

SWT Full Council

Wednesday, 19th June, 2019,
6.15 pm

The logo for Somerset West and Taunton, featuring the text "Somerset West and Taunton" in white on a teal background with a white swoosh at the bottom right.

The John Meikle Room - The Deane
House

Members: Hazel Prior-Sankey (Chair), Simon Coles (Vice-Chair), Gwil Wren, Danny Wedderkopp, Kelly Durdan, Andy Pritchard, Jean Adkins, Ed Firmin, Andy Milne, Hugh Davies, Marcus Barr, Steven Pugsley, Sue Buller, Dixie Darch, Chris Booth, Dave Durdan, Benet Allen, Caroline Ellis, Habib Farbahi, Mark Blaker, Andrew Govier, Roger Habgood, Andrew Hadley, John Hassall, Ross Henley, Catherine Herbert, Marcia Hill, Martin Hill, John Hunt, Marcus Kravis, Richard Lees, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Mark Lithgow, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Paul Bolton, Chris Morgan, Simon Nicholls, Loretta Whetlor, Craig Palmer, Martin Peters, Peter Pilkington, Lee Baker, Norman Cavill, Mike Rigby, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Phil Stone, Nick Thwaites, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Terry Venner, Sarah Wakefield, Alan Wedderkopp, Ian Aldridge, Brenda Weston and Keith Wheatley

Agenda

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting of Full Council

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting of Full Council held on 22nd May 2019.

(Pages 5 - 20)

3. Declarations of Interest

To receive and note any declarations of disclosable pecuniary or prejudicial or personal interests in respect of any matters included on the agenda for consideration at this meeting.

(The personal interests of Councillors and Clerks of Somerset County Council, Town or Parish Councils and other Local Authorities will automatically be recorded in the minutes.)

4. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Chair**
5. **To receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council**
6. **Public Participation - To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions, statements or petitions from the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 14,15 and 16.**

The Chair to advise the Committee of any items on which members of the public have requested to speak and advise those members of the public present of the details of the Council's public participation scheme.

For those members of the public who have submitted any questions or statements, please note, a three minute time limit applies to each speaker and you will be asked to speak before Councillors debate the issue.

7. **To receive only in relation to the business for which the Extraordinary Meeting has been called any questions from Councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13.**
8. **Motion - A Council of Equality and Environmental Sustainability. To consider a motion proposed by Councillor Brenda Weston, seconded by Councillor Libby Lisgo.**
9. **Regeneration of Firepool**
10. **Approval of Redundancies (Transformation) where severance is over £100,000**
11. **Confidential Report - Commercial Asset Management**

(Pages 21 - 22)

(Pages 23 - 40)

(Pages 41 - 48)

(Pages 49 - 66)

This item will likely to be considered after the exclusion of the press and public because of the likelihood that exempt information would otherwise be disclosed relating to paragraph 3 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, relating to financial and business affairs of a person (including the authority holding that information).

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Hasset". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and "H".

**JAMES HASSETT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Please note that this meeting will be recorded. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected during the recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's policy. Therefore unless you are advised otherwise, by entering the Council Chamber and speaking during Public Participation you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of the sound recording for access via the website or for training purposes. If you have any queries regarding this please contact the officer as detailed above.

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussions. There is time set aside at the beginning of most meetings to allow the public to ask questions. Speaking under "Public Question Time" is limited to 3 minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes. The Committee Administrator will keep a close watch on the time and the Chair will be responsible for ensuring the time permitted does not overrun. The speaker will be allowed to address the Committee once only and will not be allowed to participate further in any debate. Except at meetings of Full Council, where public participation will be restricted to Public Question Time only, if a member of the public wishes to address the Committee on any matter appearing on the agenda, the Chair will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors begin to debate the item.

