

Full Council Meeting – 11 July 2017

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. Fire Safety

- 1.1 Words cannot describe the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, the loss of life and the terrible suffering. As a Council, we take our role as landlord extremely seriously and want to make sure tenants feel reassured that we put their safety and security first. We do not own or manage any properties that could be classified as high-rise. We have a clear compliance plan and that enables us to keep our tenants safe.

2. Transformation

- 2.1 The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government acknowledged receipt of our submission in April 2017. Following his recent reappointment to this role, we have been in touch with the Rt Hon Sajid Javid to request engagement on our proposal to create a new District Council for the area currently served by Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils. We will update on progress when we know more.
- 2.2 In the meantime, we are progressing our Transformation ambitions. The focus of recent weeks has been on mobilising the team to deliver this and we now have a programme in place. We have engaged external support on change management, and are currently out to procurement for the technology that will support us working in a very different way.
- 2.3 We are making excellent progress on our plans for refurbishment of The Deane House and I hope many of you took the chance to attend the briefing recently held by the team to share early thinking on the future design of the building. Watch out for future updates and chances to get involved. Thank you to those Members involved in the two Member Working Groups (Technology and New Council) that are supporting this work – a significant time commitment but it has delivered some excellent work and is really helping ensure that Members are involved – at ground level – in this important task.
- 2.4 The focus over the next few months is to move to “implementation” of the plan. We will be starting work on process re-design, rolling out training to ensure our employees are in the strongest position possible for the changes that are coming, and working on the design of our new organisation.
- 2.5 Engagement with our staff team is continuing and we will be doing some “different” things too – watch out for further video style briefings, wall art and “#start the conversation” activity throughout our buildings. We have great talent in our pool of employees and we will be using this to make sure we are

“doing things differently” and getting quality engagement and feedback from staff.

- 2.6 Members will very shortly be offered the opportunity to join our employees on some Customer Training – which is quite unlike any training we have done before as it focuses on behaviour rather than the usual skills training approach. I encourage you all to take this opportunity and really think about how this can make a difference to our roles as Councillors and ultimately make things better for all our customers, as well as receive some excellent training alongside our staff.
- 2.7 Later in the summer we will also be sharing some training on “commerce” which will stimulate our thinking on what we can do as a Council, and again I encourage you all to take up this opportunity when it comes.

3. A358

- 3.1 Highways England had originally planned to close their consultation on the A358 scheme in May but due to the General Election they have extended the consultation until the 16 July 2017. The Community Scrutiny Committee considered a report on 16 May 2017 setting out the principles of a response. I am pleased that the report was well received and a number of the Parish Councils have thanked us for the thoroughness of the report and agree with the concerns we have highlighted.
- 3.2 Somerset County Council (SCC) was somewhat hampered by the Election period and have recently published their draft response which was considered by their Place Scrutiny Committee last week and they have made a non-key decision to respond to the consultation using their report as a basis for doing so. Our officers have collaborated and shared information so, helpfully, the two Councils are raising similar issues. Councillor Edwards and I met with Councillors Fothergill and Hall a couple of weeks ago and have agreed that we will try and submit a combined response by the new deadline.
- 3.3 Highways England have, after the General Election, been invited to present their proposals to various Parish Councils and community gatherings (previously they refused all such requests citing Purdah for both the SCC Elections and the General Election). Taunton Deane presented its views on the consultation at a very well attended meeting arranged by Hatch Beauchamp Parish Council and will attend where possible other Parish / Community based meetings to help people to understand the proposals and offer our views in line with the Scrutiny Committee Report.

4. Firepool, Taunton

- 4.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council has received a revised outline planning application for development on land at Firepool in Taunton. An application was first submitted at the end of 2015 and was considered by the Council's

Planning Committee last summer but was refused in line with officer recommendations. Concerns centred on layout and design, rather than the development and the mix of uses. Since then, the Council has worked with the developers St Modwen to address the issues, particularly those regarding design.

- 4.2 Firepool regeneration remains the Council's priority. We have come a long way since development of the site was proposed and a great deal of necessary preparatory work has been carried out along with SCC progressing the Northern Inner Distributor Road. Completion of this road is essential to provide the main access to the proposed new development.

5. Parking Strategy

- 5.1 In June Taunton Deane Borough Council embarked on a Parking Strategy which will set out a vision for improving the quality of its off-street car parking over the next decade. One of the key objectives as the Local Authority is to encourage people to visit our town centre and help our local businesses thrive and the way in which we provide and manage car parking is central to that.
- 5.2 The Council has appointed leading transport and urban design specialists, WSP UK Limited, in partnership with SCC, to carry out the surveys. Our surveys will help inform our Parking Strategy and ensure that it works for town centre visitors, including those who work, shop, eat, drink and live there.

6. The Brewhouse Theatre

- 6.1 Just over four years ago the future of The Brewhouse Theatre looked bleak. It was forced to close after going into administration. Taunton Deane Borough Council, which had grant-funded the Theatre stepped in to buy back the remaining years of the lease from the administrators and Taunton Theatre Association (TTA) was formed to take on responsibility for running The Brewhouse. It was saved.
- 6.2 Now, the Council and TTA are looking at how The Brewhouse can expand and become a regional 21st century arts centre. Built in the 1970s, The Brewhouse was designed to meet the then needs of the area but it is too small to accommodate some touring productions – it needs to grow. The plans for the expansion were unveiled on 13 June 2017.
- 6.3 The revitalised theatre would wrap around the existing, enlarged auditorium, working in harmony to preserve the adjoining listed 18th century building. This would provide a range of new and modern spaces such as studios, cinema and gallery, while making the most of the river frontage and creating the potential for pop-up performances, markets and events. Also included in the preliminary plans are 8 flats which can be for sale or rent subject to a Business Case.

- 6.4 Securing the funds needed of around £20 million to deliver these ambitious plans for The Brewhouse expansion will not be easy but having a viable and deliverable plan is a vital first step. The Council is now committed to working closely with TTA, Arts Taunton and others to develop the final plans and secure the necessary funds to bring our ambitions to reality.

7. Wellington Heritage

- 7.1 Specialist help is being drafted in to assist with the major task of helping to preserve some of Wellington's heritage. Historic England has agreed to fund most of the costs of an expert as Project Manager, with the balance met by Taunton Deane, to focus on how the town's rich heritage can be saved for future generations. Work will be targeted at the crumbling former Mill buildings – Tonedale and Toneworks – as well as Cornhill in the centre of Wellington and Wellington Monument.
- 7.2 Wellington's heritage is extremely important both locally and nationally. I am delighted that Historic England recognise that specialist help is needed and will fund an expert to focus on conservation. A great deal of hard work has been done to reach this point – it is really good news for Wellington. We can be justly proud of our local history and hope real progress can be made in preserving the past.
- 7.3 The Project Manager, currently being recruited, will lead the conservation management programme of a number of high profile regeneration heritage at risk projects.
- 7.4 Tonedale and Toneworks are among the best preserved examples of historic textile manufacture in the South West of England. Built in the 1830s by Fox Brothers, the Toneworks buildings were used for finishing cloth produced at the Mill. Extensions were added over the years as part of the Mill's development. It is considered a rare example of a 19th century cloth dyeing and finishing works and still contains the remnants of historic machinery. Tonedale Mill has planning consent for the conversion of the buildings to apartments. The Mill was built in the late 18th century for Fox Brothers and was used for wool preparation and yarn spinning.
- 7.5 Regeneration work at Cornhill is underway with the clean-up complete after a vacant building in the historic street became a refuge for pigeons, despite attempts to get owners to take responsibility for the clean-up. Officers threatened action under the 1990 Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act against an absentee overseas landlord after months of negotiations had stalled.
- 7.6 Works undertaken have included, cleaning the building inside and out and installing measures designed to stop pigeons roosting and entering the building. Negotiations are also underway with a local developer and potential housing association to move forward with housing scheme at the rear, which

would include the repair and re-use of fire-damaged historic buildings which have been derelict for a number of years.

- 7.5 I would like to take this opportunity of paying particular credit to Fiona Webb, Regeneration and Infrastructure Manager, who has done so much to move this, seemingly intractable, problem forward. Thank you.

8. Taunton Garden Town

- 8.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council received the Garden Town funding in January 2017. Specific details for the key projects are outlined below:-

- **Development Plan:** the adoption of the Site Allocations and Development Management Plan (SADMP) provides a complete suite of development plan documents for Taunton including the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (TTCAAP adopted 2008); the Taunton Core Strategy (adopted 2012) and the SADMP (adopted 2016). The Council was intending to progress work with a review of the TTCAAP, however we recognise that the recent award of Garden Town status provides an opportunity to widen the scope of this work and provide a comprehensive plan for Taunton supported by a detailed phasing and delivery plan
- **Taunton Garden Town Plan:** The Council recently approved the proposed workstream for a new Taunton Garden Town Plan. This plan will review the current vision for Taunton, working in partnership with key stakeholders to develop a new vision beyond 2028 and embracing Taunton's new Garden Town status, update policies and allocations in relation to Taunton and provide a more detailed delivery/phasing plan for the supporting infrastructure. The plan will also explore opportunities for innovation in housing delivery and meeting older person housing requirements.
- The additional work will provide greater detail on the critical points at which key infrastructure is required and support future funding bids as well as the allocation of our local infrastructure funding streams.

