

Taunton Deane Borough Council

At the meeting of Taunton Deane Borough Council held in the The Shire Hall, Shuttern, Taunton on Tuesday, 2 October 2018 at 6.30 pm.

Present: The Mayor (Councillor C Herbert)
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor F Smith)

Councillors M Adkins, T Aldridge, P Berry, C Booth, R Bowrah, W Brown, N Cavill, S Coles, W Coombes, D Durdan, M Edwards, H Farbahi, M Floyd, E Gaines, A Govier, A Gunner, R Habgood, T Hall, R Henley, C Hill, M Hill, J Horsley, J Hunt, G James, R Lees, S Lees, D Mansell, S Martin-Scott, I Morrell, S Nicholls, R Parrish, H Prior-Sankey, J Reed, R Ryan, F Smith-Roberts, V Stock-Williams, P Stone, A Sully, N Townsend, C Tucker, J Warmington, P Watson, D Wedderkopp, J Williams and G Wren

29. **Minutes of the previous meetings of Annual Council held on 3 May 2018, Full Council held on 10 July 2018 and Special Full Council held on 23 August 2018.**

The Minutes of the meetings of Annual Council held on 3 May 2018, Full Council held on 10 July 2018 and Special Full Council held on 23 August 2018, copies having been sent to each Member, were signed by the Mayor.

30. **To report any apologies for absence.**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs J Adkins, Beale, Mrs Blatchford, Davies, Ms Durdan, Ms Lisgo and Ms Webber.

31. **To receive any communications.**

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs Smith, reported that in August 2018 she had represented the Council on the bi-annual visit to our second twin town Konigslutter in Germany. She reported that she had been presented with gifts at a formal gathering which she had accepted on behalf of the Council.

32. **Declaration of Interests.**

Councillor Prior-Sankey declared a pecuniary interest in relation to agenda item No 8 due to her husband's role as a Street Pastor. She stated that she would leave the Council Chamber during the discussion of this item.

33. **To receive questions from Taunton Deane Electors under Standing Order 15.**

- a) Dustyn Etherington introduced members of Taunton Scouts who were taking part in 'UK Parliament Week' which focused on local democracy. They presented three questions which included the costs of housing and what plans the Council had to address the shortage of affordable housing

for those on low incomes. Cleaner transport and increased provision for use of electric cars was also requested. In addition, plans for increased playground provision to appeal to a wider age range were referred to

In response, Councillor Williams stated that affordable housing was considered a top priority by the Government. Affordable housing figures had been met and exceeded in recent years by the Council. There was a programme of work in updating existing housing with affordable housing across Taunton Deane.

As part of Taunton Town Centre regeneration, a reduction of traffic flow was part of this alongside increased cycle lanes. The installation of charging points was actively being considered in public car parks.

Funding for play areas was generally provided by developers through Section 106 Agreement contributions. Further provision was anticipated through Garden Town Status and the creation of the Country Park at Cheddon Fitzpaine/ West Monkton.

The Mayor thanked the Scout members for their contributions.

- b) Mike Ginger and Nicola Fife on behalf of the Taunton Area Cycling Campaign made reference to the Somerset County and Taunton Deane Borough Council's 20 year Transport Plan connecting our Garden Town particularly with regard to walking and cycling provision. They requested the support of both Councils to work with the Campaign to prepare a major scheme bid for £10,000,000 of Government funding to make a step change to the quality of the cycling infrastructure in the Taunton Area. A leaflet had been provided to Members informing them of the campaign objectives. Their specific questions were:-
- 1) Would the Executive Member for Planning and Transportation and senior officers be prepared to meet with Somerset County Council and the Campaign to discuss the Campaign objectives?
 - 2) How will Taunton Deane work with all parties with a view to prioritising a major scheme bid for cycling and walking as a vital element of the Garden Town plan?
- c) Mr Ginger and Ms Fife were thanked for their questions. Executive Councillor Richard Parrish welcomed the opportunity to work with all parties towards the possible submission of a bid for funding. Following the success of any initial series of meetings the progression of the application would be considered. Any further dialogue was welcome, however considering the timescale involved, any decision was likely to have to be made by the new Council.
- d) Alan Debenham requested details relating to the Transformation process, the reduction of posts and how many were through compulsory redundancies? How would this impact on the provision of services and had there been Union involvement and agreement to the proposals?

