portfolios, enables better management of cases by individual officers but also greater visibility and other management information to Managers. Other arrangements around a new team email address, new instruction form templates, improved training, documented processes and a suite of templates and increased emphasis around commercialism and outsourcing of some work is all helping in providing an improving Estate Management function to better support the Council.
- 4.5 Current and significant projects include:-
- Former Park Keepers Cottage, 277 Cheddon Road, Taunton – This property is being taken to auction in February 2017.
 - Sale of land at Frobisher Way, Taunton – A report is coming initially to Scrutiny to seek a resolution to enable this to move forward.
 - The Deane House investment and letting to Police – Asset Management have had a key role in getting this project to the current position and will continue to do so moving forward with securing additional occupiers.
 - Flood attenuation works at Bradford on Tone – Moving forward, Asset Management will have a key role and have contributed to the award of the contract for external consultants. Asset Management will oversee the land acquisition element of this significant project.

Asset Data and Compliance Work

- 4.6 Significant work is continuing in respect of surveying the General Fund stock to develop comprehensive stock condition data of a level not had before. A further benefit of having this data is that it will enable the performance of individual assets to be measured.
- 4.7 The resulting appraisal tool being developed, considering costs alongside income at individual asset level, will enable the Net Present Value of assets to be known along with valuable cashflow data during that 30 year period.

- 4.8 This is a level of sophistication not previously applied to the General Fund portfolio and will be key in enabling active asset management of these assets in the future through understanding each asset's performance and, through this, greatly assisting in decision making. Surveys of properties are now complete, the final surveys of land are almost complete and a new Asset Strategy will be presented for adoption in Summer 2017.
- 4.9 As for the Landlord Health and Safety Work across the General Fund portfolio, we are continuing to gather data (on asbestos, servicing, fire risk assessments, legionella testing, electrical safety etc) and, where necessary, commissioning further works. New policies are now in place.
- 4.10 Progress continues to be made on procuring a comprehensive Asset Management System to improve the availability and accessibility of data, improve efficiencies and to bring in line with the Housing Revenue Account portfolio. A decision has now been made to adopt Capita Open Assets and this will sit nicely with the wider suite of Capita modules already being used.

Section 5: Media, Marketing and External Communications

- 5.1 The start of 2017 has been extremely busy for communications with the announcement on Garden Town status being made.
- 5.2 As the Council had submitted a strong bid, we were prepared with a release that was issued over the Bank Holiday weekend. Media interest was considerable with radio and TV interviews, as well as the print media.
- 5.3 A successful media briefing, with partners, was held on the public realm announcement which again resulted in strong media interest with resulting broadcast interviews and a large spread in the County Gazette.
- 5.4 The start of the year also heralds the annual budget setting. A media briefing was arranged and well attended. This will be followed up with a press release following the Full Council's budget decisions.
- 5.5 The proposal for the single new Council and consultation has generated interest locally and regionally and has been picked up by the Local Government media. The February Deane Dispatch edition focused on publicising the consultation and encouraging people to get involved.
- 5.6 Partnership working continues to strengthen – we worked closely with Police communications when they confirmed The Deane House as their preferred accommodation option.
- 5.7 Communications Officers across Somerset are working together to prepare for the Somerset County Council's Elections on 4 May 2017, using some excellent material provided by the Electoral Commission.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting – 23 February 2017

Report of Councillor Roger Habgood – Planning Policy and Transportation

1. Planning Policy

Planning Strategy – Evidence Base

- 1.1 Work on the review of the evidence base to support local Planning Policy is continuing. This week we have commissioned work to refresh our Green Infrastructure Strategy. This will help to identify future projects key to realising the aims of our new Garden Towns status.
- 1.2 The brief for a new Retail/Leisure and Employment Study is being finalised.
- 1.3 The Policy Team is now working through the current Core Strategy and Town Centre Area Action Plan to identify obvious areas to address in the review and evidence base gaps.

Junction 25 Local Development Order (LDO)

- 1.4 Informal consultation on the LDO for the Strategic Employment Site will commence on 1 March 2016 with an event at the Holiday Inn, Taunton. This is an open community event. Formal consultation on the draft Order will follow later in the Spring.