- 8.2 At this stage progress has been made in the following areas since Garden Town status was awarded in January 2017:-

- Land Use Consultants, Environmental Planning, Design and Management, have been commissioned to update the Green Infrastructure Strategy, to identify key projects for place-making and delivering quality public realm.
- In the process of commissioning consultants to update the economic projections and review employment/retail/leisure land requirements.
- Station Quarter: The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) has progressed discussions with Network Rail to transfer the largest development site and a joint HCA/Taunton Deane commission for Masterplanning and viability work is expected to be complete by

February 2018. The Council is continuing to engage with the HCA over the support that can be provided towards the delivery of new housing as part of the Hinkley Housing Zone designation.

- The Council has allocated its share of the Hinkley Housing Fund, to create additional bedspaces to mitigate the impact of hosting its anticipated share of the construction workforce.
- More detailed work has commenced on the Bus Rapid Transit network a key transport proposal to improving the public transport offer in Taunton.

8.3 Further Capacity Funding Bid 2017/2018 - Officers have developed a further Capacity Funding bid for 2017/2018 and this was submitted to meet the 26 May 2017 deadline. These bids are currently being assessed by the HCA and the Department of Communities and Local Government.

8.4 To date Taunton Deane has received £475,000 of Garden Town Capacity Funding. The 2017/2018 Capacity Funding bid was submitted on 26 May 2017 and requested additional funding of £560,000 - £680,000. If successful this additional Garden Town Capacity Funding will be targeted towards:-

- Progressing master planning for key sites to inform the Garden Town Plan, to explore the potential for innovation in place making and delivery.
- Progressing infrastructure project planning work and developing a detailed Infrastructure Delivery Strategy/Implementation Plan, to inform the Taunton Garden Town Plan. This work is critical to deliver place-making and to achieve accelerated housing delivery through the timely provision of key infrastructure projects.
- Moving forward the delivery of the new garden communities, the town centre regeneration sites, all key sites within the Hinkley Housing Zone area are critical to achieve accelerated delivery. These sites also offer the opportunity to explore innovative housing delivery models.
- Commissioning specialist expertise and assistance with legal, acquisition, land assembly and financing to address key barriers to delivery. This is critical to accelerate delivery and ensure quality place-making and long term stewardship of the Garden Town.
- Specialist support/officer roles to inform/assist a Garden Town Delivery Team and explore innovative models for accelerating housing delivery to support the Government's housing priorities and to ensure quality place-making is achieved.

9. Nexus 25

9.1 Work continues in preparation for the publication of the draft 'Local Development Order' (LDO) for its statutory period of consultation, which is programmed to run for six weeks from 10 July to the 18 August 2017 (the statutory requirement being for a four week period). During July the statutory consultation on the Environmental Statement will also take place.

- 9.2 The findings of the consultation and the LDO proposed for adoption will be considered by the Community Scrutiny Committee on the 19 September 2017, the intention being that it will propose that the LDO should be submitted for a decision by Full Council on the 3 October 2017. The final making of the LDO will rely on planning permission for the M5 Junction 25 Improvement Scheme being in place.

10. Official Opening of Tangier Central, Taunton

- 10.1 I was delighted to represent the Mayor at the official opening of the fantastic newly refurbished office facility and to formally welcome the developer, CCLA's investment into Tangier Central. The move demonstrates confidence in the town's future and is helping to support business growth by providing quality space to do so. It has already secured a number of lets and talking to others.
- 10.2 Tangier Central, located within walking distance of the town centre, offering green space and close to the River Tone will help deliver a much needed base from which businesses can realise their potential. All good qualities for employers looking to invest in the town.

11. International Cricket comes to Taunton

- 11.1 The first men's international match was played at Somerset County Cricket Club on 23 June 2017 when England played South Africa in one of the three T20 matches scheduled. The Women's World Cup matches start on the 26 June.
- 11.2 I was delighted to attend and what a fantastic match it was, playing to a sell-out crowd of 12,500 spectators who witnessed a thrilling match which England, unfortunately, lost by three runs!
- 11.3 It was a tremendous atmosphere and, in addition, a facility we can be justly proud of in our town centre. Media coverage was beamed across the world with a global TV viewing figure of 858,000 and many more following online.
- 11.4 Taunton Deane Borough Council was fulsomely praised by the Chairman for all the help and support we have provided over the 13 years it has taken to reach this point. To me it was the very successful conclusion of an awful lot of planning and investment by a dedicated and committed team on both sides. Culminating in a major success for the club and a major contribution to the economy of Taunton, particularly the promotion of our County Town to so many watching across the world.

12. The Deane House

- 12.1 Taunton Deane Borough Council is embarking on a radical programme to change the way it works and deliver services to make it fit for the 21st century. Customers will be provided with greater choice to access services while the Council will make substantial savings to the public purse.
- 12.2 The refurbished accommodation at The Deane House will create fit-for-purpose premises while minimising the space needed for its own staff. This will free up space that can be let on a commercial basis so providing a return that reduces The Deane House costs to the taxpayer.
- 12.3 The first partner to share the accommodation is Avon and Somerset Police who will be moving in to The Deane House from current premises in Shuttern which has the further advantage of ensuring the Police Station is retained in Taunton.
- 12.4 The Council is exploring new ways of communicating with staff and Members and the video, made by a member of staff, was distributed widely. It is designed for internal use and to secure design suggestions from staff and Members.
- 12.5 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 across the country who have rationalised their accommodation to embrace modern ways of working. The Deane House refurbishment and sharing the office space with others is a very visible symbol to staff and our community that the way we work will radically change.

13. CDS Phase 2 Gigaclear Ultrafast Broadband Installation

- 13.1 Gigaclear have been appointed and have now carried out necessary surveys and identified the areas they will carry out their first installation which in Taunton Deane is from Corfe to Churchstanton/Churchinford. This links with the areas already being installed in the Blackdown Hills.
- 13.2 The service being provided is "Fibre to the Premises" (FTTP) which can deliver speeds from 50mb up to 1gb subject to the subscribers requirements and it is a completely new system with all fibre placed underground.
- 13.3 This will be a tremendous asset for the rural areas which should start going live later this year with all works scheduled for completion by the end of 2019. CDS has already connected 320,000 homes and businesses to better broadband and by 2019 aims to raise that to at least 380,000 as part of Phase 2. The Government wants to increase the overall coverage to at least 95% of properties but this target is heavily dependent on the private sector investing in its commercial roll-out.

13.4 For those in rural areas that have not already done so please do register an interest on “Gigaclear Post Code checker” and this will tell you when coverage to your post code may be expected or when it is likely to be known.

14. 75th Anniversary of Formation of 40 Commando Royal Marines

14.1 I was honoured to be invited to the Anniversary Parade recently and what a fantastic parade it was with precision marching from well turned out troops. In his address the Commanding Officer ran through an impressive list of postings where the Royal Marines services had been required and said they are on call for immediate posting to anywhere in the world, should the need arise

14.2 It was also acknowledged that their base at Norton Manor Camp was established in 1984 and they really appreciated the welcome and support received from our local community.

14.3 The event was well supported by family, friends and veterans and it was great to see the support given to the families of the serving Commandos in recognition of the support they, in turn give those on active service. We can be proud to be hosting 40 Commando in our midst. Reference was made to the recent announcement of their relocation but we were informed this is now under review. Hopefully this may mean a reprieve and Taunton continues to be their base.

Councillor John Williams

Council Meeting – 11 July 2017

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

1. Parks and Open spaces

- 1.1 Vivary Park has now been planted out and is looking glorious. I receive many positive comments about the floral displays and see an amazing number of people taking photographs of the park. The rose garden is looking particularly good this year and the scent is lovely to walk through or sit and have lunch. Vivary has again achieved a certificate of merit from Trip Advisor.

2. Community Leisure

- 2.1 We are working with the Friends of Longrun Meadow to improve the footpaths around the meadow which are so well used by walkers and Parkrun.
- 2.2 The Playing Pitch Strategy continues through consultation and all your input is appreciated.
- 2.3 The Member workshops for the Leisure Procurement will have happened by now and I hope as many of you as possible took the opportunity to engage with this important project.

3. Summer Sunday Bandstand Concerts

- 3.1 The Vivary Bandstand Concerts are well underway and have drawn good crowds. Friends of Wellington Park summer season is also proving popular as always – sometime in spite of the occasional poor weather!

4. GLL (Taunton Deane)

Volunteer Event

- 4.1 GLL recently held a celebration event with afternoon tea at Cheddon Fitzpaine Village Hall to thank the 40 volunteers who support the Walk Well programme in Taunton Deane. GLL's Head of Sport and Communities, Phil Lane, presented awards and certificates to the volunteers and Andrew Martin, GB Para-badminton player and recipient of a GLL Sports Foundation Award, inspired the volunteers with stories of his sporting journey as a GB Para-badminton player.

Health Walk Outing

- 4.2 On 31 May 2017, Wellington Walk Leaders organised a day trip to the South West Deer Sanctuary, followed by lunch at a nearby venue.

Sports Fest in Wellington

- 4.3 On 31 May 2017, GLL planned a Sports Fest in partnership with the Wellington ONE team. The aim of the event was to put on half-term activities for families (targeted at deprived wards) and showcase all the sporting activities available locally for children and adults to enjoy.
- 4.4 Just under 300 adults and children attended, aged from 0-70+ years. In total 19 different clubs/agencies attended and local sports clubs provided taster sessions of activities for all ages including Bowls, Walking Football, Boccia, Boxing, Tae Kwon Do, Rounders, Zumba, Football and Tennis. The local Police, Fire and children's centre teams also delivered children's safety messages and activities, as part of National Child Safety week.