Mr Debenham went on to talk about the proposals to pedestrianise Taunton Town Centre which he questioned.

In reply, Councillor Williams promised Mr Debenham a written response to the queries he had raised in relation to the Transformation process.

Councillor Williams went on to say that the pedestrianisation of part of the town centre would involve the permanent closure of St James Street to vehicular traffic and the closure of both Hammet Street and East Street on a trial basis. This would ensure that the effects on traffic could be monitored in stages. Reducing noise and pollution was an important aim. Councillor Williams added that the St James Street closure would not be implemented until the New Year to ensure there was no impact on Christmas trade. The other two closures would be introduced during the course of 2019.

34. **Receipt of petition with over 650 signatures from Taunton Deane Tax Payers, to provide effective preventative measures to stop travellers illegally setting up camp on Kingston Stream Open Space, Taunton. A copy of the full details of the petition is attached. The petitioners have formally requested that a debate takes place at the Full Council Meeting.**

Mrs Liz Goldsworthy submitted a letter and a petition with over 650 signatures which asked the Council:-

- 1) To install effective and preventative measures and secondly to take definitive action to prevent unlawful encampments on Kingston Stream Open Space adjacent to Wellsprings Road, Taunton as soon as possible; and
- 2) To take steps to obtain an injunction to prevent illegal camp sites on Kingston Stream Open Space, as other Councils have implemented in their own areas.

Following a short debate, Members asked that this matter be investigated further by the officers.

Resolved that the unauthorised encampments on the Kingston Stream Open Space, Taunton be fully investigated and that a report be prepared no later than February 2019 to be presented at Full Council at its meeting in March 2019 setting out the provisions that could be put in place to prevent further incursions.

35. **To tackle crime and anti-social behaviour working alongside businesses to reverse the downward trend and thus enhance shoppers' sense of security leading to increased footfall in Taunton Town Centre. To consider a Motion proposed by Councillor Habib Farbahi, seconded by Councillor Simon Nicholls (attached). An assessment of the implications for the Council should the Motion be carried will follow.**

Proposed by Councillor Habib Farbahi, seconded by Councillor Simon Coles.

“In May 2017, Sedgemoor District Council launched their own business crime

reduction system to replace Somerset Businesses Against Crime (SBAC). At the time, the Conservative Executives at both Sedgemoor and Taunton Deane were warned by those running SBAC and their members that this would have dire consequences for businesses.

A survey conducted by SBAC showed that 95% were happy with the service SBAC provided and 90% did not believe that Sedgemoor would deliver a meaningful service. SBAC received little funding from the public purse and was funded mostly by the business community it served. We questioned the rationale of the move by Sedgemoor but they went ahead with their plans. As predicted by so many, the consequences of this action on the businesses in Taunton Deane have been profoundly felt.

The lack of co-ordination and intelligence has led to stores reporting losses spiralling into the tens of thousands of pounds. They are telling us that intimidation and violence are on the increase. This, coupled with increased anti-social behaviour, has forced visitors to stay away from a town centre that is increasingly seen as becoming lawless. It was recently reported that the town had seen over 676,000 less visitors compared to last year at the same time and 9,241 fewer motorists using town centre car parking.

The fear of crime is keeping people away and hurting businesses further. Visible Police resources are scarce thanks to recent cuts; the CCTV system in the town centre is not fit for purpose with controllers in Bridgwater responding to calls for help by saying they are too busy or to call 101; the absence of data sharing is leading to criminals committing offences in our town with no fear of prosecution or action.

The current administration at Taunton Deane know this and have funded two security guards to patrol the town centre this summer to reassure tourists that the town is safe. This expense of thousands of pounds could have been avoided if they had listened to local businesses and saved SBAC. Indeed, the near fatal stabbing of a security guard on Friday, 7 September 2018 might have been prevented if SBAC had still been in operation as the attacker would have been known and the situation that occurred could have been avoided.