Mid Devon Local Plan

- 1.5 The Council has submitted a response to the Mid Devon Local Plan Review which includes proposals for a large allocation at Junction 27 anchored by 14,000 sq m of retail floor space. Concerns have been expressed about the compliance of such a proposal with National Planning Policy and potential impact on Wellington and Taunton Town Centres.

2. Neighbourhood Plans

Trull and Staplehay

- 2.1 We are currently awaiting to hear back formally from Trull and Staplehay whether they wish their plan to progress to referendum.

Other Neighbourhood Plans

- 2.2 The Council continues to support the preparation of plans for West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine, Creech St. Michael and Ruishton and

Thornfalcon. The Plan for West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine has been shared informally for officers to comment upon.

3. Garden Town Status

- 3.1 Officers will be attending the first meeting of a new national 'Garden Towns' forum with the Department of Communities and Local Government next Friday, 24 February 2017 in London.
- 3.2 This forum should prove a helpful opportunity to share ideas and information as well as raising live issues directly with the Government. A Green Infrastructure staff post will be advertised shortly which is partly funded from the Garden Town award.
- 3.3 Officers will continue to take forward elements of our Garden Towns proposal including the commissioning of key studies which include the aforementioned Green Infrastructure Strategy and Retail/Leisure and Employment Study.

4. Major Applications Performance

- 4.1 Major application performance for Taunton Deane has been excellent with 100% of decisions since April 2016 being made within 13 weeks or an agreed extension of time. Of these 34 applications, 29 were approved with 5 being refused. Officers continue to work with applicants to find solutions to problems to aid the planning process.

5. Quantock House, Taunton

- 5.1 The planning application for the redevelopment of Quantock House to provide a 62 bedroom care home and 58 assisted living apartments was recently considered by the Planning Committee who resolved to grant planning permission subject to a Section 106 Agreement.

6. Planning Enforcement

- 6.1 The Planning Enforcement Team is now back up to full strength and is working through all outstanding cases (400).
- 6.2 The Constitutional Sub-Committee recently considered a report to allow for the speeding up of the process for dealing with more minor breaches of planning control and to allow for resources to be properly directed to the most controversial and harmful breaches of planning control.

7. Taunton Town Centre Public Space Improvements

- 7.1 In January the Council and its appointed transport and urban design specialists WSP/Parsons Brinckerhoff held a drop-in session for

owners and managers of shops and businesses located in the town centre. The session outlined the Council's ambitious draft proposals for changes to the town centre and sought to gain the general views of those affected and to understand their needs and concerns. The information gained helped to inform and refine the design process.

- 7.2 A public exhibition detailing the proposed Taunton Town Centre Improvement Scheme will be held at Taunton Library, running from Tuesday, 21 February to Saturday, 18 March 2017. A consultation questionnaire will be available for members of the public to complete, either in hard copy or on-line. During the consultation period, there will be a number of sessions when the Project Team will be present in the Library to talk to members of the public. Subject to consultation, the intention is to hold a trial of the scheme to start in Autumn 2017.

8. Traffic Signage and Pay on Exit Car Parking

- 8.1 The team have been working hard in past six weeks on completion of the detailed specifications for procurement. We are now entering the procurement phase of the project and aim to complete installation prior to Christmas 2017.
- 8.2 As part of this project, key brown tourist information direction signs have been reviewed and a refreshed set of plate signs agreed on the key routes into Taunton. This is in line with the corporate priority around way-finding into the town. The plate signs relating to all car parks are also being reviewed as a secondary element of the project to give clarity around the status of car parks and clear directions to all. This will be addressed in next six months.

9. Car Parking Performance

- 9.1 Car park utilisation continues to be marginally better year on year across all car parks.

10. West Somerset Railway (WSR)

- 10.1 Members and officers have been meeting with WSR and Somerset County Council to support ambitious plans to enhance their gateway site at Bishops Lydeard. This represents a significant investment in this major tourist and heritage asset.
- 10.2 The site plans include provision of a new museum, coach storage sheds and improved parking facilities. It is planned that this will be complemented by operating a regular mainline connection to Taunton.
- 10.3 It is hoped that this can be trialled in the next year and we fully support this additional rail capacity which would create a link to the mainline from Bishops Lydeard. WSR also plan to improve the Minehead and

Williton sites with a complementary offer across the line which will enhance visitor experience.