Dementia Awareness Week

- 4.5 Wellington Dementia Alliance organised a full programme of activities across Wellington to raise awareness of dementia in the town. GLL took part in three different activities to support the campaign.
- 4.6 Walk Well in Wellington included a dementia wellbeing walk within their programme, offering a choice of either a long or short route followed by a coffee stop at the Beam Bridge Inn. Additional walk buddies were in place to support those with dementia or their carers.
- 4.7 A Dementia Roadshow was held in the centre of Wellington and GLL promoted a wide range of activities that are available. The event provided great networking opportunities for local people and staff to meet other organisations. A short 20 minute health walk was also provided at the Roadshow.
- 4.8 A game of Petanque had been arranged at Wellington Sports Centre; however, due to the very poor weather conditions indoor curling was offered instead.

Mental Health Awareness Week

- 4.9 To celebrate and raise awareness of Mental Health Awareness Week amongst the community of North Taunton, GLL ran a Wellbeing Walk from Lyngford Park, in partnership with the Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Lyngford Park Surgery Patient Participation Group. 13 people attended long and short wellbeing walks, which highlighted both the benefits of being physically active outdoors and enjoying nature in a built up area.

Lambrook Activity Day

- 4.10 In partnership with Taunton Deane's Community Empowerment Officer and the Link Power Team, GLL ran an event for families at Lambrook Road, Taunton on 30 May 2017. The event promoted National Smile Month and families enjoyed a discovering hunt, sports taster sessions of Volleyball, Badminton, Hockey, Tennis and Football, and making healthy smoothies.

Swim Skills Badge Testing For Brownies and Cubs

- 4.11 During May half-term Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa offered two days of swim sessions for local Beavers, Brownies and Scouts to achieve a variety of their swim badges. The bookable sessions proved to be very popular, with 82 Beavers, Cubs and Brownies attending.

Inclusive Membership Launch

- 4.12 GLL's inclusive membership for disabled people was launched in June 2017 from all Better Leisure Centres in Taunton Deane. The Better Inclusive membership gives disabled people full, anytime access to GLL's gyms, pools and fitness classes for a discounted price. GLL will be engaging with local disability groups to promote and raise awareness of the benefits of keeping active for those with disabilities.

Councillor Catherine Herbert

Council Meeting – 11 July 2017

Report of Councillor Richard Parrish – Corporate Resources

1. Electoral Services

- 1.1 Electoral Services has been very busy since the last report. Firstly, there were the County Council Elections, with eleven Electoral Divisions in the Taunton Deane area, held on 4 May 2017, followed by the General Election on 8 June 2017.
- 1.2 On the 8 June there was also a Wellington (North) Town Council by-election and the Trull and Staplehay Neighbourhood Planning Referendum.
- 1.3 It was particularly pleasing to see a high turn-out of 73.9% for the General Election in the Taunton Deane area.
- 1.4 It is not always appreciated what is involved regarding the logistics required for the running of the election process. For example, in regard to the General Election, the Elections Team consisting of two full time and two part-time employees (who are also responsible for running the election in West Somerset) are obviously key but only the tip of the iceberg, as for Taunton Deane alone, there are over 600 roles required including Presiding Officers, Polls Clerks, postal vote opening, Polling Station Inspectors, Count Supervisors, counters, security staff as well as support from other parts of the organisation for things like PR and financial expertise.
- 1.5 The process for preparing for the Electoral Register Canvass starts in July so no real time to rest and recuperate as far as the team is concerned.
- 1.6 I trust the Council will join me in congratulating the Electoral Services Team for its hard work and dedication for a job well done.

2. The Mayoralty and Democratic Services

- 2.1 Since the last meeting of Full Council, Democratic Services has been very busy ensuring that the Council's three major events to welcome our new Mayor – Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey – to her year in office went according to plan.
- 2.2 The Annual Council meeting held on 11 May 2017 at Somerset County Cricket Club was attended by well over 350 people – a new attendance record! This was followed the next evening by the Mayor's Celebration Dinner at Oake Manor Golf Club which was enjoyed by all those who attended and a week later on Sunday 21 May 2017 by the Civic Service at St James Church, Taunton.

- 2.3 Since then, the Mayor has led the bi-annual Civic Visit to our twin-town, Lisieux in France and has welcomed visitors from our other twin-town, Konigslutter in Germany. She has also hosted the Armed Forces Flag Raising Ceremony on 19 June 2017 and led silent tributes at The Deane House in memory of those who have died in the recent terrorist attacks in Manchester and London and the tragic fire at Grenfell House.
- 2.4 Combined with many other events that take place this time of year, the Mayor has had quite a hectic couple of months.
- 2.5 As well as assisting Electoral Services with the recent County Council and Parliamentary Elections, Democratic Services has again begun the task of fully supporting the Council's meetings following the usual brief hiatus either side of the Annual Council meeting.
- 2.6 Work is also currently taking place to arrange suitable alternative meeting venues for the Committees once the refurbishment works to The Deane House commence later in the year.

3. The Deane House Accommodation Project

- 3.1 The Deane House Accommodation Project has been commenced and is now gathering momentum. To assist members understanding of the timeline plan please refer to the table below:-

Name	Duration	Start Date (Monday)	Finish Date (Friday)
Pre-construction Contract Award			11.05.17
Concept Design (RIBA Stage 2)	3 weeks	22.05.17	09.06.17
Concept Design for TDBC Approval	1 week	12.06.17	16.06.17
Developed Design (RIBA Stage 3)	3 weeks	19.06.17	07.07.17
Developed Design for TDBC Approval	1 week	10.07.17	14.07.17
Technical Design (RIBA Stage 4)	4 weeks	17.07.17	11.08.17
Technical Design for TDBC Approval	1 week	14.08.17	18.08.17
Tender Period Commences	6 weeks	21.08.17	29.09.17
Tender Submission, Contract Award	1 week	02.10.17	06.10.17

- 3.2 Following the preconstruction phase, we will enter into a JCT (Joint Contracts

Tribunal) contract for the actual works which will be carried out in three phases, plus enabling works at the front end as follows:-

Phase 1 First Floor	October 2017 to February 2018;
Phase 2 Ground Floor	February 2018 to August 2018; and
Phase 3 Top Floor	August 2018 to October 2018.

- 3.3 Enabling Works in June 2017 to August 2017 includes decant of staff around The Deane House. Work is also currently taking place to arrange suitable alternative meeting venues for the Committees once the refurbishment works to The Deane House commence later in the year. The facilities Management Team are heavily involved in supporting the decant.
- 3.4 A display of indicative plans (Design DH) for the proposed works together with pictures of designs used elsewhere have been on display in The Deane House for staff and Members to view. This has been well attended and views expressed by attendees have been very positive. Further consultation has taken place which ended on 30 June 2017. All responses will be considered in the formulation of the final plans.
- 3.5 We will be sharing the next stage of developed plans and design progress with all staff in a similar manner commencing the week beginning 10 July 2017 as shown in the above table (3.1).

4. ICT Services

- 4.1 The ICT Service is heavily involved in the rollout of the new telephony solution to support The Deane House accommodation moves and is supporting the procurement exercise for procuring the software to enable the delivery of the new operating model element of the transformation.
- 4.2 The ICT Member Working Group are closely involved with the Transformation Technology procurement and are monitoring developments as they progress, concurrently changes are taking place to ensure our network remains PSN compliant.
- 4.3 A review of resourcing requirements to identify the capacity required to deliver the transformation and business as usual technology projects is also underway.

5. Revenues and Benefits

- 5.1 The Revenues Team is making good progress in reducing the significant volume of work that typically accumulates this time of year from annual billing. While slightly below target, collection is broadly on track for both Council Tax and Business Rates. The Team is performing well in speed of benefit processing for 2017/2018 with the average time to reassess Housing Benefit at under 6 days from when the customer tells us of a change in their

circumstances. The working out of new claims is on average within 23 days of the date they are submitted.

- 5.2 In July 2017, it is expected we will finalise arrangements for delivery of a Corporate Counter Fraud Service through officers employed by Powys County Council. The new team consists of experienced Investigation Officers and will be self-financing as payment will be dependent on their success in detecting fraud. As well as carrying out reactive investigations from referrals from our staff and the public, there will be extensive analysis of data that will be cross matched for anomalies.
- 5.3 The Corporate Scrutiny Committee considered a report on 25 May 2017 to agree options for public consultation on potentially changing our Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for 2018/2019. Until recently, CTS administration has been both cost effective and efficient as in most claims, we have been able to use information supplied by claimants for a Housing Benefit claim or directly from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 5.4 Since the roll out of Universal Credit, CTS administration has become increasingly difficult. Universal Credit can be adjusted every month according to variations in the customer's income and even negligible changes mean we need to reassess their CTS award under our current scheme. When we change CTS, we need to issue amended Council Tax bills and adjust direct debit arrangements. Consequently, with more people claiming Universal Credit, administration of our existing CTS scheme is becoming progressively burdensome, as well as increasingly complex for our customers. An Income Band CTS scheme could target financial support to those who most need it, whilst simplifying administration so small changes in income will not alter the CTS award.
- 5.5 Following agreement from the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, on 3 July 2017 we will start public consultation to seek views on changing our local CTS scheme for working age people from 2018/2019. We will be consulting on the following 3 options:-
 - (i) An Income Band CTS scheme;
 - (ii) Retain our current scheme but reduce maximum CTS from 80% to 70%; and
 - (iii) Retain our current scheme but introduce entitlement limits so that customers with an award above or below a certain level would no longer receive CTS.
- 5.6 Any changes to our scheme from 2018/2019 will not affect pension age CTS recipients as they will continue to receive support of up to 100% through a scheme set by the Government. However, everyone liable to pay Council Tax pays for the CTS scheme through their Council Tax payments. Therefore, it is important we get a broad cross section of views, regardless of whether residents receive CTS or not.