A well-known national chain with over 1,400 stores reported that the worst shrink figures in the whole company were in Taunton.

Furthermore in the Police and Crime Commissioner's annual report it was recorded that Business Crime in all regions of Avon and Somerset fell by 5% in 2017 except for Somerset West (which covers Taunton Deane, West Somerset and Sedgemoor) where it rose by 5% a difference of 10% to the rest of the service area which included Bristol, Bath and Weston-Super-Mare.

If we failed to address these issues, we would see further reductions in visitor numbers; continued crime and disorder in our area; and businesses (particularly the smaller, independent stores) would close leaving further voids hard to fill in the current climate.

We propose a solution to the business crime issues affecting our communities. We hope that the business community will support it and that the Full Council support this motion, which will benefit our traders and residents with increased visitors to the area.

The Taunton Deane Business Crime Unit:-

- Currently, Taunton Deane fund Sedgemoor CCTV to the tune of £250,000 a year to monitor and maintain our CCTV network;
- Local taxpayer's money is being used to generate income for another authority and with little benefit for our community;
- CCTV Operators are not pro-active in monitoring offenders, disinterested in calls for help from the businesses, and are also overstretched looking after multiple locations often with only one or two operators; and
- Taunton Deane is funding work that benefits Bridgwater and other areas but not Taunton Deane.

We know this money could be more effectively used and targeted in the key areas; we need to give our businesses a dedicated service.

We therefore recommend that Taunton Deane Borough Council

(1) Engages with all the businesses in the town centre to fully understand their challenges and see if contributions via the radio link systems can help and support their businesses. Taunton Deane and the new authority have to come together with the business community to ensure a safe environment for them to operate so that they can survive these difficult times;

(2) We propose that the £250,000 per year that is currently being spent with Sedgemoor District Council would be better used here in the County Town by developing a Taunton Deane Business Crime Unit rather than the current outsourced centres that are not obviously working. Therefore cancel the current contract and seek an alternative provider.

This new Unit to:-

- Monitor and maintain the CCTV system;
- Operate a radio link system for the area; provide high visibility security presence in the town; and
- Co-ordinate a professional and compliant data sharing service;

(3) We propose that businesses also need to contribute via the radio link systems knowing that a better quality service than that currently being received will be provided. The community would benefit from a stronger security presence and a reduced fear of crime, which would attract customers back to Taunton Town Centre;

(4a) An external Audit should be conducted to include a review of the whole system with immediate effect to ensure that people and businesses in Taunton Deane Borough Council are receiving the best possible value for the

services currently provided by Sedgemoor District Council; and

(4b) A Task and Finish Group be set up to look at issues of Crime and Anti - social Behaviour and consider possible solutions.”

Following a lengthy debate, the proposer and seconder of the Motion requested that each recommendation should be voted upon separately and that a recorded vote be taken in each instance.

In accordance with Standing Order 18(2)(a), the Mayor called for a formal roll call of votes to be taken and recorded in the Minutes in respect of each part of the Motion.

Resolved that recommendations **(1)** and **(4b)** (set out above) be approved and that recommendations **(2)**, **(3)** and **(4a)** (also set out above) be not approved. Details of the recorded votes follow.

Part **(1)** of the Motion recommendations was put and was **carried** with thirty three Councillors in favour and thirteen voting against as follows:-

Yes	No
Councillor M Adkins	Councillor Bowrah
Councillor Aldridge	Councillor Brown
Councillor Berry	Councillor Edwards
Councillor Booth	Councillor Mrs Herbert
Councillor Cavill	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Coles	Councillor Parrish
Councillor Coombes	Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams
Councillor D Durdan	Councillor Sully
Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Townsend
Councillor Mrs Floyd	Councillor Mrs Tucker
Councillor Gaines	Councillor Mrs Warmington
Councillor Govier	Councillor Watson
Councillor Mrs Gunner	Councillor Williams
Councillor Habgood	
Councillor Hall	
Councillor Henley	
Councillor C Hill	
Councillor Mrs Hill	
Councillor Horsley	
Councillor James	
Councillor R Lees	
Councillor Mrs Lees	
Councillor Mansell	

