

Full Council Meeting – 11 April 2017

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. Submission to the Government – Proposal to Create a New Council

1.1 I, along with Cllr Trollope-Bellew Leader of West Somerset Council, am very pleased to report that, as advised on 29 March 2017, our proposal to create a new Council has now been submitted to the Government. The submission is based on the position made in the Business Case last year, shares updates on work done by Councillors since then and shares the feedback and representations made during the consultation exercise. The submission is now published on our dedicated website www.yournewcouncil.org/news

1.2 I hope Councillors have had a chance to read this comprehensive document which provides the Government with the background to our proposal, along with the facts considered by us last year in the Business Case. I look forward to hearing from the Department of Communities and Local Government in due course.

2. Transformation Programme

2.1 We continue to make good progress on our plans. The work done to confirm the Business Case is complete and I am happy to share that our forecast level of savings can be delivered. The scale of change ahead is significant and we are re-focussing our leadership resources to ensure this is achieved at pace.

2.2 The Member Working Groups on “Technology” and the “New Council” continue to meet to shape the work of the programme and we will hear more on that at our next ‘Making a Difference’ Session in April.

3. Toneway Funding

3.1 A project to improve capacity along the Toneway Corridor – the stretch of road at Creech Castle - is one of five schemes in Somerset to gain a total of £24,000,000 from the Growth Deal.

3.2 The Toneway Corridor scheme will improve access into Taunton Town Centre from the M5 at Junction 25.

3.3 Improving our infrastructure is key to delivering our Growth Programme in Taunton Deane and I am delighted we have been awarded the substantial sum of £6,400,000 from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) towards the £9,800,000 cost of the project.

- 3.4 As a Council we are planning to invest more in boosting Taunton Deane's economy in the coming years supported by the allocation in our recent budget of £16,600,000 over the period 2016/2017 – 2020/2021 from New Homes Bonus, towards growth and regeneration which for ease of reference is as follows:-
- £3,000,000 - Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation;
 - £3,500,000 - Major Transport Schemes;
 - £3,500,000 - Town Centre Regeneration
 - £4,000,000 - Employment site enabling and promoting enterprise and innovation;
 - £2,000,000 - Supporting delivery of New Garden Communities;
 - £500,000 – Marketing, promotion and inward investment; and
 - £100,000 – Preparation of Local Development Order (LDOs).
- 3.5 There is another vote of confidence in Taunton, following the announcement of Garden Town status in the New Year and, as Members will no doubt recall, we have been awarded a further £350,000 for planning the infrastructure works to deliver development.

4. Defibrillator Funding

- 4.1 An event was held at The Deane House on 22 March 2017 to which Town and Parish Councils, village hall committees, sports clubs and community groups were invited to come along to find out how they can apply for up to 50% off the costs towards a defibrillator. This event was well attended with the John Meikle Room almost full to capacity so demonstrating the keen interest in providing these vital life-saving facilities right across Taunton Deane.
- 4.2 This is definitely a case of where we can provide assistance through “pump priming” investment by the Parishes and community groups and help them deliver these excellent facilities to help preserve life.
- 4.3 My sincere thanks to my colleague Councillor Jane Warmington for Chairing the successful evening and to Helen Phillips and Chris Hall for the sterling work in organising the event and presentation on the night.

5. Affordable Homes for Rent

- 5.1 South Western Housing Society and Taunton Deane Borough Council celebrated the opening of 28 new homes in Cotford St Luke on 8 March 2017. These new homes were developed in partnership with the Council and built by Kier Living.
- 5.2 One of the houses is a Lifetime Home, designed to ensure comfortable living for the long term. It provides accessible and adaptable accommodation that

will allow tenants to stay in their homes for longer and give greater choice to disabled people. The Lifetime Homes concept is based on five overarching principles, inclusivity, accessibility, adaptability, sustainability and good value.

- 5.3 The Council is committed to providing affordable housing for those who need modern homes to rent. It has made significant investments in housing and is quite unique in building to add its own stock of affordable properties. Schemes like this are really important for Taunton Deane, providing affordable housing to meet local need. Working in partnership with housing associations, such as the South Western Housing Society is key to delivering new affordable homes in the Taunton Deane and these quality properties will be a boost to the rental market as the condition of the tenancy agreement is for people with local connections first.
- 5.4 It is also a salutary reminder of the desperate need for affordable housing when seeing the number of applications for these houses when initially advertised in December 2016 the following bids were received:-
- 16 No 2 bed houses – 122 applicants;
 - 8 No 3 bed houses – 51 applicants; and
 - 4 No 1 bed flats – 43 applicants.

The successful tenants would also have had local connections as it is a requirement of the lease that these are given first choice.

- 5.5 As further evidence of demand, our “Housing Waiting List” contained around 2,600 families registered as in need of a decent home, so reinforcing the need for us to continue delivering much needed housing both for the open market and affordable.

6. Connecting the Deane Digitally

- 6.1 People in three key towns in Taunton Deane can now enjoy open and unlimited Wi-Fi thanks to a Taunton Deane Borough Council initiative. The Authority has spent the last few months working with one of the country’s leading experts, Pinacl, to get Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe, digitally connected.
- 6.2 Residents and visitors will be able to use the new Wi-Fi 24 hours a day, seven days a week via their social media accounts. There is no charge or subscription fee. Those without social media will need to sign up initially with the system recognising them on their return. The open Wi-Fi will also keep people informed of events and activities taking place and is a boost for businesses in Taunton Deane helping them to market their services as people arrive in the three towns.
- 6.3 The success of this initiative is a testament to collaborative working. Our own staff including those at Deane DLO have worked alongside business partners

and Town Councils to get open public Wi-Fi up and running.

- 6.4 We also have to thank Pinacl for their expertise and Scottish Southern Electric for carrying out the installation on Somerset County Council owned lamp posts, along with those who have allowed use of their property to host the access points which includes Shaul`s Bakery in Wellington, Wiveliscombe Recreation Ground and Somerset County Council`s Library at Wiveliscombe.
- 6.5 All that remains now is for the public and businesses to make the most of this great new service which we hope will become a 'mine of information' of what's on or available in the respective towns.

7. The Brewhouse Theatre 40th Anniversary

- 7.1 I was delighted to attend the above event which truly was a celebration of this very successful establishment, particularly when it was only 2013 that the organisation under previous management failed and the auditorium "went dark".
- 7.2 It was particularly good to welcome ex-Councillor John Meikle who did so much to deliver this wonderful facility for the town back in 1977 and it was very interesting to hear that it was constructed and fitted out for £186,000 which sounds impossible when today's cost of delivery is considered. Very little of this amount was from the public purse and funds were raised by selling bricks at £1 apiece, the seats at £35 each and other innovative ways of raising money were employed.
- 7.3 Of course in all this our thanks and gratitude must go to the great army of volunteers who raised the funds and then willingly committed their time and support to the successful running of this great theatre then, and now. We owe them a great big '*Thank You!*' for all they have done and continue to do.
- 7.4 With the passing of this important 40 year milestone I must mention the potential expansion. We are working with Taunton Theatre Association (TTA) on a fresh feasibility study for its potential expansion. Crucially, this will include a Business Case to ensure the long term commercial viability of any larger venue.
- 7.5 Members may recall that the potential expansion of The Brewhouse was one of the key commitments in the *Taunton Rethink* proposals, with the building and immediate surroundings safeguarded to facilitate future expansion, allowing wider redevelopment of the Coal Orchard site. A planning application for the wider Coal Orchard site has now been submitted and will be determined shortly.
- 7.6 I want to assure Members that we have been looking at the whole area

comprehensively, with a further architectural team reviewing the potential Brewhouse expansion and liaising closely with the wider Coal Orchard Redevelopment Team. This is to ensure that, either with the venue in its current, or expanded form, the whole site works as a coherent whole, with The Brewhouse at its heart.

7.7 This Council remains committed to a thriving Town Centre, with a great cultural offer. Our support for The Brewhouse and its continued development is evidence of that commitment.

7.8 May I reinforce the point that any expansion of The Brewhouse will depend on availability of substantial capital funding and a strong Business Case to run any newly expanded venue. We will continue to work with TTA and will share plans in the coming months. We are also well aware of Arts Taunton's keen interest in delivering the best possible for art and culture in Taunton with The Brewhouse and major arts centre at the heart of this. We will be sharing our plans and Business Case with them when available in the near future.