- 5.7 Public consultation will be for eight weeks and will close on 27 August 2017. Officers from the Revenues and Benefits Service will interview a random selection of households in every Parish to obtain their views. We will also be seeking views on our options to change the CTS scheme from welfare support agencies and advice groups, such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, as well as inviting further consultation responses through our website.
- 5.8 The outcomes of the consultation will be reported to Members in due course.

6. Corporate Services

Corporate Performance and Strategy

- 6.1 The Quarter 4 performance report for 2016/2017 has been produced and will be going to Corporate Scrutiny in July.
- 6.2 Work is being undertaken to understand the Data Protection changes that will come into force next year.
- 6.3 The Corporate Risk Register has recently been refreshed and reviewed by the Management Team.

Communications

- 6.4 The External Communications Team has done a really good job on promoting the Litter Campaign and continue to respond as necessary about communications issues. The in-house team are working closely with the Transformation Programme to support the future communications required. Staff and Members are being involved at all stages of development.

Customer Services Project

- 6.5 We have recently given notice to Somerset County Council (SCC) that we do not intend to extend the temporary 12 month extended shared service arrangement that we put in place in December 2016 when the service returned from Southwest One (SWO).
- 6.6 We are working with SCC to facilitate a smooth return of the service to our direct management in December 2017.

SWO Succession Project

- 6.7 This project is now largely completed and has seen the successful return of services and migration of systems. A detailed update report will go to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee in July. The system replacements include the launch of the new website which has gone well and provides the platform upon which we can build and improve through the Transformation Programme.

- 6.8 At a lunchtime event on 20 June 2017, which was attended by some 35 staff members, I expressed the thanks of the Council for the dedication and expertise to all that have guided us to a very satisfactory conclusion in returning the services in house previously provided by SWO.

7. Resources and Support Services

HR and Organisational Development

- 7.1 Three payroll runs have now been completed and the team has quickly adapted to the new processes and procedures. The General Election meant that we had to set up all election staff on the new payroll which was a challenge but was achieved. The next stage is the development of the HR information system i.e. leave booking, travel and expenses via the HR system, which will now be the focus for the next quarter.

Accommodation move

- 7.2 We are working with the Health and Safety Officer to review and develop policies to ensure that staff know how to set up their work stations correctly when they move out of their current accommodation and guidance for both managers and staff on employee wellbeing, maintaining contact and available support.

Apprenticeship Levy

- 7.3 This came into force in April 2017 and the levy is set at 0.5% of our annual pay bill – approximately £70,000. The levy can be drawn down to pay for the approved training of apprentices and the development of existing staff.
- 7.4 We have increased the number of apprenticeships we are offering this year and are working together with local colleges and training providers to ensure that we utilise this training resource to its potential.

Wellbeing

- 7.5 The HR Officers attended a Wellbeing Training Day with colleagues from across the South West region. There were some interesting ideas which we intend to develop for staff particularly with regard to men's mental health. We will also be training several mental health first aiders, to act as a first point of contact for staff to enable them to discuss their concerns and get advice on where and how to access support.

Procurement Team

- 7.6 The team continue to provide support and training in respect of the implementation of the E5 system. The focus is to build the reporting mechanism that will help maximise the benefits from the way the system has been designed to operate.

- 7.7 The Invitation to Tender has been issued for the Unified Transaction Portal (UTP). This is a major procurement project in which the team have played a key role in both the market analysis and specification design.
- 7.8 Tenders that have either been recently awarded or are currently being evaluated include:-
- Estate Management Consultancy Services (6 lots);
 - Managed Print solution;
 - Works Contractor – Moorland Place; and
 - Employment and Retail Study.
- 7.9 In addition to the UTP (outlined above) and the more general Transformation Project, major areas of focus include:-
- Working with the Property Team to plan and support major procurement projects;
 - Similarly working with the Housing Enabling and Development Team to support major projects; and
 - Increasing the exposure of staff to managing procurement projects. The aim being to increase their knowledge and experience, the end goal being to create 'go to' specialists in various operational areas – e.g. Fleet, ICT, general office services.

8. Finance

- 8.1 The finalising of the outturn reports for both Councils and briefing Members on the options for any potential underspend is underway. Also, the Finance Team is looking at trends to find early indications of underspends that may occur in 2017/2018 which may influence our decisions in-year.
- 8.2 **Statement of Accounts** – The Statement of Accounts have been produced for both Councils and the unaudited versions are now on the websites. We continue to review these alongside the auditors until these are signed off for Taunton Deane in July and for West Somerset in September.
- 8.3 **External Audit** – As part of the Statement of Accounts approval process we are now in the audit period and the accounts inspection period (12 June until 21 July 2017) where members of the public can come in and ask questions of staff in relation to the entries in the accounts.
- 8.4 **Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)** – We are looking at the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the MTFP to understand and share with Members the challenges we face in setting a balanced budget in future years and identifying opportunities to enhance our income generation.
- 8.5 **New Finance and Procurement System** – We are working hard to reach a BAU (Business as usual) position with our new finance system. At the same time, we are continuing to train our staff to ensure we are using the functionality to inform our finance decisions going forward. We think the new

system will help budget holders and other stakeholders understand their costs and income streams better and, in turn, help them make the best of the budgets they have available.

Councillor Richard Parrish

Council Meeting – 11 July 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 one 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.

1. Fire Safety Update - Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower, Taunton

- 1.1 The horror of the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London was terrifying and deeply upsetting. Taunton Deane Borough Council has been reassuring its residents about fire safety in their homes and how it is managed. All Local Authorities and Registered Housing Providers (RHPs) are re-inspecting their properties as a matter of urgency and the Department of Communities and Local Government has written to them about this.
- 1.2 Taunton Deane does not own any high-rise tower blocks (described as more than four storeys high or above 18 m in height). Our tallest blocks of flats are four storeys and the vast majority are two-storeys. Any Council buildings with communal areas are risk assessed regularly as part of a fire safety plan.
- 1.3 The Council has a clear plan to ensure it complies with the relevant legislation and its requirements. Some of our non-traditional housing has been fitted with cladding to improve insulation and reduce condensation. These buildings are two-storey properties and the material used complies with regulations, including fire safety.
- 1.4 There are no current plans to fit any water sprinklers in our buildings and no provision has been made for these in the recently revised Housing Business Plan. A full Fire Safety Position Statement is being undertaken which will be published as soon as it is complete.
- 1.5 Gas Servicing was brought in house this April and each address on gas has an annual service and fire safety check within ten to twelve months of the last. With so many Council properties (5,800 and the majority on gas) these are ongoing throughout the year. The Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for these in May 2017 was 99%. The only reason this was not 100% was due to a resident being away to look after her terminally ill father. This property has now been safety checked and we are on target to complete 100% of gas safety checks at the end of June. We take our gas servicing very seriously indeed.

- 1.6 The Council has a built a strong relationship with its tenants over recent years through the monthly Tenants Services Management Board (TSMB) and the Tenants' Forum as well as through our traditional Housing Estate Officers visiting tenants. Senior officers have met members of the TSMB to update them and to let them know that tenants will be provided with detailed, updated information about fire safety shortly.
- 1.7 Tenants have been made aware that the Council has no high-rise housing over four-storeys and has not used the type of cladding linked to the terrible tragedy at Grenfell Tower. They have also been assured that the Council has a robust programme of fire risk assessments in place and with TSMB we will continue to monitor and ensure that fire safety compliance is a priority for the Housing Service.
- 1.8 Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (Fire Service) were able to update District Councillors on fire safety at the recent Safer Somerset Partnership (which the Portfolio Holder sits on) on 22 June 2017. Fire crews have completed their operational risk inspection of buildings in Somerset which are above four storeys or over 18 m in height. These are mostly business premises but also some residential buildings.
- 1.9 Their site specific information in Somerset is therefore up to date so that fire crews understand where there may be any different or additional risks. Equipment checks are up to date including performance of local water mains (good size and operating well). The visible presence of the Fire Service across Somerset has also been helpful for the public who have found this reassuring.
- 1.10 The Fire Service is also liaising with partners who manage high-rise buildings. There are seven such buildings across Somerset West (that is Taunton Deane, Sedgemoor and West Somerset) and three of these are in Taunton Deane. These are Waterside House (rendered and pronounced safe), Exchange House (brick and render located off The Crescent) and Quantock House (empty and about to be demolished) and the Fire Service has no undue concerns about these buildings.
- 1.11 The Fire Service has a very good relationship with Local Authorities' Environmental Services and Building Control who let them know of any concerns either reported to them or they come across in the course of their work. The Fire Service will then prioritise these (for example a complaint about a blocked fire exit) and do a fire safety check.
- 1.12 Fire Service Home Checks continue to be available and they have an information package to circulate to partners and to hand out to residents.
- 1.13 Anyone with a three to four storey building who may be worried and would like a fire safety visit should contact the Fire Service. They have already completed their fire safety checks of high-rise buildings across both East and West Somerset as their priority.