Councillor Martin-Scott	
Councillor Morrell	
Councillor Nicholls	
Councillor Mrs Reed	
Councillor Ryan	
Councillor Mrs Smith-Roberts	
Councillor Smith	
Councillor Stone	
Councillor Wedderkopp	
Councillor Wren	

Part **(2)** of the Motion recommendations was put and was **lost** with fifteen Councillors in favour, twenty eight voting against and three abstentions as follows:-

Yes	No	Abstain
Councillor M Adkins	Councillor Berry	Councillor Aldridge
Councillor Booth	Councillor Bowrah	Councillor Mrs Hill
Councillor Coles	Councillor Brown	Councillor Mrs Lees
Councillor D Durdan	Councillor Cavill	
Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Coombes	
Councillor Mrs Floyd	Councillor Edwards	
Councillor Gaines	Councillor Govier	
Councillor Henley	Councillor Mrs Gunner	
Councillor Horsley	Councillor Habgood	
Councillor R Lees	Councillor Hall	
Councillor Morrell	Councillor Mrs Herbert	
Councillor Nicholls	Councillor Hill	
Councillor Mrs Smith-Roberts	Councillor Hunt	
Councillor Stone	Councillor James	
Councillor Wedderkopp	Councillor Mansell	
	Councillor Martin-Scott	
	Councillor Parrish	
	Councillor Mrs Reed	
	Councillor Ryan	
	Councillor Mrs Smith	
	Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams	
	Councillor Sully	
	Councillor Townsend	
	Councillor Mrs Tucker	
	Councillor Mrs Warmington	
	Councillor Watson	

	Councillor Williams
	Councillor Wren

Part **(3)** of the Motion recommendations was put and was **lost** with twenty one Councillors in favour, twenty three voting against and two abstentions as follows:-

Yes	No	Abstain
Councillor M Adkins	Councillor Berry	Councillor Aldridge
Councillor Booth	Councillor Bowrah	Councillor Mrs Gunner
Councillor Coles	Councillor Brown	
Councillor D Durdan	Councillor Cavill	
Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Coombes	
Councillor Mrs Floyd	Councillor Edwards	
Councillor Gaines	Councillor Habgood	
Councillor Govier	Councillor Hall	
Councillor Henley	Councillor Mrs Herbert	
Councillor Mrs Hill	Councillor Hill	
Councillor Horsley	Councillor Hunt	
Councillor R Lees	Councillor James	
Councillor Mrs Lees	Councillor Martin-Scott	
Councillor Mansell	Councillor Parrish	
Councillor Morrell	Councillor Mrs Reed	
Councillor Nicholls	Councillor Ryan	
Councillor Mrs Smith	Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams	
Councillor Mrs Smith-Roberts	Councillor Sully	
Councillor Stone	Councillor Townsend	
Councillor Wedderkopp	Councillor Mrs Tucker	
Councillor Wren	Councillor Mrs Warmington	
	Councillor Watson	
	Councillor Williams	

Part **(4a)** of the Motion recommendations was put and was **lost** with twenty Councillors in favour, twenty five voting against and one abstention as follows:-

Yes	No	Abstain
Councillor M Adkins	Councillor Berry	Councillor Aldridge
Councillor Booth	Councillor Bowrah	

Councillor Coles	Councillor Brown
Councillor D Durdan	Councillor Cavill
Councillor Farbahi	Councillor Coombes
Councillor Mrs Floyd	Councillor Edwards
Councillor Gaines	Councillor Govier
Councillor Henley	Councillor Mrs Gunner
Councillor Mrs Hill	Councillor Habgood
Councillor Horsley	Councillor Hall
Councillor R Lees	Councillor Mrs Herbert
Councillor Mrs Lees	Councillor Hill
Councillor Mansell	Councillor Hunt
Councillor Morrell	Councillor James
Councillor Nicholls	Councillor Martin-Scott
Councillor Mrs Smith	Councillor Parrish
Councillor Mrs Smith-Roberts	Councillor Mrs Reed
Councillor Stone	Councillor Ryan
Councillor Wedderkopp	Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams
Councillor Wren	Councillor Sully
	Councillor Townsend
	Councillor Mrs Tucker
	Councillor Mrs Warmington
	Councillor Watson
	Councillor Williams