8. University of Somerset

8.1 At long last we are seeing a start on the long and complex journey of achieving the establishment of a University of Somerset preceded by the recent setting up of a University Centre Somerset which is to be applauded. Our congratulations to the Bridgwater and Taunton College for their initiative.

8.2 The main campus is being established in Taunton with Engineering/Nuclear at Bridgwater and Horticultural at Cannington which is to be welcomed for the good of Somerset and Taunton. I quote from the University Centre literature as follows:-

“Welcome to the University Centre for Somerset. We're an innovative institution with a proud history and a bright future.

We specialise in providing vocational degrees that blend academic rigour with real-world experience in the workplace.

Employability is at the heart of everything we do. Meaning we are the perfect place for you to study. Your future is in safe hands”.

8.3 The University Centre Somerset was successfully launched recently with its own designated campus in the Wellington Road buildings which we welcome as it will provide a huge economic boost for Taunton as it grows and becomes established.

9. Junction 25 Upgrade and Dualling of the A358

- 9.1 The planning application for the upgrade of Junction 25 is anticipated to be submitted by mid-April and this will be dealt with by the Somerset County Council (SCC) but is welcome news that this long running traffic congestion “hotspot” is to be addressed. Funding of around £22,000,000 to carry out the works is already in place.
- 9.2 On the 28 March 2017, Highways England launched their consultation on the proposals for the dualling of the A358. A single route option is being consulted upon, with a closing date for comments on 20 May 2017.
- 9.3 At the time of writing this report, we have had less than a week to digest the proposed route. However, we are working closely with SCC and the LEP, and listening to affected communities along the route, to consider how this option promotes the intended benefits of this much needed project, and will be submitting a robust response. A Members’ Briefing session is being held on Thursday, 6 April 2017 to gather initial views and further views will be sought prior to submission of our response.
- 9.4 Although it has to be welcomed that we are at last seeing proposals for this much needed upgrade, I do have concerns about the degree of economic, environmental and community benefit for Taunton and Somerset that the proposed route offers. The proposed route will connect to the M5 near Taunton Racecourse, leaving the existing A358 route through Henlade as the main connection to Junction 25.
- 9.5 In the coming weeks, we will be raising these concerns and focusing on how we can achieve the best possible outcomes for Taunton and Somerset from this much needed National Strategic Infrastructure Project.

10. Broadband Installation Progress to date

- 10.1 Since the start of the partnership between local authorities in Devon and Somerset, the Government and BT in 2013, a quarter of a million miles of optical fibre has been laid and more than 1,460 fibre broadband cabinets installed by engineers from Openreach, BT’s local network business. The project has involved the employment of more than 300 staff at any one time and taken over two million engineering man hours.
- 10.2 Connections are moving forward apace as take up of fibre service is now 32.5%, compared to 30% at the start of the year. This increase can in part be attributed to Connecting Devon and Somerset (CDS) marketing campaigns which have included a mail-out of leaflets to over 143,000 live addresses, press coverage, stickers on cabinets to indicate that a service is available and providing updates to Parish Councils.
- 10.3 Take up now exceeds the 30% level which BT forecast and this is being used to calculate the take up ‘claw back’ provided for in the contract. This is

calculated at the end of the deployment, and at two yearly intervals. This will allow for further deployment of superfast broadband and CDS will begin discussions with BT on how to apply this investment as the current contract completes and planning for the new Phase 2 contracts becomes firm.

- 10.4 Phase 2 - The CDS partnership has concluded its procurement of suppliers to deliver Phase 2 of the CDS programme. Delivery contracts for Somerset have been awarded to Gigaclear, which will be deploying an ultrafast pure fibre network that can bring broadband speeds of up to 1000Mbps. Gigaclear specialise in connecting rural communities by installing pure fibre straight into the home. Mobilisation meetings are taking place including establishing links with Highways Departments and on marketing and communications and initial survey work is also underway. Gigaclear and CDS are finalising delivery plans and the deployment schedule which should be confirmed during June 2017. Residents and businesses can see if they will benefit from a Gigaclear connection at www.connectingdevonandsomerset.co.uk/line-checker.
- 10.5 The above link is to the CDS web site to check by postcode but I would also recommend for rural areas without a decent service to check out the "Gigaclear post code checker" site as this also gives the opportunity to register interest without commitment! By registering you should be kept up to date as and when progress is made and the timetable is established. Under the Phase 2 works Gigaclear have two years in which to complete the installation.

Councillor John Williams

Council Meeting – 11 April 2017

Report of Councillor Richard Parrish – Corporate Resources

1. Corporate Strategy and Performance

- 1.1 The Council's Corporate Plan is currently being drafted and copies will be sent to the Joint Management Team (JMT) and Portfolio Holders in early April 2017. A Draft Corporate Plan will be presented to the Executive on 20 April.
- 1.2 The Quarter 4 Performance data will be collated during April and will be reviewed by JMT at the Performance Review Day on Friday, 19 May 2017. This will be reported to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee on 22 June 2017 alongside the financial report.
- 1.3 The Annual Governance Statement is due to be drafted in April and then sent to the Corporate Governance Committee for approval. The exact timing of this is yet to be determined by the Finance Team.

2. Customer Contact Service

- 2.1 Discussions are continuing regarding Somerset County Council (SCC) space reductions which will allow the vacant space to be used for the Taunton Deane decant.
- 2.2 Agreement has been reached with SCC regarding minor changes to staffing arrangements which will generate a saving to the Council.
- 2.3 The Interim Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system is now implemented with thanks to SCC for their co-operation.

3. Facilities Management

- 3.1 The Facilities Management Team is now being involved with The Deane House Refurbishment Project to assist in its planning and implementation.
- 3.2 Production of significant data is being gathered to assist on the Pool Vehicle Fleet Policy. This will be reported to Members on completion.
- 3.3 Assistance has been provided at Director level with regard to the submission to the Secretary of State for the proposed New Council.
- 3.4 Invoice scanning to support the new Finance System is now implemented prior to the go live of the system.

4. HR and Organisational Development

- 4.1 Configuring the new Payroll System for Members, employees and Elections Staff has now been completed. The first parallel run went well and we are now on the second parallel run review, prior to the start date of 1 April 2017.
- 4.2 Configuration of the new HR System is underway and being currently tested before commencing staff training next month.
- 4.3 Successful management of the TUPE transfer process for seven gas engineers from Saltire to the Council is complete.
- 4.4 HR has supported and advised on the recruitment of multi-trade operatives within Building Services – this is the final phase of recruitment to support the Building Services restructure.
- 4.5 Casework has been done to continue support for absence review meetings. Quarter 3 absence data was 5.02 days, but projected at 6.7 days per annum which is significantly lower than absence levels in the previous 12 months. This trend is welcomed and hopefully will continue.
- 4.6 HR has been advising on and implementing this month's statutory changes. Members will be aware that IR35 for contractors has come into force and also the Apprenticeship Levy. Both previously reported to Full Council in February.

5. ICT and Information

- 5.1 The Public Services Network (PSN) health check, in preparation for the PSN assessment in March / April has been completed and the Infrastructure Team is currently working through the findings to improve the security of the service.
- 5.2 Progress towards SAP replacement continues apace, in readiness for the end of March go-live for Finance, HR and Payroll. Go-live for the new website is now scheduled for the week commencing 17 April 2017. This is reported further in paragraphs 8 and 9.
- 5.3 Interim CRM replacement is now live. This enables the Taunton Deane Customer Contact Centre to deliver the service without SAP.
- 5.4 The upgrade of the Housing System has been completed successfully; also the Revenues Systems for Taunton Deane and West Somerset have been successfully merged and the Revenues Team is now running on a single system that contains both West Somerset and Taunton Deane data.
- 5.5 Work has commenced on the various projects associated with Transformation and the accommodation changes, including the deployment of the new 8x8 telephone system to The Deane House. The Accommodation Projects have commenced and work on other components of 'Smart' working is also underway.