- 1.14 Somerset East residents with a care line (equivalent to the Deane Helpline) have their fire detectors linked up to the Fire Service at an additional cost to Mendip and South Somerset District Councils of £5,000 a year each. This is something we at Taunton Deane should consider as well.
- 1.15 As well as acting quickly on our own initiative following this dreadful tragedy, Taunton Deane has received over ten separate communications from different Government Departments (Communities and Local Government, Homes and Communities Agency, Local Government Association) and agencies (Fire Service and others) in relation to Grenfell Tower and fire risk. These have been revisited and reviewed and we have responded to all of them where a response was needed and any follow-up actions are in hand. Any further correspondence or requests are being channelled through our Asset Surveyors which we will use as a central clearing house so nothing is missed.
- 1.16 Our hearts go out to all those who were caught up in this dreadful event and witnessed it - those whose lives were lost, those who they've left behind, those who helped on that fateful night and our brave Fire Crews who worked so long and hard.

2. Local Crime and Policing Update

- 2.1 Once or twice a year the Community Scrutiny Committee ask Avon and Somerset Police (Police) for an update on crime and policing in Taunton Deane which is usually presented by the Somerset West Sector Inspector. Inspector Carey's report is mostly pictorial which is helpful and can be found on the Taunton Deane website (Community Scrutiny Committee 27 June 2017) or <http://www2.tauntondeane.gov.uk/webpages/tdbcagendas/Meeting.aspx?MID=20171960>.
- 2.2 For anyone particularly interested in detailed crime statistics for their neighbourhood, visit police.uk and put in your postcode to explore the crime map for your local area. This is updated monthly, is two months in arrears with a figure for that month's total recorded crime. You click on the dots on the map for information about individual crimes (what and where). The side menu has more local information which includes 'local policing priorities' about what's being done to address issues in the neighbourhood. It is really informative.
- 2.3 Comparing neighbourhood crimes with those across the district and county can be found on the Somerset Intelligence Network which collates the information from police.uk into simple bar charts (<http://www.somersetintelligence.org.uk/community-profiles.html>) This is where you will also find lots of other information relating to community safety including the Police and Crime Plan, the Police and Crime Needs Assessment and more.

3. National Award for One Team Working

- 3.1 The One Team initiative which has now been adopted in seven areas in Somerset has been highly commended in a major national award. Taunton Deane Borough

Council was shortlisted as a finalist in the category 'Delivering Better Outcomes' in the Municipal Journal's (MJ) Local Government Awards. We would like to pass on our thanks and congratulations to officers who work as part of our three One Teams. The award is a reflection of the great work they are doing.

- 3.2 Angela Bolitho (North Taunton One Team Coordinator) and Simon Lewis (Assistant Director of Housing and Communities) travelled up to the 2017 MJ Awards in London to represent the range of partners and officers who work in our three One Teams in Halcon, North Taunton and Wellington and received Highly Commended in second place.
- 3.3 The One Teams bring local authorities and other agencies together co-ordinating their frontline support. Partners include the Police, Somerset County Council, the Fire Service, health services, Knightstone Housing, schools, churches and partners from the voluntary sector.
- 3.4 Taunton Deane not only helps co-fund the initiative with the Police, but has also restructured its housing service to embed One Team working in its day-to-day business to make sure it can best help tenants and align with other partners.
- 3.5 This summer the Halcon One Team, now four years old, will be moving into the ground floor of Moorland House to share a dedicated workspace. To be located together in the heart of a community is part of the long term plan for One Teams in Halcon and the other areas. Moorland House is part of the Council's new residential redevelopment near Asda and there are eight single person flats occupying the two floors above.
- 3.6 Bath Spa University has been evaluating One Team working for the past two years as part of the Police Innovation Fund award. Their report is due out in the Autumn and as well as helping to shape learning, it should help identify the value of this innovative problem-solving approach, evidencing the benefits within the community and the increased effectiveness of individual organisations who have chosen to work more closely together.

4. Taunton Deane Star Volunteer Award

- 4.1 Another successful Taunton Deane Star Volunteers Award Ceremony filled North Street Church and included nominees, the judges, volunteer groups, partner agencies, the Mayor of Wellington and several Councillors.
- 4.2 We would like to congratulate the overall winner Graham Farrell from Link Power in Halcon who was nominated by Community Development Officer Suzie Rea for his cheerful dedication and commitment to Link Kitchen. Graham cooks and serves breakfasts most days in the pop-up kitchen outside the Community Centre in Halcon.
- 4.3 Engage South West hosted the ceremony and referred Graham to Link Power as a volunteer last year. He is very grateful to Engage for giving him a chance to work again and was really thrilled to have won this individual award. Very well done indeed.

- 4.4 Earlier this year each of the Link Power volunteers received a Pride in the Community Award from the Police Commissioner at a special ceremony at Taunton Rugby Club. They had been nominated by the Police Sergeant Andy Murphy QPM, Halcon One Team Co-ordinator.

5. Somerset West Lottery Launch

- 5.1 Good causes across Taunton Deane and West Somerset are generating support after the launch of the Somerset West Lottery in mid-June when tickets went on sale. Already over two hundred weekly tickets have been sold on line through the dedicated website <https://www.somersetwestlottery.co.uk/> which will raise over £5,500 a year between the forty-four good causes which have signed up already. Every month they will each receive half the value of any tickets sold on their behalf.
- 5.2 Other local good causes can apply on-line to be included with the Councils covering all the set up and ongoing costs. So if you know of any you think might be interested, please encourage them to visit the website and consider doing this.
- 5.3 Please give some thought to buying a regular weekly lottery ticket on-line to support our local voluntary and community sector good causes which help so many people in both our areas. It is really straightforward and the link is : <https://www.somersetwestlottery.co.uk/> . Thank you on behalf of all our good causes.

Councillor Jane Warmington

Council Meeting – 11 July 2017

Report of Councillor Terry Beale – Housing Services

1. Deane Housing Development

Creechbarrow Road, Taunton

- 1.1 All units have now been handed over including Moorland House. There is still some minor snagging issues but these are currently being addressed.

Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green, Wellington

- 1.2 This development is progressing well. We are currently discussing the process of a phased handover as well as the returning decants.

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 Current projected six month build project with the ground floor space and 41 bed flats. Currently going through the tender process.

Oake

- 1.5 We are still developing a number of options on the site including development and refurbishing. In addition, discussions are continuing regarding short term tenancies for the properties currently void.

Off site manufacture (OSM)

- 1.6 Information is still being gathered on options and costings for offsite manufacture. 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

- 1.7 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.

Affordable Housing

- 1.8 I am delighted to confirm that in the year ending March a record number of affordable

housing was delivered within Taunton Deane. The annual target of 200 was well exceeded with 284 homes delivered. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Development Team and the whole of Housing for a job well done.

2. Welfare Reform

Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)

- 2.1 The total DHP budget for 2017/2018 is £196,652.00. Since April to date 51 DHP's have been awarded to Taunton Deane tenants with a total of £13,302 being paid direct onto the rent accounts and a further £6,500 committed to come across onto the accounts.
- 2.2 There have been many reasons why DHP's have been awarded to Council tenants, some of these include rent shortfall due to bedroom tax, low income families and help with arrears or rent.
- 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 (UC)

- 2.4 We have now had UC in Taunton Deane since April 2015. When it was first launched in Taunton it was for single unemployed claimants however since 26 October 2016, the system changed which meant everyone of working age making a new claim for benefits would have to claim UC. There was a further change to this in April 2017 which means any family with three or more children can no longer make a new claim for UC but would instead have to make a claim for old legacy benefits, those claimants with no children or two or less children will still have to claim UC.
- 2.5 UC continues to cause some of our tenants a great deal of issues and in some cases a large amount of distress.
- 2.6 The communication between UC and claimants is poor, as most of the contact is through their online journal. When you call UC you cannot speak to your Case Manager so very rarely are any issues resolved by making that call. Claimants are often left for weeks not knowing when they will receive money or how much they can expect to receive.
- 2.7 When there has been an error from UC it can take months for the tenant to get any of that money backdated and paid. This is extremely frustrating for our tenants as they are finding themselves falling further into arrears with their rent and also getting into debt with their other bills.
- 2.8 We have also had tenants fail the habitual residency test and have then had to appeal the decision which has been taking a very long time and is not an easy process especially for those who do not have English as their first language.
- 2.9 Although it may appear that UC is all gloom and doom, the majority of our tenants have been able to make and sustain their claims without issues, however for those

that do it seems to take a lot of time and support to be able to resolve those issues.

- 2.10 I do have a concern that as the “roll out” of UC continues and starts to gather pace the level of service given by UC will get worse and it will take even longer to sort out the problems. I am also of the view that unless the amount of staffing at UC increases and the standard of help given to claimants improves, our tenants could find themselves in much worse positions than they are now. Our officers of course continue to offer all the help, advice and support that they can to those tenants most in need and I am monitoring the situation with regard to staffing and stress issues.

3. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Service

Performance

- 3.1 Satisfaction with the service remains high. At the end of Quarter 3 94% (target 66%) of tenants who reported ASB in year to date rated the help and advice received as good or excellent. This is an increase since the last update which is very encouraging.