Part **(4b)** of the Motion recommendations was put and was **carried** with all Councillors present in favour, as follows:-

Yes	No
Councillor M Adkins	
Councillor Aldridge	
Councillor Berry	
Councillor Booth	
Councillor Bowrah	
Councillor Brown	
Councillor Cavill	
Councillor Coles	
Councillor Coombes	
Councillor D Durdan	
Councillor Edwards	
Councillor Farbahi	

Councillor Mrs Floyd	
Councillor Gaines	
Councillor Govier	
Councillor Mrs Gunner	
Councillor Habgood	
Councillor Hall	
Councillor Henley	
Councillor Mrs Herbert	
Councillor Hill	
Councillor Mrs Hill	
Councillor Horsley	
Councillor Hunt	
Councillor James	
Councillor R Lees	
Councillor Mrs Lees	
Councillor Mansell	
Councillor Martin-Scott	
Councillor Morrell	
Councillor Nicholls	
Councillor Parrish	
Councillor Prior-Sankey	
Councillor Mrs Reed	
Councillor Ryan	
Councillor Mrs Smith	
Councillor Mrs Smith-Roberts	
Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams	
Councillor Stone	
Councillor Sully	
Councillor Townsend	
Councillor Mrs Tucker	
Councillor Mrs Warmington	
Councillor Watson	
Councillor Wedderkopp	
Councillor Williams	
Councillor Wren	

36. **Community Infrastructure Levy Allocations for 2019/2020 - 2022/2023. Report of the Principle Policy Officer (attached), to be presented by Councillor Richard Parrish.**

Considered report previously circulated, concerning the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Allocations for 2019/2020 - 2022/2023.

The Council introduced a CIL on 1 April 2014. As at 1 September 2018 the CIL strategic pot held approximately £3,128,500 CIL receipts with a further £974,000 due to be received. The Neighbourhood proportion provided almost £500,000 to

local communities across Taunton Deane and a further £170,000 was due to be collected for local areas.

CIL allocations of £15,500,000 for the period 2019/2020-2022/2023 had been proposed for Member approval. The proposed CIL allocations were for infrastructure categories associated with the delivery of infrastructure projects for the Taunton Garden Town and were in addition to the £16,600,000 New Homes Bonus already committed to delivering the Council's growth agenda.

Approval of the CIL allocations, outlined in Table 1 of the report, was necessary to enable them to be committed as match funding in infrastructure bids for current and future projects, in line with the Council's approved Regulation 123 list.

At present officers were working in partnership with Somerset County Council, Sedgemoor District Council and Government officials to develop a funding bid for the Housing Infrastructure Fund (Forward Fund) and the proposed CIL allocations would support infrastructure funding profiles for Taunton projects in the bid.

The report recommendations had been endorsed by both Taunton Deane's Scrutiny Committee on 18 September 2018 and the Shadow Executive on 26 September 2018.

Resolved that:-

- a) The Community Infrastructure Levy funding of £15,500,000 for the period 2019/2020 to 2022/2023, by infrastructure type as set out in Table 1 in the report, be approved;
- b) The Community Infrastructure Levy Allocation Principles set out in the report be approved;
- c) A recommendation to the Shadow Council of Somerset West and Taunton Council to include the proposed investment of Community Infrastructure Levy allocations within its recommended Capital Programme for 2019/2020 be supported; and
- d) A recommendation to the Shadow Council of Somerset West and Taunton Council to incorporate delegation powers within the new Constitution be also supported. The delegation powers would require the approval of the Head of Strategy and relevant Portfolio Holder (in consultation with the Section 151 Officer) to enable the profile of Community Infrastructure Levy spending to fall outside the indicative years shown in Table 1 in the report but within the overall sum allocated by infrastructure type and subject to sufficient Community Infrastructure Levy funding being available.