6. The Mayoralty and Democratic Services

- 6.1 The Mayor is Patron to the Taunton Deane Male Voice Choir. In recognition and thanks for this Patronage, the Choir stages an annual concert with proceeds donated to the Mayor's Charities.
- 6.2 This year, supported by the Taunton Military Wives, the Choir performed to a large, appreciative (and generous!) audience in St. Mary Magdalene Church, Taunton on Saturday, 25 March 2017. The concert was a great success and will considerably boost the funds already collected for charity.
- 6.3 The next major event in the Mayoral Calendar is the Citizenship Award Ceremony which is due to be held on the evening of Wednesday, 26 April 2017 at the Somerset County Cricket Club.
- 6.4 Thereafter, the focus of Democratic Services will be to ensure that the Annual Council meeting on 11 May 2017 also at the Cricket Club, the new Mayor's Celebration Dinner at Oake Manor Golf Club on 12 May and the Civic Service at St James Church, Taunton on 21 May all run 'according to plan'. Invitations to all three of these events have already been sent to Councillors.

7. Electoral Services

- 7.1 Preparation work is continuing at pace in regard to the Somerset County Council Elections to be held on 4 May, 2017.
- 7.2 By the time of the meeting all nominations for the 11 Electoral Divisions in the Council's area will be known. For any further detailed information about the timetable and process, please contact Elisa Day and the Elections Team. A Parish Council By-Election for a vacancy at Creech St Michael Parish Council will also be held on 4 May, 2017.

8. Southwest One (SWO) Exit and SAP Replacement

- 8.1 Services returned successfully from SWO on 1 December 2016.
- 8.2 Payroll service transfers from SWO to Midland HR are due to return on the 1 April 2017.
- 8.3 SWO SAP Systems being replaced are as follows:-
 - HR/Payroll – On track for Payroll provision by new supplier in April; HR modules will be rolled out in a phased and controlled manner during May (for example expenses and overtime claims, Annual Leave and reporting absence);
 - Finance/Procurement – Resourcing issues with this implementation but should go live in mid-April;
 - New Website – On target for launch week commencing 17 April 2017;

- Customer Relationship Management – system used by Customer Contact – now implemented with effect from 21 March 2017.

8.4 There are still occasional minor contractual and operational issues to resolve as we finally disaggregate from SWO. These are being monitored and managed closely.

9. Finance and Procurement

9.1 **Financial Year End** - Now that the budget for 2017/2018 has been set, the Finance Service can focus in earnest on the year end closedown and reporting process for the 2016/2017 financial year. This will be the final year when the Draft Statement of Accounts must be approved by the Council's 'Chief Finance Officer' – S151 Officer – by the end of June, with the final audited Statement of Accounts to be approved by the end of September. For the accounts for 2017/2018 financial year onwards the statutory deadlines are brought forward to the end of May for Draft Accounts and end of July for Audited Accounts.

9.2 The aim is to complete the accounts in line with these earlier deadlines this time around, but in practice with the added demands of the new system implementation in April this is extremely challenging. Our staff is committed and will be doing their utmost to meet this target.

9.3 There will be some changes to the format of the accounts this year, with our costs and income being presented in a way that more closely aligns with our own budgeting and reporting arrangements. The aim is for the Accounts to “tell the story” about our financial position and performance in a much clearer and simpler way.

9.4 **New Finance System** - The implement the new “E5” Finance System – replacing SAP – continues to be a top priority for the service with significant work requirement to implement systems and processes to:-

- Purchase (procure) goods and services;
- Pay our suppliers;
- Bill for our services and collect income from our customers;
- Account for, monitor and report on all of the costs and income for the Council; and
- Maintain robust financial controls and processes to properly manage financial resources.

9.5 The new system will be fully operational by mid-April with appropriate contingency arrangements in place to deal with urgent items during the first 1-2 weeks of April.

9.6 Thanks again to everyone in the Project Team who have worked extremely hard to deliver this critical project in the timescale, both in our own teams and colleagues from Advanced Business Solutions who are supplying and implementing the software.

10. Revenues and Benefits Service

10.1 We have carried out annual billing with 53,104 Council Tax and 4,144 Business

Rates bills hitting the mats during the week of 13 March 2017. As last year, wherever possible benefit notifications accompanied the Council Tax bill, so reducing customer enquiries and saving on postage costs.

- 10.2 At the time of writing the Revenues Team look set to recover 98% of Council Tax owed for 2016/2017 so exceeding collection performance in the previous year. In Business Rates we are on track to recover more than 99% thereby exceeding any past collection performance. These results are a fantastic testimony to the dedication of the Revenues and Benefits Team. I trust the Council will join me in congratulating Heather Tiso and the Team.
- 10.3 In processing new benefit claims we are unlikely to meet our annual target of 20 days due to continuing delays in receiving information from the Department for Work and Pensions for Universal Credit recipients. However, at the end of February, the combined average speed in working out new claims and changes in circumstances for benefit recipients remains at less than 8 days.
- 10.4 In March 2017 the Corporate Governance Committee agreed to a proposal from another Local Authority to provide Corporate Counter Fraud services in 2017/2018. The new provider has a successful investigative track record in delivering savings from those who attempt to obtain public funds by fraudulent means. Further information will be provided to Members after we have finalised an inter-authority agreement specifying formal terms.

11. SHAPE Partnership Services - Law and Governance

Legal Referrals 2016-2017 – Quarter 4 (January to March)

Received from Taunton Deane Borough Council	104
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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	6
	Establishment of special purpose vehicles – e.g. partnering arrangements; companies limited by guarantee	
	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	

Category	Sub-Category	No. of Referrals TDBC
Electoral Law	Conduct of elections	
Employment	Advice on Employment Law & Procedures	1
	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	
	Licensing	
	Planning enforcement	1
Statutory and other nuisance		
Governance	Constitution	1
	Corporate/Policy advice	2
	Attendance at Full Council/Special Council	2
Highways	Definitive Map Modification Orders	
	Rights of Way	
	Section 38 Agreement	1
Housing	General advice on all aspects of housing including policy and tenancy agreements	5
	Homelessness	
Information and Complaints	Corporate complaints and Ombudsman investigations	
	Legal advice on FOIA, DPA SAR and EIR requests and policies	
Licensing	Advice	
	Attendance at licensing committee and sub-committees	3
Litigation	Advice and conduct of proceedings in relation to negligence	
	Advice on litigation and how to avoid it	
	Advice to either Party's insurers	
	Commercial litigation	

Category	Sub-Category	No. of Referrals TDBC
	Debt recovery	5
	Disrepair	
	Homelessness appeals	
	Housing/property repossessions and advice	6
	Injunctions	
	Judicial review and defending civil claims	
	Personal injury	
	Professional negligence	
	Property damage	
	Statutory appeals	2
	Trespass	
	Warrants and RIPA applications	1
Planning	Advice on town and country planning matters	2
	Attendance at Planning and Regulation committees	3
	Building Regulations advice	
	Common land and village greens	
	Compulsory purchase	1
	Conservation Areas (Order and enforcement) plus Article 4 Directions	
	Lawful Development Certificates (CLUEDs and CLOPUDs)	2
	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	15
	Tree Preservation Orders	
Property	Agreements	4
	Empty properties	
	Encroachment/trespass	
	Leases	1

Category	Sub-Category	No. of Referrals TDBC
	Licences	
	Property law advice	17
	Purchases	
	Right to buy	20
	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	104

Councillor Richard Parrish

Council Meeting – 11 April 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 so as to sustain improvements and reduce the need and costs of intervention in the future.

The Portfolio Holder apologises for the short report - she has not been very well!

1. Community Defibrillators

- 1.1 Town and Parish Councils, village hall committees, sports clubs and community groups were invited to an evening event at The Deane House for those considering installing a defibrillator in their locality and we would like to thank so many for coming along. Several partner organisations contributed to this well rounded, informative and interesting evening which was well attended and really well received.
- 1.2 We would like to thank Council Leader John Williams for initiating this and establishing the small grant pot of £13,000 to support this; the Somerset Community Foundation who will administer this alongside our community grant; the Community Council for Somerset who are able to help with applications; the Community HeartBeat Trust and the British Heart Foundation HeartStart for the exhibitions of defibrillators, the demonstrations, optional training and for sharing their expertise during the all important question time.
- 1.3 Particular thanks go to our speaker one of our Assistant Directors Chris Hall who was superb - succinct, acerbic, amusing and as a retained Fire Fighter, experienced and practical. His candour was refreshing and set the tone for a very successful evening; and Community Officer Helen Phillips whose thoughtful planning and organisation brought everyone together and allowed plenty of time for questions of which there were many and this ensured everyone got the most out of giving up their time to be there.
- 1.4 We hope this will be reflected in the number of grant applications to enable more public access defibrillators to be located within our communities and registered with the Ambulance Service. This would improve coverage, provide confidence and potentially help save lives particularly in remote rural areas which are often farthest for our emergency services to reach.
- 1.5 Details of the community defibrillator fund will be put on our developing website

later this month (www.tauntondeane.gov.uk) with a link to the appropriate Somerset Community Foundation webpage.