4. Repairs and Maintenance

Personal Digital Assistants

- 4.1 We have recently had some problems with the Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) equipment used by staff. Some of these have revolved around IT issues, some security and some with regard to signal issues.
- 4.2 With regard to IT there are five PDAs still at The Deane House left to reconfigure out of 43, and we are returning the PDAs to trade professionals as we receive them back from IT. About three quarters of the workforce are now back on PDAs.
- 4.3 Around 75% of problems recorded on the issues log are password related. IT are investigating alternative PDA's with fingerprint recognition, so as to improve, and more importantly, simplify password access for trade professionals. In addition for security our ICT Services Team is reviewing a new MDM (Mobile Device Management) solution with encryption software.
- 4.4 Regarding signal coverage, some of the trades are reporting that this is improving in areas such as Milverton, which will happen over time as enhancements are made by our supplier. There are also hotspots which have been installed in Wiveliscombe, which we are hoping staff will be able to use. Coverage does still remain a problem in certain areas but we remain committed to exploring ideas which will help with this.

5. Review of the Somerset Strategic Housing Framework

- 5.1 Housing is very much in the national spotlight, fuelled by the tragic events at Grenfell Towers and the deepening housing crisis of affordability, homelessness, fuel poverty and worsening stock conditions (certain sectors). The way that we, as

partners, try to tackle these huge issues is to combine our efforts into strategy and (most importantly) subsequent action.

- 5.2 The current Housing Strategy is provided by the Somerset Strategic Housing Framework (2013-2016). This is a County-wide strategy with individual district action plans. It contains priorities relating to affordable housing, supporting vulnerable people, and making best use of the existing housing stock.
- 5.3 The current Framework is now time expired, and requires refreshing in a number of significant policy areas including recent Government advice concerning both housing delivery and homelessness, and the links between health and housing. A partnership approach is being taken to the review, involving all Somerset Borough/District Councils, Knightstone Housing Association (providing the link to the Registered Provider sector), the County Council, Public Health and the Clinical Commissioning Group. Taunton Deane and West Somerset are providing the project management expertise.
- 5.4 To launch the review, a Housing Framework Conference has been organised for 12 July 2017 at Taunton Rugby Club. This event will bring together 100 stakeholders to discuss housing related issues, and to set a steer for the content of the revised Framework i.e. draft priorities /actions. Public engagement will also commence on this date, informed by district housing profiles that will be hosted on our website. All Members will receive the link by email in due course.
- 5.5 The indicative timeframe for the review is as follows:-
 - Launch / initial engagement: 12 July to 30 September 2017;
 - Draft Framework: late Autumn 2017; and
 - Final Draft Framework: Spring 2018.
- 5.6 A draft version of the Framework will be presented to the Community Scrutiny Committee / Executive during the late Autumn. In the meantime, if you would like to receive more information, please contact myself or Mark Leeman (m.leeman@tauntondeane.gov.uk).

6. Fire Safety

- 6.1 Officers have recently met to review the Taunton Deane position and the current action plan on Fire Safety and work is taking place on an updated Fire Safety Status report which will be shared with the Tenant Services Management Board and Members. We will continue to ensure good communications with Members, tenants, staff and partners as we develop our position and work programme on compliance.
- 6.2 Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy we have received over 10 different communications from the Department of Communities and Local Government, Homes and Communities Agency, Local Government Association, Fire Service

and others in relation to Grenfell Tower and fire risk. We have revisited these and we are happy that we have responded to all of them where a response was needed from us and have any follow-up actions in hand.

Councillor Terry Beale

Council Meeting – 11 July 2017

Report of Councillor Patrick Berry – Environmental Services

1. Environmental Health

- 1.1 Food Hygiene Inspections – The Environmental Health Team across Taunton Deane has now completed all required food hygiene inspections for the financial year 2016/2017 and almost 100% for Quarter 1 of the financial year 2017/2018.
- 1.2 The team is also engaged in a food sampling exercise from mobile vendors at events this year. The events will include Dunster Show, Bhuddafields and Taunton Flower Show.
- 1.3 Anti-Littering Campaign - Environmental Health is involved in the current Somerset County Gazette campaign on littering. Press releases are being issued over next 5-6 weeks on a variety of topics including littering, fly-tipping, gulls and food safety.
- 1.4 Also included in the above campaign is dog fouling. In particular, we have received a series of letters from pupils in Year 6 at St Andrews School which concern dog fouling at the Greenway Recreation Ground. A photo opportunity is to be arranged as part of the campaign.
- 1.5 During Food Safety Week, which commenced on 19 June 2017 several press releases, Facebook posts, and tweets were issued.
- 1.6 Safety Advisory Groups (SAG's) – Several large events are taking place this Year - Taunton Flower Show, Eat Taunton, the UB 40 Concert at Taunton Racecourse, Fake Festivals and the recent International 20/20 Cricket Match have all been the subject of SAG Reviews.
- 1.7 The team's enforcement activity continues with two cases in Wellington and we have a date for the commencement of hearings in court for an accident case involving one of the town centre retailers.

2. Licensing

- 2.1 **Performance:** The service achieved its performance target again for the final quarter.

- 2.2 **Appeals:** Two appeals had been lodged with Taunton Magistrate's Court against decisions recently taken by the Licensing Sub-Committee.
- 2.3 The first, which was to revoke the licence from a taxi driver following a road-rage incident, had been captured on a video recording device. The hearing took place on 21 June 2017. The Court agreed that the cab driver's actions showed that he was not a fit and proper person to hold a taxi licence.
- 2.4 The second appeal concerned an alcohol off-licence shop, which lost its licence in a review called by Avon and Somerset Police. The Taunton Magistrate's Court has set the appeal hearing for mid-July.
- 2.5 Licensing worked closely with the Environmental Health Group and the Somerset County Cricket Club to ensure that the International 20/20 Cricket Match, the first in Taunton since 1963, was a big success and passed off without incident.

3. Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning

- 3.1 IdVerde Contract: Cleansing operations have now been with IdVerde for five months and up to now the reports have been good. We have a follow-up inspection regime of 80 streets per month and so far few problems have emerged.
- 3.2 Most comments received have been positive, particularly in Wellington. Recently certain areas have emerged as problem areas such as the Toneway verges (the central reservation is not the responsibility of Taunton Deane). These were given special attention last week leading up to the International Cricket.
- 3.3 Despite being high profile, fly-tipping is not increasing according to Taunton Deane records and IdVerde has been responding to call-outs as foreseen in its contract to handle this type of work.
- 3.4 There are still issues with domestic rubbish being left out on the wrong day, particularly in areas with a high proportion of single occupancy dwellings. Rubbish left on the pavement risks not only the usual attempts by gulls and rats but also risks being deliberately scattered by people returning home after a night out.
- 3.5 We have requested the Somerset Waste Partnership to write to residents in these areas pointing out that they, the residents, remain responsible for refuse left out at the wrong time.
- 3.6 Deane DLO is also well involved with the Anti-Littering Drive in conjunction with our Environmental Health Team and the Somerset County Gazette.
- 3.7 Having reviewed the number and condition of the dog bins in Taunton Deane, Deane DLO is about to start a phased replacement programme.

4. Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)

- 4.1 The recruitment process has begun to find the permanent replacement for SWP Managing Director (MD) Steve Read, who left at the end of May to become Director of Energy, Waste and Environment at West Sussex County Council. Applications closed on Monday, 26 June 2017, with interviews expected to take place in mid-July, and – assuming the successful candidate will need to give three months’ notice – the new MD will relieve Bruce Carpenter, SWP’s previous Head of Operations, of his interim MD role at some point in October.
- 4.2 The Somerset Waste Board is due to select its Chairman for the coming year at its Annual General Meeting on 30 June 2017.
- 4.3 Although there was a small spike in fly-tipping near the Priorswood Recycle Centre following the introduction of charges for certain vehicles and types of waste, this has not continued and has now settled down to a more usual level. These charges were only introduced after neighbouring authorities had introduced theirs and it is considered likely that the increase may have been due to visitors, having come from afar, fly-tipping after discovering that Somerset also charges about the same as other authorities.
- 4.4 The SWP also recently issued a warning about summer barbecues. “Enjoy that summer barbecue but take care to not start a fire by discarding the ashes into your rubbish bin or black sacks,” SWP is warning. “Drench ashes with water or let them cool completely to avoid a rubbish fire threatening your home and family or causing a blaze in a waste truck or at a landfill site. The last major landfill fire in Somerset took days to put out, while across the United Kingdom, people have died in fires that began in rubbish bins.”

5. Cemetery and Crematorium

- 5.1 The new Cemetery and Crematorium Manager and Registrar Manager, Garry Bowles, is now settling into his post and reports the following:-
- As reported previously, the number of cremations has increased slightly and this trend continues.
 - A new software package for the service is now required. This item will need to be fully compatible with the new overall software package for handling of the ‘transformed’ Council.
 - During the recent hot weather, the Chapel became extremely hot with several customers being taken ill. The emergency services had to be called more than once. Due to its design, the proximity to the cremators and the large windows, the building is in need of better ventilation or air-conditioning.
 - In order to give customers more choice a new series of post-cremation memorials is to be introduced soon.

- Councillors may be interested to see the excellent facilities and services that the Taunton Deane Crematorium and Cemeteries offer. Garry Bowles would be very happy to give a conducted tour. He is also looking for input and any constructive comments on how to improve the service offered.

Councillor Patrick Berry

Council Meeting – 11 July 2017

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

Section 1: Business Development

The Glass Box, Taunton

1.1 Members will be aware of The Glass Box, which opened in Taunton Library in Summer 2016. The centre is run by the Somerset County Council's Libraries Service and offers innovative space in the town centre for people to meet, design and create. It offers numerous digital and creative services for users, including 3D printing, digital equipment, and business information.