11. Bath Place, Taunton

- 11.1 Bath Place is currently being resurfaced in conjunction with Somerset County Council and working closely with local traders - work continues.

12. Long Term Transport Strategy

- 12.1 Work is continuing with Somerset County Council to refresh the Taunton Transport Strategy, with a document to come through the democratic process for approval in Summer 2017.

Councillor Roger Habgood

Council Meeting – 23 February 2017

Report of Councillor Mrs Catherine Herbert - Sports, Parks and Leisure

1. Parks

Taunton's Vivary Park

- 1.1 I am really proud that Vivary Park has earned a 2016 Certificate of Excellence from TripAdvisor.
- 1.2 The "Jewel in the Crown" of the County Town maintained an overall rating of at least four out of five in order to qualify for the prestigious ranking. The certificate will be proudly on display in the town centre rotunda.
- 1.3 The park also automatically received a Certificate of Excellence badge on its page at TripAdvisor.co.uk, and is currently number two in its list of the best places to visit in Taunton Deane.
- 1.4 Now in its sixth year, the prestigious Certificate of Excellence designation recognises establishments that consistently earn great TripAdvisor reviews.
- 1.5 To qualify for a Certificate of Excellence, a hospitality business must have been listed on TripAdvisor for at least 12 months, maintain an overall TripAdvisor rating of at least four out of five, and have a minimum number of reviews.

Open spaces

- 1.6 Winter cutting back and tidying of shrub beds continues.

Deane DLO Move

- 1.7 The team are now settled into the new Deane DLO Depot at Westpark, Wellington and the new environment is supporting a positive and invigorated way forward.

2. Play and Leisure

Playing Pitch Strategy

- 2.1 Thank you to everyone who attended the briefing on this subject. The Strategy is nearing completion and will be considered by the Community Scrutiny Committee soon.

Parish Play Grants

- 2.2 The latest round of grants attracted two applications which are currently being assessed and processed.

3. GLL (Taunton Deane)

Headline News

- 3.1 Tone Leisure fully merged with GLL on 1 January, 2017.
- 3.2 This report format will follow the GLL four pillars: BETTER Communities, BETTER People, BETTER Service and BETTER Business.

BETTER Communities

- Project Wellington - A fun day was held in partnership with Taunton Deane Borough Council, Knightstone, Get Set services and Wellington ONE Team. 167 children and parents registered on the day at Cades Farm play area.
- National Older People's Day - Tone Leisure attended this event at the Brewhouse, which was attended by 300 older people. Tone's tailored products for older adults were promoted on the day eg. Health Walks, Walking Football, Forever Active and Nordic Walking.
- Community engagement sessions were run in Vivary Park in partnership with Taunton Deane Borough Council and Knightstone as a way of supporting those affected by the loss of the play area due to the Creechbarrow Road project.
- Learning disability sessions in partnership with Future4 Resource Centre, Roman Road, Taunton. Through funding from Somerset Skills and Learning 16 adults with learning difficulties from Six Acres Future4 centre have enjoyed 6 weeks of swimming at Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa and Health/Nature walks in their local community. Staff at the centre are now continuing to support these service users to continue to keep active by regularly attending these sessions each week. The next stage of the project sees more learners experience Trampolining and Zumba activities.
- Health Walks - In 2016, 334 people walked on Tone's Taunton based Walk Well scheme and 100 new walkers were registered during the year.
- This Girl Can Run - GLL now has a beginners ladies running group at Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa, Wellington Sports Centre and Wellsprings Leisure Centre. Many of these ladies are completely new to exercise and running. Attendance is approximately 8 ladies per group each week, and some ladies that started with a target of running 5 km have now completed the Taunton 10 km.
- Bumps and Beyond - This partnership project, with the NHS Midwifery Team at Musgrove Park Hospital and Knightstone Housing Association, has seen over 80 pregnant ladies and 20 mums and babies access the tailored

ante/postnatal fitness classes, which include aqua natal, yogalates and pregnancy circuits.

BETTER People

- Ed Hamblett, new General Manager of Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa, commenced his employment at the end of November 2016.
- Chris Storer was offered the role of General Manager at Wellington Sports Centre and commenced his employment on 16 January 2017. Chris has recently held the role of General Manager of Whitby Leisure Centre.