2. New Text Number to help combat Rural Crime - 07492 888109

- 2.1 Avon and Somerset Police are continuing with their Rural Crime Text Line after a successful trial. The number above is now the permanent number to text in on. Please add this to the list of contacts on your mobile phone if you use one.
- 2.2 The Police are asking rural communities and businesses to help them prevent, combat and detect rural crime by providing information and intelligence about suspicious activities or suspected crime in their area.
- 2.3 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.
- 2.4 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 market 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. Halcon One Team Coordinator

- 3.1 Avon and Somerset Police have temporarily redeployed Sergeant Andy Murphy who coordinates the Halcon One Team to assist with the partnership response across various agencies to the criminal exploitation of our most vulnerable. This is part of County Lines drug activities which in Somerset is mainly within three One Team areas in Yeovil, Taunton and Bridgwater.
- 3.2 Sergeant Murphy's working knowledge of partnerships, these areas and his ability to co-ordinate joint resources over a sustained period of time makes him the obvious choice for this role and we wish him well in this. This is currently the most concerning organised criminal activity in Somerset and is a priority for Avon and Somerset Police.
- 3.3 Initially his deployment is for six months and took effect from the 3 April 2017 on the same day the Constabulary adopted its new operating framework. Key partners and some Councillors have already been made aware of this.
- 3.4 Avon and Somerset Police recognise this leaves something of a gap in Halcon but have stressed the need to address this issue across Somerset's most vulnerable and complex communities as paramount.

- 3.5 We are talking to partners who make up Taunton Deane's three One Teams to establish a holding plan during the absence of a full time coordinator in Halcon. In the meantime please address any urgent concerns to our Taunton East Area Community Manager Tony Knight.
- 3.6 The regular Halcon Litter Pick held on the first Saturday of the month gave Sergeant Andy Murphy a really good send-off with an especially large turnout of families, One Team members, supporters and Councillors who shared a barbecue afterwards kindly provided by local businessman and regular sponsor Brian Pollard.

4. Customer Care Training

- 4.1 Without giving too much away, this staff training is excellent and really worthwhile. The delivery is refreshingly simple, informal and involves plenty of discussion. There are very few people including Councillors who would not benefit from this. It is about delivering a more consistent level of customer care and what that actually means. What it is not about is who you are but it is about how you are.
- 4.2 Unsurprisingly the learning benefits interactions with everyone including colleagues as well as customers (I would add in other halves and children as well!!!). It is thought provoking, revelatory and certainly salutary and should help us all work better together in support of others.

Have a happy and healthy Easter.

Councillor Jane Warmington

Council Meeting – 11 April 2017

Report of Councillor Terry Beale – Housing Services

1. Deane Housing Development

Creechbarrow Road, Taunton

- 1.1 Eight flats and the office at Moorland House are due for completion in mid-May. The Play Area when vacated will be developed by Parsons Landscapes and hopefully will be completed by the summer holidays.

Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green, Wellington

- 1.2 The first timber frames will be appearing in the next couple of weeks followed by the roof tiles. We have experienced a slight delay due to the need to accommodate statutory undertakers but the scheme remains on time. The two blocks are going to be named Weavers Court and Weavers Lodge and completion remains late 2017, early 2018.

Laxton Road, Taunton

- 1.3 Nothing further to report.....the Planning Application is being finalised and we are looking at various ways of developing the site including off site manufacture. We have carried out a consultation exercise and are working closely with one family which has been very positive.

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 is currently being verified by Planning. 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 a planning application is not required.

Oake

- 1.5 Once again nothing further at this stage. 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)

- 1.6 We have had a number of excellent discussions with manufacturers and we have visited one premise where OSM units are made. So far our research is very positive

and exciting and we also have preliminary discussions with our partners on a number of possibilities relating to OSM.

Development Pipeline

- 1.7 Nothing further to report. There is a range of future development options. Financial and feasibility work is underway to further inform the decision as to which sites to bring forward next.

Photo-Voltaics

- 1.8 With regard to any Right to Buy sales no-one has requested to purchase PV and therefore the units will be removed and stored pending re-issue.

2. Welfare Reform

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

- 2.1 The total DHP budget for 2016/2017 was £150,894.00. Up until 28 March 2017, 112 DHP's have been awarded to Taunton Deane tenants with a total of £50,894 being paid direct onto the rent accounts. This equates to approximately 33% 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 28 March 2017, the Council has received 377 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 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. 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.

- 2.9 Clearly for some managing an online account when they have very little knowledge of a computer can be difficult and very challenging. This group of people will call on us to help them through their difficulties.
- 2.10 The DWP are very clear that we are in a “test and learn” phase of UC. Taunton Deane 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 then resolved, before the service is further rolled out to other parts of the country, to avoid other claimants facing the same issues.
- 2.11 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 cost payments not being included in their first award and in some cases this going on for two or three assessment periods;
 - Payments not being made on the correct day;
 - Other benefits or elements of previous benefits being stopped when they should not have been;
 - Bedroom Tax or Non Dependant Deductions being incorrectly applied; and
 - No responses to messages left for the DWP on the claimants journal.
- 2.12 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.
- 2.13 Moving forward, the Benefits System does get more complicated. From 6 April 2017 people making new claims who have three or more children will not be able to claim UC and will have to make claims for legacy benefits which include Housing Benefit, Job Seekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance and Tax Credits.

3. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Service

3.1 **Performance** - Satisfaction with the service remains high. At the end of Quarter 3 93% (target 66%) of tenants who reported ASB in year to date rated the help and advice received as good or excellent.

3.2 Casework

ASB cases recorded between 01/01/16 – 31/12/16 (12 months)

75 new cases were opened during the period:-

Alcohol	8
Communal Areas	1
Domestic Abuse	1
Drugs misuse/Dealing	10
Garden Nuisance	5
Harrasment	19
Hate Crime	2
Noise	16
Other Crime	1
Pets	1
Physical violence	7
Rubbish/Fly Tipping	1
Vehicles	3
Total	75

3.3 **Closed cases** - 44 cases were closed during the period, all cases were resolved.

3.4 **High Profile/Risk Cases**

- Noise, assault on neighbour. County Court on 26 August 2016; Suspended Possession Order (SPO) granted; SPO breached; Warrant application submitted; awaiting County Court date.
- Injunction with power of arrest granted by Magistrates Court– Mental Health. Boundaries of Injunction are being tested by perpetrator. This is being monitored but to date there have been no breaches that we can take back to Court. Injunction remains in place until July 2017.
- Trying to identify suitable accommodation for move. One remaining household member to move. They have been offered an alternative property; This property is yet to become void and then works required to be completed. Council continues to support household.
- Poor tenancy behaviour, seeking possession. Case file with Legal Services.

Councillor Terry Beale

Council Meeting – 11 April 2017

Report of Councillor Patrick Berry – Environmental Services

1. Environmental Health

Food Hygiene Inspections

- 1.1 The Environmental Health Team across Taunton Deane is on track to complete the majority of all food hygiene inspections for the financial year 2016/2017. This target has now been met for the last three consecutive years.
- 1.2 There are a handful of new food businesses that have opened recently that will be inspected in the new financial year; this is due to the recent high turnover of businesses in this sector. The code of practice states that we have 28 days to inspect after registration of the food business and we try and meet that target where possible. Once all the inspections have been entered into the IT system the team will be able to run off figures for the total number of routine inspections, rescore inspections, revisits and inspections to new businesses that have been carried out by the team for the year.
- 1.3 Work for 2017/2018 includes reviewing our charges for this service including possible charges for Food Export Certificates and rescore inspections under the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme.