1.2 During the first year of its operation the facility has proved very popular.....

I have agreed to offer the Glass Box the sum of £10,000 to enable the service to continue its development and growth over the next year. Specifically the contribution will enable the Library Service to invest in new promotional equipment, and to extend the range of services it provides to the business community. Officers are currently discussing a year-long programme of events, ranging from weekly IT clubs to occasional prestigious meetings led by a nationally recognised digital innovator.

1.3 The Glass Box is an excellent facility and I would urge all Members to visit it and use its services.

Heathrow Logistics Hub

1.4 Heathrow plc has invited Expressions of Interest from locations that wish to be considered to host a Logistics Hub. The four hubs will support the massive Heathrow expansion project, which will be Europe's largest privately funded infrastructure project, and they will be located in different parts of the United Kingdom. These facilities will help deliver the airport's expansion and will create opportunities for suppliers from across the country.

1.5 The Council intends to submit an Expression of Interest and is working alongside the local development industry to draft the submission in relation to particular strategic employment sites within Taunton Deane.

1.6 It is important that we seek out opportunities to secure inward investment such as this. Although the details of the Logistics Hubs are sketchy I am confident that the area has a strong offer to make. I would congratulate officers for identifying the opportunity.

Taunton Deane Business Awards (TDBA)

- 1.7 200 local business people turned out for an evening of celebration as Taunton Deane's second Business Awards reached their climax. The black tie awards ceremony was held at Somerset County Cricket Ground on General Election night, 8 June 2017 and the house was full and celebrating success.
- 1.8 Now in its fourth year the TDBA goes from strength to strength each time, and I was pleased to offer the Council's sponsorship, working alongside PKF Francis Clark. The competition exposes some real success stories, and I would congratulate all of the businesses that reached the finals. This year there were 10 hotly contested awards, all sponsored by local businesses.
- 1.9 The winners were:-
- Digital Innovators: INTROTWEET
 - Start-Up: ELITE STAFFING SOLUTIONS
 - Customer Excellence: BUFF URBAN SPA
 - Exporter of the Year: GRANNY GOTHARDS
 - CSR: VIRIDOR
 - Growth Business (Over 2 years): GRANNY GOTHARDS
 - Best Employer: LLOYD AND WHYTE
 - Creative Industries Awards: TAUNTON AND BRIDGWATER COLLEGE#
 - Best Marketing Campaign: REMINISCENCE LEARNING
 - Young Entrepreneur of the year: LITTLE MONSTERS ATTIC.
- 1.10 I would also thank and congratulate White Knight Marketing for managing a very successful competition.

Support for the Creative Innovation Centre (CICCIC), Taunton

- 1.11 The Council has commissioned CICCIC to continue its work amongst the creative industries during 2017/2018. Located on Paul Street, Taunton the centre has become established over recent years as a valuable resource to support enterprise, community and culture locally.
- 1.12 The Council's support will build upon the services provided by the centre to the Council over the past two years, progressing a strategy for the creative industries in Taunton Deane. The Centre will draw together a regular forum, comprising organisations and businesses in the creative sector, to shape and oversee the delivery of the strategy.

Employment and Skills Prospectus

- 1.13 I am pleased to welcome a temporary additional member of staff to the Business Development team during this Summer. Lori Cooney lives in Taunton and is an undergraduate student of Economics at Plymouth University. We have recruited her to produce an Employment and Skills Prospectus for Taunton Deane.

1.14 Lori will review the labour market in the Borough, summarise the activities currently in hand to assist residents to enhance their employment opportunities, and make recommendations on how the Council might intervene further to enhance the support available.

1.15 The Prospectus will be completed in the early Autumn.

LEADER rural funding

1.16 Taunton Deane is covered by three EU funded Leader Programmes, namely, Making it Local (covering the Blackdown Hills and Wellington), The Western Somerset Programme (which covers those rural wards in the west of Taunton Deane) and the Somerset Levels and Moors Programme. In summary all of the Borough with the exception of Taunton's urban wards is covered.

Making it Local has £1,400,000. <http://makingitlocal.org/index.php>
Western Somerset has £1,480,000 <http://western.somersetleader.org.uk/>; and
Somerset Levels and Moors has £1,690,000
<http://levelsandmoors.somersetleader.org.uk/>

1.17 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.

1.18 Within the Levels and Moors Programme three Taunton Deane projects have been funded so far; namely, Granny Gothards Ice Cream, Mere Green Farm, and Gothards Farm. The Western Somerset Scheme is also still inviting applications. To date two projects have been funded in the Borough; reinstatement of a historic path at Hestercombe Gardens and installation of shepherd huts at Tilbury Farm in West Bagborough. The Making it Local funding is now fully committed, and no projects have been supported from within Taunton Deane.

1.19 If Members become aware of rural businesses that require funding to invest I would urge them to put them in contact with Nadine Ackland or David Evans in the Business Development Team.

Somerset West Cycle Network

1.20 Officers are progressing a project to enhance cycle routes across Taunton Deane and West Somerset, which will lead to the development of an integrated cycle network. Many of the sections of the route are already in place, and the project will involve enhancement, new build, and in due course, marketing.

1.21 Following a call for applications under the Rural Development Programme for England an expression of interest has been submitted to improve an existing Sustrans cycleway in the Selworthy area of Exmoor. The application is a good

example of joint working within the new One Team, being written by Taunton Deane staff and supported by West Somerset Council staff.

Programme of support for start up and young businesses

1.22 Officers are working closely with colleagues in West Somerset and Sedgemoor Councils to provide a programme of innovative projects to support pre-start ups and young businesses across the three Districts. The programme currently underway reflects the needs of businesses and is commissioned from delivery organisations with expertise in working alongside businesses in a supportive role. Three programmes currently underway are:-

- **Somerset Business Start Up Day** to be held at The Glass Box, Taunton on Wednesday 13 September 2017. Businesses will be invited to meet with statutory and regulatory services, financial organisations, technology firms and advisory bodies to get ideas and learn about starting a business. If successful the event will be repeated later in the year.
- **Cornerstone Mentoring:** The Council has contracted Cornerstone for a couple of years to provide mentoring to young businesses. The service is accredited and run by volunteers. 59 Businesses from the Taunton Deane area have received the 1:1 support during 2016/2017, and we have offered them further financial support during the current year to continue the service.
- **Get Business Get Digital.** Since its launch at the beginning of this year the programme, delivered by Cosmic, has supported 55 Taunton businesses, through 20 workshops and 16 hours of 1:1 mentoring.

Taunton Garden Town and Inward Investment Communications Strategy

1.23 The Growth Team have been working with our marketing and communications partner (Coast Communications) since October 2016 to develop and implement a Communications Strategy and approach for our Inward Investment and Taunton Growth (Garden Town) Programme. The objectives of this strategy are to ensure that stakeholders are informed about the Council's 'Growth' activities in a proactive and positive manner, and position Taunton as an extremely competitive location with strong opportunities for growth, access to skills and potential for investment.

1.24 Current activities and priorities include:-

- A new Inward Investment website is in the final stages of development and is due to go live this summer;
- A 'Taunton Garden Town' public exhibition has been prepared and will be on display in the town centre from 10 – 15 July 2017;
- Taunton Garden Town information and 'Frequently Asked Questions' have been developed and will feature on updated pages on the new Taunton Deane website in July.

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

Destination Marketing

- 2.1 Taunton and the surrounding area continues to be promoted through the Destination website (www.visitsomerset.co.uk/taunton), social media and regular e-newsletters.
- 2.2 The Marketing and Visitor Centre Manager has recently been appointed as an Executive Director of the Visit Somerset Board who are the trade-led organisation promoting the County as a visitor destination. We are also working with other destinations across the South West to promote the region overseas.
- 2.3 The Visit Taunton Facebook account currently has over 7,660 likes, Instagram over 1,250 followers and Twitter over 6,250 followers, these continue to be widely used to promote attractions, competitions, events, retail, special offers and services available in the Visitor Centre. We have also added Pinterest and Snapchat channels, all of these social media platforms are now featured on the Destination website Home Page.
- 2.4 The Marketing and Visitor Centre Team have worked hard to boost the new Visit Wellington and Visit Wiveliscombe platforms (with large increases since my last update) – in Wellington the Facebook page now has nearly 800 likes, Twitter over 150 Followers. In Wiveliscombe Facebook has over 500 likes, Twitter over 130 Followers. The team are making regular visits to both towns to gather content from businesses and are being supported by the Business Group in Wiveliscombe and the Community Office Team in Wellington.

Events

- 2.5 We have just held another successful Somerfest. Now in its fifth year this continues to be a popular event in the town. Fuse Performance brought a great collection of artists and performers to our open spaces, including this year bringing activities to the High Street and outside of the Visitor Centre.
- 2.6 Great crowds were drawn to both Castle Green and Somerset Square where Britain Got Talent's semi-finalists 'Lords of Strut' were among the acts who entertained the crowds. A music stage was created on Goodland Gardens and the event was also able to help celebrate The Brewhouse's 40th Anniversary, plus host the Cancer Research UK Duck Race and Taunton Longswords's "1000 cut challenge".
- 2.7 Other popular events held in recent months include the new Eat Taunton event on Castle Green in May which organisers tell me attracted over 20,000 visitors on the day, the Vintage Bus Day who had one of their best ever years and the Dragonboat Race.