37. **Part II - To receive reports from the following Members of the Executive (attached):-**

Leader of the Council (Councillor John Williams)

Councillor Williams's report covered the following topics:-

- Taunton Marine Geospatial Innovation Centre;

- Quantock House and Lyngford House, Taunton;
- Transport Schemes;
- Taunton Park and Ride;
- Shadow Council;
- Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget Update;
- The Deane House Refurbishment; and
- Recruitment Update.

Corporate Resources (Councillor Andrew Sully)

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

- Corporate Services;
- Corporate Performance;
- Customer Services;
- Facilities Management;
- ICT/Technology;
- Member Case Management;
- Finance;
- HR and Organisational Development; and
- Revenues and Benefits.

Community Leadership (Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington)

Councillor Mrs Warmington presented the Community Leadership report which focused on the following areas within that portfolio:-

- Update on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping in Taunton;
- Changes in Taunton Deane;
- Welcome to staff who will be joining the new Council; and
- Thank you to staff who are leaving Taunton Deane and West Somerset Councils.

Housing Services (Councillor Terry Beale)

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

- Housing Enabling and Development - North Taunton; Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green, Wellington; 12 Moorland Close, Taunton; and Completions;
- Deane Housing Repairs and Maintenance;
- Welfare Reform - Discretionary Housing Payment; and Universal Credit;
- Deane Helpline; and
- Anti-Social Behaviour.

Environmental Services and Climate Change (Councillor Patrick Berry)

The report from Councillor Berry drew attention to developments in the following areas:-

- Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning;
- Somerset Waste Partnership (Procurement of a new Waste and Recycling Collection Contractor; and General Issues);
- Licensing (Performance; Staffing; Process Redesign); and
- Cemeteries and Crematorium (Wellington - new graves area; St Mary's Cemetery, Taunton – new graves; Woodland Walkway; Cremation Walkway; Children's Garden; Chapel Waiting Room Expansion Project; Software Registry Replacement; and Business Figures).

Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Culture, Tourism and Communications (Councillor Mark Edwards)

The report from Councillor Edwards covered:-

- Events, Place, Retail Marketing and Visitor Centre – Events; Place and Retail Marketing; and Visitor Centre;
- Growth Strategy and Specific Projects – Coal Orchard Redevelopment, Taunton; Firepool Hotel Project, Taunton; Business Development
- Communications; and
- Asset Management Service Update – Asset Management System (Open Assets by Capita); Property Health and Safety (H&S) and Compliance; Leisure Procurement – Lease Heads of Terms; Proposed Country Park; Annual Asset and Insurance Valuations; Landlord and Tenant Advice for Projects Managed by Development and Regeneration Teams; One Public Estate Meetings; and Traveller Encampments.

Planning Policy and Transportation (Councillor Richard Parrish)

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

- Planning Policy – Community Infrastructure Levy; and Land at Bagley Road, Wellington – Planning Appeal;
- Taunton Urban Realm;
- Car Parking – Park and Ride; Variable Message Signage and Car Park Pay on Foot;
- Employment, Leisure and Retail Study;
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment;
- Housing Infrastructure Fund; and
- Garden Town Plan.

Sport, Parks and Leisure (Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams)

The report from Councillor Mrs Stock-Williams dealt with activities taking place in the following areas:-

- Community Leisure – Play and Recreation; Planned Works for 2018/2019; Section 106 Funding for Play, Sport, Allotments and Community Halls; Capital Grant Scheme for Voluntary Village Halls, Sports Clubs and Allotments and the Parish Play Area Grant Scheme; and Summer Sunday Bandstand Concerts;
- GLL (Taunton Deane) – Community Sport and Health; and Facilities;
- Leisure Procurement Project;
- Parks and Open Spaces – Grass Cutting; Rough Sleepers and Travellers; Housing Grounds Maintenance; Events; Vivary Park Lake, Taunton; Wellington Park; and Green Flags.

(The Meeting ended at 9.35 pm)