Private Water Supplies

- 1.4 Our fees and charges have been reviewed for 2017/2018. This work is on track and statutory returns sent to the Drinking Water Inspectorate showing that we have met our statutory obligations for 2016/2017. In the Taunton Deane area, 17 risk assessments of supplies were completed as well as 44 statutory sample visits.

Air Quality

- 1.4 Our Annual Status Reports have been submitted to the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) regarding air quality in the district. Officers continue to monitor air quality across Taunton Deane with the main contributing factor being traffic.
- 1.5 Officers also work closely with colleagues in Public Health at Somerset County Council (SCC) and attend the County Air Quality Steering Group when required and have fed into a draft County-wide air quality strategy. All inspections of permitted processes have been completed at industrial processes and petrol filling stations across the two districts. These inspections are chargeable and fees are set centrally by DEFRA.

Safety Advisory Groups (SAG's)

- 1.6 The team works closely with our colleagues in Licensing to provide specific safety advice to event organisers. There are some large events taking place this year including UB40 at Taunton Racecourse, and International T20 cricket at the Somerset County Cricket Ground.
- 1.7 The team have 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. Both Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils now have a more formal approach to event safety to ensure we are working to guidelines and that event safety is promoted across both areas. We also work closely with the Police, Fire, SW Ambulance and Highways.

Anti-Social Behaviour

- 1.8 The team continues to work with the Police on anti-social behaviour (ASB) issues across Taunton and officers attend ASB meetings regularly with the Police and other partners to discuss cases that have an Environmental Health involvement, for example noise and dog fouling issues. Our reactive work around nuisance complaints including noise, odours, pests and rubbish take a large proportion of our time and resources throughout the whole year, especially the summer months.

Dog Fouling issues

- 1.9 We are producing a plan detailing how we tackle dog fouling issues across the two districts in a more cohesive way. This will include reviewing our enforcement powers and resources, making ourselves more visible during fouling patrols, planning Dog Action Days, targeting high risk areas and using PR to focus on commercial dog walkers and responsible dog ownership. We will be working with partners where necessary including our own Pest Control Officer, stray dog warden service and groups within the community.

Staffing

- 1.10 Georgie Dornom has joined the team one day per week from the Private Sector Housing Partnership. She has recently started working in the Housing Team after gaining work experience at Mid-Devon. She hopes to complete her training and qualify as an Environmental Health Officer. My team work closely with the housing partnership to ensure that complaints from tenants regarding their accommodation are investigated and that Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO'S) meet their licence conditions.

2. Licensing

Performance

- 2.1 The service achieved its performance target for the third quarter.

Appeals

- 2.2 Two appeals have been lodged with Taunton Magistrate's Court against decisions taken by the Licensing Sub-Committee to revoke licences from a taxi driver and alcohol off-licence shop.
- 2.3 The taxi driver appeared before the Sub-Committee at the recommendation of Licensing Officers following a road rage incident captured on a video recording device fitted to a vehicle. The off-licence appeared following a review of the licence called by Avon and Somerset Police. Proceedings are due to begin in April.

Ombudsman complaint

- 2.4 A member of the public who reported a taxi driver for inappropriate behaviour has taken the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman. An investigation was carried out by the Licensing Sub-Committee and the decision was taken to not take the matter any further.
- 2.5 The complainant, unhappy with the outcome, made a formal complaint to the Community and Client Services Manager and subsequently complained to the Ombudsman, the outcome of which is not yet known.

Service request trends

- 2.6 Officers have observed an increase in the number of dog breeding complaints. Six complaints against both licensed and alleged unlicensed boarders were received in 2016, whereas four have been received already since the turn of the year.

Reducing red tape for businesses

- 2.7 At the last meeting of the Licensing Committee, Members approved a recommendation from officers that itinerant traders (those who move from street to street, trading for short periods, including mobile ice cream sellers), be exempt from applying for Street Trading Consents.
- 2.8 Members shared the view that there was little merit in licensing such businesses as they did not stop for long in one place and could easily move, meaning there were minimal risks to public safety and that many did not even stop on the highway but instead, parked on private land.

3. Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning

IdVerde Contract

- 3.1 Cleansing operations were transferred to IdVerde from 1 February 2017 and

We are now in our second month of the contract. Officers have conducted a number of inspections and standards are being maintained at the level dictated by the contract, challenging areas due to bird fouling such as the Station Road Rail Bridge and Cornhill in Wellington have been pressure washed to bring them up to standard with local residents very pleased with the results.

- 3.2 All IdVerde staff now has the correct uniform and can be seen about their duties in the town centres and wider area.
- 3.3 Fly tipping remains a visible and high profile issue despite the numbers of incidents being relatively low. We believe there is a small minority of serial offenders using the same spots to fly tip their waste.
- 3.4 In order to tackle this problem our partners at IdVerde have sourced a number of Infrared capable motion activated cameras for installation at local hotspots. It is our intention to gather the evidence necessary to effect a prosecution of these offenders.

4. Somerset Waste Partnership

Recycle More

- 4.1 Now that the budget has been approved, work is currently underway to prepare for introduction of enhanced kerbside recycling collection services.

Easter Collections

- 4.2 Every household in Somerset will have Easter waste day changes, with pick-ups due on Good Friday, 14 April 2017 taking place on Saturday 15 April. No collections on Easter Monday, 17 April mean all that week's kerbside services are one day later, including Friday pick-ups on Saturday 22 April. All recycling sites remain on their usual schedules, with nine sites open on Good Friday and all 16 on Saturday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday.

Taunton Priorswood Recycle Centre

- 4.3 This centre was closed temporarily after a small fire broke out on Friday, 10 March 2017. No one was injured and the fire was not in an area used by the public. According to Viridor, the Site operator, the Site's emergency plan was instigated quickly and efficiently with everyone evacuated off site safely and in line with health and safety procedures. The site was reopened later the same day.

5. Cemeteries and Crematorium

- 5.1 The year-end cremation figures for the service have exceeded expectations and are significantly higher than the previous two years shown in the table

below. According to the national death figures for England and Wales there has not been a significant rise overall so this would suggest a local anomaly. It will of course reflect favourably in the income for the service.

Year	Number of Cremations
2016 - 2017	2283
2015 - 2016	2072
2014 - 2015	2053

- 5.2 Some landscaping work has and is continuing to take place around the Crematorium complex to soften and beautify the building surrounds making for a more welcoming and pleasant approach to the Chapel. In doing this we will also be able to provide living memorials which will be offered as further choice to the bereaved this upcoming financial year.
- 5.3 We have carried out initial landscaping to an unused, previously scrubland, area of Taunton Cemetery (Wellington Road) to make it into a green, copse or spinney memorial garden for additional choice of memorialisation for the bereaved and also to extend an area that previously has been left to grow wild. We are also looking at other areas within this site to free up further burial and memorial land.

Councillor Patrick Berry

Council Meeting – 11 April 2017

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

Section 1: Business Development

Launch of Nexus 25 – Strategic Employment site at Junction 25

- 1.1 In my last report to Council I reported that the Council is preparing a Local Development Order to bring forward a new 25 hectare Strategic Employment Site the rear of the Park and Ride facility at Junction 25 of the M5. The site will be known as Nexus 25, reflecting the site's excellent connectivity to the region's road network.
- 1.2 A public and business information event was held at The Holiday Inn on Wednesday 1 March 2017. Officers of the Business Development Team organised the business event, and I am pleased to report that 80 businesses and their representatives attended. Following introductions by the Leader and the Director of Growth and Development the businesses were able to view the plans and discuss with our Planning Officers the proposals. A number of potential investors attended, and it was a great success, providing an opportunity to demonstrate to business leaders our firm commitment to driving forward business investment in Taunton Deane.

Heart of the South West Productivity Plan

- 1.3 The Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSWLEP) has undertaken the preparation of a Productivity Plan for its area, which is intended to increase competitiveness by raising productivity levels. It issued a Green Paper for discussion in February 2017 and invited businesses and other stakeholders to submit comments to inform the Plan.
- 1.4 The Productivity Plan will guide the long term growth aspirations for the area and will be the key strategic document for us to engage with the Government on future prosperity.
- 1.5 The Plan is being produced by the LEP on behalf of a broad constituency of stakeholders, including the LEP itself, the 17 local authorities, the National Parks, and the three Clinical Commissioning Groups in the area. The Plan will ultimately be signed off by the new HotSW LEP Joint Committee, of which this Council will be invited to become a member.
- 1.6 The Green Paper summarises the stark productivity challenges facing the LEP area:-

Our success in recent years has been in growing the number of people in employment. With 80% of our population employed, the HotSW area enjoys employment rates not just above the UK average, but close to the best performing countries in Europe. Despite this, our LEP area ranks 32nd out of 39 LEP areas in England for the level of productivity. Productivity also varies considerably within the LEP area itself.