- 2.8 It was also great to see the Cooper Associates County Ground host its first International Match last month when England played South Africa in a T20 match, whilst the result was close (and perhaps not as we would have hoped), the feedback appears to have been really positive with lots of good reviews on Taunton as a result.
- 2.9 The Marketing Team continue to work with the club and the English Cricket Board on the Women's World Cup with games taking place as we speak and we will be hosting a Cricket in the City event on Castle Green on the 1 July 2017.
- 2.10 The new events booking portal continues to take shape with a launch planned in the Summer. The Marketing Team now act as the welcome desk for all event enquiries and account managing many of these event organisers, once the portal has been launched we intend to actively market these spaces and encourage more events and activities.

Retail Marketing

- 2.11 Account management of town centre businesses continue to take place, with the Marketing Team facilitating these. These discussions are proving very useful to helping steer our activity in the town centre. It is encouraging to see the recent refurbishment of TK Maxx, plus the start of work on the old BHS unit and a planning application recently received for the old HMV.
- 2.12 Officers are now hosting regional meetings of the Association of Town Centre Managers group in Taunton each quarter. Fact-finding and learning from others is proving invaluable to our activities.

Visitor Centre

- 2.13 The Visitor Centre Team continue to support all of our marketing activities in addition to providing the important day to day service to customers. The team continue to pursue new commercial opportunities which is seeing new publications and services beginning.
- 2.14 In recent months the team has been supported by students from Belgium, Germany and Spain as our working partnership with the Totnes Language School continues.

Section 3: Strategic Regeneration Projects

Coal Orchard Redevelopment

- 3.1 The outline planning application for a mixed use scheme on the southern element of the site received conditional approval at the Planning Committee on 21 June 2017. We now need to develop the reserved matters application for the site and will seek to submit this at the earliest opportunity. There is

further consultation and development work to do though with a range of interested parties.

- 3.2 We will also commence the application process for the demolition of St James Street Pool which requires a separate full consent due to its relationship with the Conservation Area.
- 3.3 Officers have also been working on the Business Case which is due to be considered at Council tonight. This seeks an indicative borrowing approval for £9,500,000 to develop the site. If the case is agreed there will be next phases of work to procure project management and deliver the build following the securing of a reserved matters application.
- 3.4 As Members will be aware we have in tandem with this work delivered 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 study has created a robust platform to go forwards with and exciting expansion of the site to create a truly regional arts centre which will serve the area. The next steps for this development are being planned. These include creation of the necessary £20,000,000 funding package which will need to be worked up with partners and will be sought from a range of sources.

Lisieux Way, Taunton Site

- 3.5 The Council and Thales continue to work together on a plan to secure the future of the hi-tech companies such as Novanta (GSI) and South West Path Lab, both crucial to the long-term regeneration of this important town centre business park.
- 3.6 Officers continue to negotiate the details of an agreement and programme of development and are investigating commercial options to further accelerate growth, retain jobs and secure new employment also encourage new industry and business into Taunton and the wider Somerset region.

Section 4: Asset Management Service General Fund Activities

After an extremely challenging period in respect of resourcing across Asset Management we are now beginning to see an improving picture with a more stable staffing structure and therefore able to further progress projects which had stalled.

Estate Management Work

- 4.1 The annual asset valuation exercise which was outsourced to Torbay Development Agency was successfully completed and this year included the vast majority of the General Fund portfolio and therefore making subsequent year's asset valuation exercises smaller.
- 4.2 There is a fairly significant consultant budget which in previous years has been underspent. A significant piece of work has been undertaken to

commission consultants under the ESPO framework to support the Estate Management deliver services alongside officers. Consultants have now been appointed to deal with valuation work, agency, estate management, lease event management and compulsory purchase.

- 4.3 In total four consultants have been appointed and this will enable much better resource allocation to deal with fluctuating workloads and enable external specialist input to be commissioned as necessary. Mobilisation meetings are taking place in July and we will be seeking to recover fees where reasonable from third parties, tenants and from capital receipts to ensure maximum benefit can be obtained from the budget.
- 4.4 Along with providing additional capacity, these consultants will be working closely with officers within Asset Management to improve innovation and commercialism. Business Rates appeals work was outsourced earlier this year with fees being deducted from savings made.
- 4.5 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.

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 previously available. A further benefit of having this data is that it will enable the performance of individual assets to be measured with the resulting appraisal tool being developed considering costs alongside income at individual asset level enabling the Net Present Value of assets to be known along with valuable cashflow data during that 30 year period.
- 4.7 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 along with asbestos surveys, fire risk assessments, preparation of floor plans and a review of land. This intelligence will then inform a new Asset Strategy which will be presented for adoption in late Summer 2017.
- 4.8 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.
- 4.9 Whilst the recent Grenfell Tower fire in London has understandably generated significant attention on fire safety relating to residential flats and which we have responded to in respect of the Housing Revenue Account portfolio, quite rightly there is increasing focus also on commercial and operational property. The Council had already proactively commissioned Fire Risk Assessments as

appropriate on the General Fund portfolio and these are due to be completed by August 2017 creating subsequent action plans to enable the Council to initiate building works where or if required.

Section 5: Media, Marketing and External Communications

- 5.1 The Public Relations Team provided support and proactive communications during the two recent elections – Somerset County Council and the UK Parliamentary General Election.
- 5.2 We joined the Electoral Commission’s social media campaign to raise awareness on registration, how to vote and reminders on when to vote.
- 5.3 The count at Wellsprings overnight on June 8-9 was attended by radio and print journalists and we were able to provide them with information throughout. We used Twitter to provide updates throughout the night (and morning), finishing with the declaration of the result by the High Sheriff of Somerset.
- 5.4 With the pre-election period over, the Council held a successful media briefing on plans for The Brewhouse Theatre. This resulted in good coverage in print and on radio. Thanks must go to The Brewhouse Team for the support and venue.
- 5.5 We continue to attract more social media followers on both Twitter and Facebook and are looking to make more of both these channels.
- 5.6 The Council’s anti-litter campaign, in partnership with the Gazette, was successfully launched. This aims to educate people through a series of articles on issues ranging from street litter to dog fouling.
- 5.7 The work of volunteer groups will also be featured as they do so much on behalf of the community throughout the year.
- 5.8 The campaign was masterminded and co-ordinated by Becky Howat with support from colleagues in service areas.
- 5.9 We hope that the partnership with the Somerset County Gazette on such an important – and highly visible topic – will have the desired impact.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting – 11 July 2017

Report of Councillor Roger Habgood – Planning Policy and Transportation

1. Planning Policy

- 1.1 Work on the review of the evidence base to support local Planning Policy is continuing. Progress is being made on the Green Infrastructure Strategy. This will help to identify future projects key to realising the aims of our new Garden Towns status.
- 1.2 The Policy Team continues to work through the current Core Strategy and Town Centre Area Action Plan to identify obvious areas to address in the review and evidence base gaps.

2. Junction 25 Local Development Order

- 2.1 Informal consultation on the Local Development Order (LDO) for the Strategic Employment Site took place in March 2017. Work continues in preparation for the publication of the Draft Local Development Order for its statutory period of consultation, which is programmed to run for six weeks from the 10 July to the 18 August 2017 (the statutory requirement being for a four week period).
- 2.2 During July the statutory consultation on the Environmental Statement will also take place. The findings of the consultation and the LDO proposed for adoption will be considered by the Community Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 19 September 2017, the intention being that it will propose that the Local Development Order should be finalised by the decision of Full Council on the 3 October 2017.
- 2.3 The final making of the LDO is dependent on planning permission for the M5 Junction 25 improvement scheme being in place.

3. Mid Devon Local Plan

- 3.1 Mid Devon Council submitted its Local Plan Review 2013 - 2033 to The Planning Inspectorate on 31 March 2017, for examination into the legal compliance and soundness of the Plan.
- 3.2 The Council (TDBC) responded earlier in the year to the proposals for a large allocation at Junction 27 anchored by 14,000sq m of retail floorspace. Concerns were expressed about the compliance of such a

proposal with National Planning Policy and the potential impact on Wellington and Taunton Town Centres.

- 3.3 The Secretary of State has appointed Mr Paul Griffiths BSc (Hons) BArch IHBC to conduct the examination and to report to the Council in due course.

4. Neighbourhood Plans

Trull and Staplehay

- 4.1 The plan progressed to referendum in June 2017. The votes cast in favour of a Yes were 1167 (78.53%). The number cast in favour of No 282 (18.98%). The turnout was 81.29%.
- 4.2 The Community Scrutiny Committee passed the plan at its meeting on 27 June 2017 for a Full Council decision.

Other plans

- 4.3 The Council is continuing to support the preparation of plans for West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine, Creech St. Michael and Ruishton and Thornfalcon.

5. Garden Town Status

- 5.1 Officers continue to take forward elements of our Garden Towns proposal.

6. Major Planning

Coal Orchard

- 6.1 This scheme has been in gestation for over nine years and has evolved in that time to respond to both public, local business and stakeholder feedback. The Planning Committee recently passed the outline planning application. This important scheme can now progress.
- 6.2 The Brewhouse Theatre plans have received positive feedback and the campaign to raise the required funds will now begin in earnest.

Firepool

- 6.3 The revised Firepool application will be put to the Planning Committee for consideration in the very near future.

7. Car Parking

- 7.1 The Car Park Maintenance Programme continues to deliver improvements across the estate.
- 7.2 Income and usage for April and May mirrors year on year performance.

Variable Message Signage (VMS)

- 7.3 The contract for the supply and installation of this signage has been let. The signs will be installed during the winter period in readiness for the Pay on Exit car park improvements in the New Year.

Councillor Roger Habgood