BETTER Service

- GLL is currently exploring a joint partnership bid with Age UK and Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership (SASP).
- UV has been installed and commissioned at both Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa and Taunton Pool, funded by Taunton Deane Borough Council.

BETTER Business

Wellsprings Leisure Centre held a successful events programme during December by hosting 5 Christmas Party evenings attracting over 2,000 merry customers, along with a Cinderella Pantomime attended by 350 customers.

Councillor Catherine Herbert

Council Meeting – 23 February 2017

Report of Councillor Richard Parrish – Corporate Resources

1. Transformation Project

Proposed New Council

- 1.1 The Public Consultation exercise is proceeding well and we are engaging with the public and key stakeholders via a variety of different means including roadshows, meetings with Parish and Town Councils and the website.
- 1.2 The consultation will run until 28 February 2017. We are reviewing the responses as they are received and will be preparing a summary report to accompany the proposal to the Secretary of State.

New Organisational Design

- 1.3 We have been undertaking work over the past couple of months, which has been supported by Ignite, to understand more about the activities we currently undertake, our readiness for change and to identify opportunities for change.
- 1.4 This builds on the work undertaken to inform the High Level Business Case agreed by Members last summer. The result of this work will help to inform our future organisational design.

Support Plans

- 1.5 We are developing People Support and Customer Change plans to support the delivery of the new operational model and to support staff and customers through the process of change.

Technology

- 1.6 Implementing appropriate technology solutions will underpin our ability to deliver the fundamental changes we need to make to the way we work. A Member Working Group to focus on technology is now up and running to focus on this area.

The Deane House Accommodation Project

- 1.7 Recommendations were put to a special Full Council on 6 February 2017 and approved by the majority of Members.

2. SHAPE Partnership Services - Law and Governance

Legal Referrals 2016-2017 – Q3 (October to December)

Received from Taunton Deane Borough Council	83
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Category	Sub-Category	No. of Referrals TDBC
Commercial, Contracts and Procurement	Advice – existing contracts	3
	Complex company or trust structures	
	Construction contracts	
	Drafting and negotiation of new contracts	5
	Establishment of special purpose vehicles – e.g. partnering arrangements; companies limited by guarantee	1
	EU procurement rules and Council Financial Regulations and Standing Orders	
	Major commercial projects – e.g. PFI/PPP not listed in the section above	
	State Aid	
Electoral Law	Conduct of elections	
Employment	Advice on Employment Law & Procedures	
	Disciplinary appeals & employment tribunal cases	
	TUPE	
Enforcement/ Prosecutions	Advice on enforcement policy and procedures	
	Anti-social behaviour and High Hedges	
	Benefits	
	Car parking fines	
	Environmental	
	Food standards	
	Highways	
	Housing	3
	Licensing	
	Planning enforcement	
	Statutory and other nuisance	
Governance	Constitution	
	Corporate/Policy advice	4
Highways	Definitive Map Modification Orders	

Category	Sub-Category	No. of Referrals TDBC
	Rights of Way	
Housing	General advice on all aspects of housing including policy and tenancy agreements	6
	Homelessness	
Information and Complaints	Corporate complaints and Ombudsman investigations	
	Legal advice on FOIA, DPA SAR and EIR requests and policies	1
Licensing	Advice	2
	Attendance at licensing committee and sub-committees	1
Litigation	Advice and conduct of proceedings in relation to negligence	1
	Advice on litigation and how to avoid it	
	Advice to either Party's insurers	
	Commercial litigation	
	Debt recovery	2
	Disrepair	
	Homelessness appeals	
	Housing/property reposessions and advice	6
	Injunctions	1
	Judicial review and defending civil claims	1
	Personal injury	
	Professional negligence	
	Property damage	
	Statutory appeals	
	Trespass	
Warrants and RIPA applications		
Planning	Advice on town and country planning matters	2
	Attendance at Planning and Regulation committees	
	Building Regulations advice	
	Common land and village greens	
	Compulsory purchase	
	Conservation Areas (Order and enforcement) plus Article 4 Directions	
Planning contd.	Lawful Development Certificates (CLUEDs and CLOPUDs)	4