HotSWLEP, 2017, p5.

- 1.7 The Green Paper confirms the shared commitment to increasing productivity across the Heart of the South West to ensure a successful future economy. In turn this will feed into the national Industrial Strategy, whose Green Paper was issued for consultation at the same time.
- 1.8 This Council submitted representation to the HotSWLEP following consideration of a report by officers at the Growth Steering Group on 28 February 2017. The cross-party Steering Group commented that Taunton Deane strives to develop a diverse economy with a broad base of traditional industries and a thriving community of new sectors, with levels of productivity within each at the same or higher than the UK average. Taunton Deane requires a strong community of businesses in new, high value sectors (such as digital, nuclear, and environmental technologies), and it must strengthen its reputation as a destination for new investment in those fields
- 1.9 The Council's submission emphasised the need for investment in skills, enterprise, innovation, competition and infrastructure to support business growth.
- 1.10 If Members wish to see copies of either the Productivity Plan Green Paper or the Council's representation on that document please contact David Evans, Business Development Manager.

Nuclear South West Inward Investment Group

- 1.11 The Council is a full member of the Nuclear South West Inward Investment Group, which is led by the HotSWLEP on behalf of a consortium comprising the Department for International Trade, plus local authorities and LEPs in the vicinity of Hinkley Point. The group has clear aims to encourage nuclear-related investment into the region, to strengthen links with the nuclear industry in the region, and to raise awareness of the Nuclear South West cluster
- 1.12 The group has a three year programme and undertakes proactive marketing nationally and internationally to attract nuclear related investors to the area. The Local Authority Members are charged with fulfilling investment enquiries in their respective areas. In recent weeks a contract to deliver specialist inward investment services on behalf of the Group has been awarded to a consortium led by the South West Manufacturing Advisory Service.

- 1.13 This Council contributed £20,000 to the Group during 2016/2017, and will contribute £13,333 during each of the following three years, which is in line with the contributions of other local authorities in the Group.

Brewhouse Sponsor

- 1.14 The Taunton Theatre Association has been successful in securing long term sponsorship from Invest South West. The deal will provide income to the theatre for five years, and will hopefully also encourage other local businesses to step forward and to play an active role.
- 1.15 Members will be aware that the Council's own contribution to the theatre has been reduced to reflect budgetary pressures, and this year amounts to £140,000. I am confident that this money is very well spent. The theatre has taken major steps forward over the past 12 months, and now offers a varied and diverse offering to the public, suiting all cultural tastes and interests and enhancing Taunton's reputation as a regional home of the arts. I would urge Members to continue to support the theatre, including The Brewhouse Cinema.
- 1.16 An update report will be presented by the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Taunton Theatre Association to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee this Summer.

Taunton Deane Business Awards

- 1.17 This year's exciting competition closed on Friday, 31 March 2017, and I am pleased to report that 58 businesses entered.
- 1.18 The Council is one of two Core Sponsors, alongside Francis Clark Accountants. Other companies have stepped forward to sponsor each of the 10 individual award categories.
- 1.19 Entries will be judged and shortlisted over the next few weeks in anticipation of the Awards Final in June 2017.

Launch of the University Centre for Somerset (UCS)

- 1.20 A long awaited and huge step forward was taken in March with the launch of the new UCS, based at the Bridgwater and Taunton College campus on Wellington Road, Taunton. This is the start of an exciting new era for higher education in Somerset and follows many years of lobbying by this Council and others.
- 1.21 UCS specialises in vocational degree level qualifications. The Centre prides itself on having strong links with employers and delivering programmes that equip students with skills they will use in the workplace.
- 1.22 Courses are delivered by tutors with extensive professional experience and strong research and teaching skills. They have a strong vocational focus, in

areas such as Business, Computing and IT, Engineering, Health and Social Care, Construction and Leadership and Management.

- 1.23 The University is referred to as a University Centre because degrees are currently validated by some of the United Kingdom's most prestigious universities, and in due course UCS will obtain its own accreditation status.
- 1.24 This is a new era for higher education in Somerset, creating great opportunities for us all to stay and work in Taunton whilst gaining a prestigious qualification. Further details can be found at www.somerset.ac.uk.

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

Destination Marketing

- 2.1 Taunton and the surrounding area was promoted at the annual British Tourism and Travel Show in March 2017. On a joint stand with the West Somerset Railway the event attracts group and travel operators. The team also attended the annual South Somerset Literature Exchange event to promote and distribute the new Visitors Guide.
- 2.2 The Destination website (www.visitsomerset.co.uk/taunton) has been refreshed and revised to complement the new Council site being launched this month.
- 2.3 Regular e-newsletters are being produced and circulated to promote the destination, events, promotions and the retail offer. This is being boosted by data captured by users of the new Open Wi-Fi.
- 2.4 A new food and drink leaflet for Taunton and the Easter edition of The Deano publication have both been produced in-house, copies of which are available in the Visitor Centre and on the website.
- 2.5 The Visit Taunton Facebook account currently has over 6,900 likes, Instagram nearly 1,130 followers and Twitter over 6,000 followers. These continue to be used to promote attractions, events, retail, special offers and services available in the Visitor Centre.
- 2.6 The recently launched Visit Wellington Facebook page has 140 likes, Twitter nearly 100 Followers. Visit Wiveliscombe Facebook 125 likes, Twitter nearly 90 Followers; the accounts in Wellington and Wiveliscombe were set up to support and promote businesses and events in these towns and are linked to the open Wi-Fi available in these town centres. Both are supported by their respective Town Councils', the Community Office Team in Wellington and the Wiveliscombe Business Group.

Events

- 2.6 The new events booking portal continues to take shape with the Marketing

Team now acting as the welcome desk for and account managing many of these event enquiries. It was encouraging to welcome over 30 different event organisers to the recent Taunton Events Group meeting. The calendar is being boosted by a series of new events such as StrEat Taunton, Eat Taunton both taking place in Castle Green in addition to annual favourites such as the Vintage Bus Day, the Dragonboat Race and Somerfest.

- 2.7 The team continue to support the English Cricket Board who are bringing the Women's World Cup to the Somerset County Cricket Ground in late June. The 'countdown clock' to the event is positioned outside of the Visitors Centre having been launched on International Women's Day on 8 March 2017. More events in Taunton are planned in the run up to and during the competition.

Retail Marketing

- 2.8 Account management of town centre businesses continue to take place, with the Marketing Team facilitating these discussions.
- 2.9 A project to understand opening hours in the town centre is currently being undertaken with the hope we can harmonise these.

Visitor Centre

- 2.10 The Visitor Centre Team recently celebrated English Tourism Week in the office with a number of promotions supported by local attractions and businesses. They also hosted a Taunton Chamber of Commerce Business Breakfast where members learnt about the services the Marketing and Visitor Centre Team offer.
- 2.11 A refreshed and new range of gifts and souvenirs have been added in recent weeks in addition to all of the new season stock of leaflets and brochures.

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 May by the Planning Committee. Officers intend taking a report to the June 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.
- 3.2 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.

- 3.3 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 is expected to report in late April and will then enable further considerations on the site.

Section 4: Asset Management Service General Fund Activities

Estate Management Work

- 4.1 A number of significant changes are continuing to take place within the Estates Team to ensure the team act more commercially and at the same time provide an improved customer service.
- 4.2 Work is progressing with the Procurement Service to ensure arrangements are in place from May to externalise works to help with resourcing and utilise existing consultant budget. The outsourced asset valuation exercise in readiness for closing the 2016-2017 accounts is progressing well.

Asset Strategy Work

- 4.3 External consultants are now finalising the stock condition surveying work across the entire General Fund portfolio. A wider portfolio performance exercise will then be undertaken which along with the current Fire Risk Assessment work, Asbestos Surveys and a Land Assessment will help inform a new Asset Strategy for the period 2017-2020. This Asset Strategy is anticipated to come through the Council's Decision Making cycle during late summer.

Section 5: Media, Marketing and External Communications

- 5.1 Taunton Deane's corporate Twitter account, @TDBC, now has more than 3,000 followers – good news - and it is a very useful extra tool to get messages out quickly and safely.
- 5.2 Our Facebook page is also building up a presence and, again, is a great way to deliver messages direct to residents. The post, for example, on the launch of the public space consultation reached almost 4,000 people.
- 5.3 The imaginative use of digital channels will become increasingly important and we are actively looking at ways we can harness technology while maintaining the traditional routes of press releases and the corporate website.
- 5.4 Communications is working with partner authorities in Somerset, at County and District level, on the 2017 elections. These take place on 4 May 2017 for all Somerset County Council Divisions. The elections mean that we are now in the pre-election period with the associated protocols in place.

- 5.5 We continue to work closely with partners to promote joint initiatives wherever possible – for example the new affordable housing development in Cotford St Luke, the new school library at Minerva Primary and Somerset Rivers Authority.
- 5.6 We have also supported Somerset Waste Partnership by using our social media channels to issue information – one recent example was the fire at the Priorswood Recycling site that closed the facility for a day.
- 5.7 We continue to respond to media queries, issue media releases and advise colleagues on both positive and negative issues.
- 5.8 We also set up media briefings on important issues to provide as much factual information as possible and to co-ordinate interview requests. Recent examples include the launch of the Public Realm Consultation and the New Council proposal being submitted to the Secretary of State.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting – 11 April 2017

Report of Councillor Roger Habgood – Planning Policy and Transportation

1. Planning Policy

Planning Policy Team in line for National Honours

- 1.1 As I am sure Members are aware the joint Planning Policy Team working for Taunton Deane Borough and West Somerset Councils is in the running for a top national award.
- 1.2 The team has been shortlisted for the Local Authority Planning Team of the Year in the National Planning Awards.
- 1.3 The team is up against strong competition from Bury, the City of London Corporation and West Sussex County Council.
- 1.4 In the past year, the joint team has secured Garden Town status for Taunton from the Government and undertaken significant and complex master-planning for new development in and around Taunton.
- 1.5 The team has also overseen adoption of the West Somerset Local Plan to 2032: the first plan adopted for the area since 2006 and the Taunton Deane Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) which provides complete policy coverage and allocations to guide development in Taunton Deane until 2028.
- 1.6 Team members have also been closely involved in Neighbourhood Plans in both Council areas, working with Parishes and the community.
- 1.7 The team has been successful in drawing in external funding – for example securing £350,000 of funding for Taunton Deane as part of the Government's Garden Town programme. Taunton has been recognised as one of only nine places nationally where new, sustainable communities delivering upwards of 10,000 new homes will be realised.
- 1.8 A compelling bid was put together drawing together elements of previous work on development and infrastructure planning into a professional submission. Garden Town status enables Taunton Deane to complete essential additional studies and evidence gathering to inform the detailed planning of key sites and help to ensure sufficient resources are available to deliver the transformational levels of growth set out in our Planning Policy documents.
- 1.9 I am sure the Council would like to extend its thanks to the team for their hard work and to wish them well in the National awards. The recognition is much deserved.

2. Neighbourhood Planning

Trull and Staplehay

- 2.1 Trull Parish Council have formally requested that the Trull and Staplehay Neighbourhood plan be put to referendum and arrangements for this have already referendum have begun. The timescale for the referendum is likely to be early June 2017.

3. Placemaking - Garden Town

- 3.1 Tauntons Garden Town Status continues to attract interest. Garden Town status has further enhanced Taunton as the County Town and will be a major catalyst for growth and prosperity.
- 3.2 The Housing Minister Gavin Barwell MP recently visited Taunton to discuss the planning White Paper with Leaders from across the West Country. Our Garden Town Status featured in the debate.

4. Planning Development

Major Planning Applications

- 4.1 **Firepool** - A revised outline planning application for development on land at Firepool in Taunton is expected imminently.
- 4.2 The application will include a mix of uses including restaurants on the waterfront, cinema, hotel, supermarket and retail units, offices and new homes and high quality public realm.
- 4.3 Firepool's regeneration remains the Council's priority. The revised proposals have sought to address previous design concerns and have been positively received by the Design Review Panel and the Taunton Economic Advisory Board.
- 4.4 The applicant, regeneration specialist St Modwen, will submit a range of supporting documents, which will be assessed by the Council's Planning Department and statutory consultees such as Highways, the Environment Agency and Natural England.
- 4.5 **Coal Orchard** - The planning application has been received and is being considered. Officers continue to work with partners to finalise details before consideration by the Planning Committee later this Spring.
- 4.6 **Staplegrave** - The promoters of the two sites at Staplegrave have submitted a viability case. Further information has been requested in order to assess the case provided. The applications will be referred to the Planning Committee when discussions have been concluded.

- 4.7 **The M5 Strategic Employment site at J25 - Local Development Order (LDO)** - Consultation regarding the above commenced in early March 2017 with business leaders, Parish Councillors and local residents attending events that offered an opportunity to view the emerging proposals and to discuss matters with the Project Team.
- 4.8 Peter Brett Associates and the company LHC have been appointed to develop a LDO for the 25-hectare site. LDOs streamline the planning process, reducing risk and delivery timescales.
- 4.9 Further formal consultations will take place during Summer 2017.
- 4.10 **Planning response to Housing White Paper** - The Council has formally responded to the recent Housing White Paper which sets out the Government's position regarding planning fees saying "it would take steps to secure the financial stability of Planning Departments, ensure that the planning system has the skilled professionals it needs to assess and make the tough decisions we expect, and provide targeted support to address areas of specialist weakness".
- 4.12 It has been agreed that Taunton Deane Borough Council should agree to this course of action and the Councils Section 151 Officer has confirmed to the Department of Communities and Local Government that the additional income will be invested accordingly.
- 4.13 Currently the fees received by the Council do not cover the costs of the Planning functions. Fees are set nationally.
- 4.14 Planning fees will therefore increase by 20% from July 2017 on the basis that the Council commits to invest the additional fee income in its Planning functions.

5. Transportation

Car Parking Performance

- 5.1 Car park utilisation remains buoyant across the Council's Car Parks. The general pattern remains as one of a reduction in longer term parking in Shopper Car Parks that has freed up spaces for shoppers, a key Council objective.
- 5.2 Somerset towns Car Park Capacity - A reminder comparison

Bridgwater	637
Street	2014
Yeovil	1815
Taunton	3000

Car Park Works

- 5.3 Variable Message Signing (VMS) and Pay on Foot Parking - The two procurements for Smart Parking have now been issued to OJEU for the market to respond to – closing date 14 April 2017. Project completion is planned for the end of the year.
- 5.4 The upgrade of the Wood Street Car Park in Taunton is now fully integrated with the VMS and Pay on Foot projects. The Enfield, Castle Street, Tangier and Canon Street car parks will all have maintenance works to boundary fences and entrances to support the introduction of Pay on Foot.
- 5.5 The DLO are replacing all Car Park lighting with LED bulbs as part of the maintenance programme.

6. Highways England A358 Dualling

- 6.1 The A358 Taunton to Southfields Dualling public consultation commenced on 28 March and is due to finish on 20 May 2017.

7. Cycling

- 7.1 TACC (Taunton Area Cycling Campaign) continues to develop with appropriate support from the Council. The group has carried out a survey and put together a list of hotspots that require attention in order to improve cycling for our residents. TACC is an amalgam of Cycling Groups enabling a coherent voice to promote Cycling and sustainability in the Taunton Area.
- 7.2 Taunton Deane has assisted TACC with the production of 12,000 Cycling Maps of Taunton that will be available to residents. 7000 maps will be distributed by Sustrans as part of their project in the next couple of months. The rest of the maps will then be placed in and around the town.
- 7.3 Currently 24% of people in Taunton either walk or cycle to work - double the national average. Our Garden Town aspirations seek to increase that number by working with TACC and other partners. Councillors from both Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane met jointly with TACC to discuss its plans and aspirations and both Councils have now established working relationships with TACC.

8. Taunton Town Centre Public Realm

- 8.1 The consultation has now closed. Responses are now being worked through and enhancements to the scheme following the successful consultation will now be considered.
- 8.2 Thank you to all those that came along to the public events or provided feedback through other means.