Category	Sub-Category	No. of Referrals TDBC
	Listed building (Enforcement and Repair Notices)	
	Other orders etc. under the Localism Act 2011	
	Public Inquiries and Appeals	
	Rights of Way, Diversion Orders and Temporary Closure Orders	
	Road naming orders	
	Section 106 Planning Obligations, Enforcement Notices and Stop Notices	4
	Tree Preservation Orders	
Property	Agreements	1
	Empty properties	
	Encroachment/trespass	1
	Leases	3
	Licences	1
	Property law advice	13
	Purchases	
	Right to buy	17
	Sales	
Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act	Application for judicial approval	
	Legal advice on the application of the Act to Council activities	
Training and Information	Updating and advice on forthcoming legislative changes	
	TOTAL	83

3. Corporate Services

Corporate Strategy and Performance

- 3.1 The Taunton Deane Quarter 3 Performance report has been produced and circulated to the Joint Management Team. This is not scheduled to be reported to Members as we now only receive reports at Quarter 2 and 4.
- 3.2 There are no major concerns. Only three out of 35 measures have been identified as being currently well below target and these have been brought to

the attention of the relevant managers. These are priority housing repairs within time 80% (98% target), customer complaints 68% (90% target) and draft minutes for committees 58% (100% target). Improvement in statistics is expected.

- 3.3 The Corporate Plan for 2017/2018 is currently being drafted and once agreed with all Service Areas will be sent to Members and the Executive by early March 2017.
- 3.4 All Service areas (including Corporate Services) have reviewed and updated their respective Risk Registers as at January 2017.
- 3.5 No Data protection incidents have been reported and no Independent Commissioners Office (ICO) decisions have been found against the Council in the last quarter. This outcome is welcomed.
- 3.6 Three Local Government Ombudsman Decisions were received for in the last quarter. Two complaints were found as no fault in the Council's actions. One decision found maladministration in relation to the way a Right to Buy application was handled and the Council has accepted the decision and implications.

Customer Contact Service

- 3.7 Meetings have been held with Somerset County Council to review the customer service based on the Service Level Agreement we have in place and to consider potential future efficiencies.

Facilities Management

- 3.8 Work is being undertaken to review staff car parking due to issues of insufficient capacity in The Deane House Car Park at present and a review of the usage of the pool cars is being undertaken given that the scheme has been live for three months. Outcomes of this will be reported in due course.

HR and Organisational Development

- 3.9 Focus of the team has been on training, data imputing and building the new HR Payroll system.
- 3.10 The TUPE transfer of Deane DLO Cleansing staff to Id Verde on 1 February 2017 was completed successfully.
- 3.11 The team continue to support absence review meetings across the Services. Absence data for Q3 is due to be provided later this month.
- 3.12 Officers have attended a meeting with the Taunton Chaplaincy Service with a view to offering a confidential support service to staff. This is a welcomed development.

- 3.13 The recruitment service is currently supporting a number of partner, permanent and agency vacancies, in particular the final phase of the Building Services restructure.
- 3.14 IR 35 - This change comes into effect on 1 April 2017 and requires contractors who meet the criteria to pay tax and NI as though they were an employee. We are currently reviewing our contractors to identify if any will be impacted by these changes.
- 3.15 From 1 April 2017 the Council will pay an Apprentice Levy of 0.5% of the pay bill (£70,000 estimate) and will be able to recoup this cost by offsetting approved training against the levy. We are working with Bridgwater and Somerset College to identify approved training that could be used to develop both our existing staff and apprentices and suitable training courses to widen the current apprenticeships that we offer.
- 3.16 The Government has also set public sector bodies with more than 250 employees a target of employing an average of 2.3% of employees as new apprentices by 2020 – this equates to approximately 12 new apprentices each year.

4. ICT and Information

- 4.1 The ICT Service successfully transitioned from Southwest One in December 2016. Since then we have stabilised the Taunton Deane ICT service, including setting up a new Self-Service Helpdesk portal for users to raise and track ICT incidents. We are getting very positive feedback from users about the new service.
- 4.2 Alongside this we have been very busy delivering major upgrades to the Housing and Revenues and Benefits systems, preparing for the forthcoming year end activities.
- 4.3 Also, the four major projects associated with the SAP replacement, Finance/ Procurement, HR/Payroll, Website and Customer Relationship Management (Interim) have reached the critical phase with go live due at the end of March. The Application Engineer's team is fully committed on these projects.
- 4.4 Finally, we are commencing various projects associated with Transformation and accommodation changes. The deployment of the new telephone system to The Deane House has commenced by extending the cloud based 8x8 system we deployed as part of the new Deane DLO Depot accommodation. Other components of 'Smart' working are also underway.

5. Southwest One (SW1) Exit and SAP Replacement

- 5.1 Over the two months since services returned - other than a few teething problems – the transfer was successful and continues to work well.

- 5.2 The Customer Contact Service is now being managed by Somerset County Council under a 12 month temporary arrangement and is also working well.
- 5.3 The main financial 'true-up' negotiations have been completed satisfactorily with SW1, settling: assets purchased, transferred contracts and prepayments, outstanding service credits and significant invoices.
- 5.4 Payroll and SAP systems remain within SW1 until 31 March 2017.
- 5.5 Established projects are in progress to replace SAP with new systems for: Finance and Procurement, Payroll Bureau and HR, Website and Customer Contact. These are major time critical projects.
- 5.6 Resources are being stretched as Transformation work increases so minimum functional requirements have been determined on some projects to ensure business continuity, particularly for Finance and Procurement, however, there is little room for slippage against revised plans, so we are regularly monitoring and producing contingency plans.
- 5.7 Communications continue and staff training is being scheduled during February and March 2017.

6. Revenues and Benefits Service

- 6.1 This service is extremely busy in preparations for annual billing and re-assessing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support for 2017/2018. Following the approval of recent legislation on information to be contained in Council Tax bills we are applying the necessary changes to correctly show the funding needed for Adult Social Care.
- 6.2 In previous years, we have supplied a booklet form of the Council Tax Guide in electronic format on our website which contained information that the regulations state must be provided. This guide also contained reference to other Council Services and a statement from the Leader.
- 6.3 In annual billing for 2017/2018 it has been decided to only supply information that is legally required. By limiting the information published at annual billing we will save considerable preparation time as well as making financial savings through design and printing costs.
- 6.4 Press releases including Member statements and information such as the "A-Z list of services" is already available on our website. Compiling and designing the Council Tax Guide in the past has required significant effort, while the information was accessed by relatively few people.
- 6.5 The combined average speed in working out new claims and changes in circumstances for benefit recipients remains at less than nine days from the start of the financial year to 31 January 2017. However, delays in receiving information from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for Universal

Credit recipients is resulting in a decline in our performance when processing Council Tax Support claims. This has been followed up with the DWP.

- 6.6 We have exceeded our target for collecting Business Rates at 31 January 2017 and we are confident we will meet our annual target of 98.5% by 31 March 2017. As collection of Council Tax is still slightly below target at 0.47%, we are taking action to increase payments in the run up to the end of the financial year.

7. Finance and Procurement

Budgeting

- 7.1 Council is tonight considering the 2017/2018 budgets for approval for the General Fund, Housing Revenue and Capital budgets. Council is also asked to formally approve the Council Tax and housing rent changes for the new financial year.
- 7.2 Members have received several reports in the lead up to the preparation of the budget proposals
- 7.3 It is pleasing that the Executive is able to present a balanced budget, and my thanks go to the Management Team, budget holders, the Finance Manager and her teams in supporting the preparation of the budget proposals in ever more challenging times.

New Finance System

- 7.4 The project to implement a new finance system for the Council – E5 Financials, provided by Advanced Business Solutions – continues to be an important priority. We are working to very tight timescales with the new system scheduled to go live on 1 April 2017. The project team and key users are currently testing the system, and training and guidance will be provided to system users in the next few weeks in readiness for the launch.
- 7.5 Inevitably with any big system change there are risks. The project has been managed really well, and thanks goes to Kerry Prisco for her excellent work as Project Manager, and it is a credit to the many staff involved in the project that we remain on track.
- 7.6 However the timescales are tight and it is important that we continue to prioritise our efforts to ensure the project is delivered successfully. There is a risk that some “business as usual” services may be temporarily affected, but the team are doing everything possible to keep disruption to a minimum.

Councillor Richard Parrish