9. West Somerset Railway

- 9.1 Officer and Member discussions with the West Somerset Council (WSR) continue. WSR is of course an important partner. The WSR offers opportunity for economic development. The appearance of the 'Flying Scotsman' on our heritage steam railway later this summer, will I am sure, bring many people to the region.
- 9.2 WSR continue to develop aspirational projects for the railway. One such project - the Southern Gateway - is now out for consultation with draft proposals being shared with consultees regarding the Bishops Lydeard Station site and surrounding area.

Councillor Roger Habgood

Council Meeting – 11 April 2017

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

1. Parks and Open spaces

- 1.1 Things are generally quiet during the winter months for our Parks and Open Spaces with the majority of the team taking a well-earned rest before the growing season begins again. However, our Parks have been achieving awards at a cracking pace, with Vivary Park, Taunton gaining a Trip Advisor award and a prestigious 5 Gold Star award from South West in Bloom. Wellington Park, French Weir, Victoria and Vivary Parks all also gained Green Flag awards.
- 1.2 Longrun Meadow has been developing well with Park Running increasing in popularity throughout the winter and the new bridge being used by many to make their way from the Park and Ride to the town centre. New signs have been installed by the Somerset Wildlife Trust as part of their Routes to the River Tone project showcasing the various species that can be found in Longrun and in our other Parks and Open Spaces.
- 1.3 Our teams are all back now from the winter break and grass cutting began in earnest last week.

2. Community Leisure

Play and Recreation

- 2.1 Improvements have been made to TDBC's Play Areas and Playing Fields:-
 - Dobree Park, Wellington has had drainage works, fencing and a table tennis table;
 - Acacia Gardens, Taunton – under 5's climbing unit installed and a new swing;
 - Humphreys Road, Wellington – cone climber installed;
 - Westridge Way, Bishops Lydeard – new play equipment installed on a railway theme;
 - Petanque Pitch behind Wellington Sports Centre completed. Benches, scoreboards and signs installed;
 - French Weir Park – hip hop and zip wire installed;
 - Hamilton Gault Park - Spiders Web and trampolines;
 - Corner Close, Wellington – Installation of Diablo Multi Play Unit.

Summer Sunday Bandstand Concerts

- 2.2 A season of summer Sunday bandstand concerts in Vivary Park have been scheduled.

Fields in Trust – Centenary Fields

- 2.3 Frieze Hill Community Orchard has now joined Hamilton Gault Park, Taunton as being successfully dedicated with Fields in Trust as a Centenary Field in Trust.
- 2.4 The programme launched in 2014 by Fields in Trust President HRH The Duke of Cambridge, in partnership with The Royal British Legion is providing a unique way to commemorate the Centenary of World War 1 and remember those who lost their lives during the conflict by protecting outdoor recreational space in perpetuity for the benefit of future generations. The Centenary Fields programme also fulfils the Armed Forces Community Covenant which the Council has signed up to.

Monkton Heathfield New Community Hall

- 2.5 A new community hall as part of the Monkton Heathfield development has been completed and named the 'Brittons Ash Community Hall'. The hall is open for use and has been well received by the local community.

3. GLL (Taunton Deane)

Community Sport

Teenage Yoga for Mental Health

- 3.1 GLL are working in partnership with The Taunton Academy Secondary School to deliver yoga sessions to their Year 11 girls and boys. The teachers were supportive of this happening, as many students are feeling stressed now about exam pressure. The sessions were launched at the end of February, with 25 students choosing to come along to the first session.

Buggy-a-cise

- 3.2 As part of the Bumps and Beyond project with the NHS and Knightstone Housing Association, GLL launched their first Buggy-a-cise class in February 2017.
- 3.3 16 ladies came along to the first taster session at Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa, which included a variety of cardiovascular buggy running, circuit stations and mat work focusing on the pelvic floor muscles. All the mums were also treated to a coffee at the Better Coffee Corner after the session as a way of making them feel comfortable in the leisure centre facilities.

Hillside Children's Centre Swimming Case Study

- 3.4 Hillside Children's Centre staff provided GLL with some great feedback of the value of the ongoing swimming project for deprived families in partnership

with the Council. The Children's Centre have been using free swimming vouchers to run a regular swimming session for families that would not normally get the chance to engage in such activities due to either being a single mum, for health reasons, a lack of confidence and/or financial barriers.

Zumba for Wellbeing

- 3.5 With funding from Somerset Skills and Learning, GLL launched a six week course for ladies in North Taunton who were low in confidence, socially isolated, and/or unemployed.
- 3.6 The Zumba course focuses each week on different mental health aspects including confidence building and socialising with other group members. 29 ladies have signed up for this course and on the first week they focused on goal setting. On Week 2 they focused on the social aspect and having the confidence to get to know other group members. It is hoped that this class will empower these ladies to have the confidence to continue with regular exercise.

Trampolining for Wellbeing

- 3.7 A six week course for ladies starts on Wednesday, 19 April 2017. Bookings are currently being taken for this beginner course, which is free and funded by Somerset Skills and Learning.

February Heart Month

- 3.8 As part of the Health Promotion month in February, GLL raised awareness of the British Heart Foundation's Heart Month. GLL asked members of certain classes to "Ramp up the Red" and come along in fancy dress to help raise awareness of the importance of keeping a healthy heart. At Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa, Freddie Brown's Circuits Class came along dressed in red and Freddie shared with them his own experience of cardiac problems.
- 3.9 At Wellsprings Leisure Centre James Quirk, Instructor of the Phase IV Cardiac Class, talked to members about the Cardiac Risk in the Young charity (CRY). Members of the group came to the class dressed in red fancy dress and together raised £311 for the CRY charity. Members were also reminded at each of their circuit stations of the top 10 tips of how to keep their heart healthy.

Children's Activity Day

- 3.10 GLL reminded children and families of the importance of keeping active for their heart at the Project Wellington event in Wellington Methodist Church, in partnership with Wellington Children's Centre, ONE team, Knightstone and the Council. Children and parents had to engage in a "heart raising treasure hunt" in order to increase their physical activity levels. 120 children came along to the event, with a focus on 0-5 year olds.

Wellsprings Hosts Somerset Humdinger Half and Hurtle

- 3.11 214 men and women set off on a windy Sunday (12 February 2017) to run the Humdinger Half marathon and 106 ran the shorter Hurtle event; the finish line

was located at Wellsprings Leisure Centre. Eight of the Wellsprings weekly ladies running group also completed the Hurtle, accompanied by run leader Penny Crout.

Lyngford Park Primary School Consultation

- 3.12 As part of the continuing work to build better links with local schools GLL carried out consultation with parents and children after school at Lyngford Primary School, which is based in one of Taunton's most deprived wards.
- 3.13 It was an insightful experience and there was lots of positivity about more sporting opportunities being offered for children and families. Kayaking and Rock Climbing were activities that children were keen to try. Family Rounders was also something that many families wanted to see in their local area in the summer.

Mayor Presents Olympic Medallists with Local Awards

- 3.14 On Tuesday, 7 February 2017 the Mayor presented Taunton Deane's Olympic medallists Ed Ling and Lucy Shuker with commemorative globes to mark their medal winning achievements in last year's Rio Olympics. The presentation, on behalf of the Council, took place at Taunton Tennis Centre, where Lucy trains.

Fit and Fed Training

- 3.15 GLL are looking to launch a programme for teenagers in North Taunton during the summer holidays. The Fit and Fed concept acknowledges how hard it can be for parents to feed their children during the summer holidays, when school meals are not available and the programme aims to provide a nourishing meal along with opportunities to participate in sports and games.

Walk Well in Wellington

- 3.16 Jenny Dilley, Walk Co-ordinator for Walk Well in Wellington Health Walks, has launched a lunch club which is open to anyone who attends the health walk group. Many walkers are living on their own and some experience social isolation and loneliness, so the aim of the group is to offer more opportunities for friendship and a chance to chat with others. The first lunch group met in Churchstanton and over 20 people attended.

Volunteers in Play

- 3.17 Somerset Play Forum delivered their first Volunteers in Play course on Saturday, 4 February 2017 at Wellsprings Leisure Centre. The aim was to support local communities to increase opportunities for children and young people to play out of doors in their local community. Eight volunteers attended this course, funded by Somerset Skills and Learning.