If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group. These arrangements do not apply to exempt (confidential) items on the agenda where any members of the press or public present will be asked to leave the Committee Room. Full Council, Executive, and Committee agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: www.somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

The meeting room, including the Council Chamber at The Deane House are on the first floor and are fully accessible. Lift access to The John Meikle Room, is available from the main ground floor entrance at The Deane House. The Council Chamber at West Somerset House is on the ground floor and is fully accessible via a public entrance door. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available across both locations. An induction loop operates at both The Deane House and West Somerset House to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter. For further information about the meeting, please contact the Governance and Democracy Team via email: governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

If you would like an agenda, a report or the minutes of a meeting translated into another language or into Braille, large print, audio tape or CD, please email: governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

SWT Full Council - 22 May 2019

Present:

Councillors Benet Allen, Lee Baker, Marcus Barr, Mark Blaker, Paul Bolton, Chris Booth, Sue Buller, Norman Cavill, Simon Coles, Dixie Darch, Hugh Davies, Kelly Durdan, Caroline Ellis, Habib Farbahi, Ed Firmin, Andrew Govier, Roger Habgood, Andrew Hadley, John Hassall, Ross Henley, Catherine Herbert, Marcia Hill, Martin Hill, John Hunt, Marcus Kravis, Richard Lees, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Mark Lithgow, Janet Lloyd, Dave Mansell, Andy Milne, Chris Morgan, Simon Nicholls, Craig Palmer, Martin Peters, Peter Pilkington, Hazel Prior-Sankey, Andy Pritchard, Steven Pugsley, Mike Rigby, Federica Smith-Roberts, Francesca Smith, Vivienne Stock-Williams, Phil Stone, Nick Thwaites, Anthony Trollope-Bellew, Ray Tully, Terry Venner, Sarah Wakefield, Alan Wedderkopp, Danny Wedderkopp, Brenda Weston, Keith Wheatley, Loretta Whetlor and Gwil Wren

Officers: Shirlene Adam, Jo Comer, Paul Fitzgerald, James Hassett, Marcus Prouse and Amy Tregellas

(The meeting commenced at 6.15 pm)

1. **Election of Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Hazel Ruth Prior-Sankey be elected Chair of the Council for the ensuing municipal year.

Councillor Prior-Sankey signed and made the declaration of acceptance of office, and thanked Councillors for their support.

A moment's silence was then undertaken at the behest of the Chair for the memory of former Councillor and Mayor of Taunton Deane Bob Bowrah BEM.

2. **Appointment of Vice-Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Simon Adrien Paulian Coles be appointed Vice-Chair for the ensuing Municipal year.

Councillor Coles signed and made the declaration of acceptance of office, and thanked Councillors for their support.

3. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors J Adkins, I Aldridge and D Durdan.

4. **Declarations of Interest**

Members present at the meeting declared the following personal interests in their capacity as a Councillor or Clerk of a County, Town or Parish Council or any other Local Authority:-

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr L Baker	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee & Cheddon Fitzpaine	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Barr	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Blaker	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr P Bolton	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Booth	All Items	Wellington & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr N Cavill	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Davies	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Govier	All Items	SCC & Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Herbert	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr Mrs Hill	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Hunt	All Items	SCC	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Lithgow	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Lloyd	All Items	Wellington & Sampford Arundel	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Mansell	All Items	Wiveliscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Milne	All Items	Porlock	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Morgan	All Items	Stogursey	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Nicholls	All Items	Comeytrove	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Palmer	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Peters	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr P Pilkington	All Items	Timberscombe	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr H Prior-Sankey	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr V Stock-Williams	All Items	Wellington	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Tully	All Items	West Monkton	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr T Venner	All Items	Minehead	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr A Wedderkopp	All Items	SCC & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Wedderkopp	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Weston	All Items	Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr G Wren	All Items	Clerk to Milverton PC	Personal	Spoke and Voted

5. **Minutes of the final meetings of the Shadow Full Council, Taunton Deane Borough Full Council and West Somerset Full Council**

(Minutes of the meeting of Shadow Full Council held on 26th March 2019, Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Full Council held on 20th March 2019 were circulated with the agenda)

RESOLVED that the minutes of Shadow Council held on 26th March 2019 be noted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of Taunton Deane Borough Council held on 20th March 2019 be noted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of West Somerset Council held on 20th March 2019 be noted, with the amendment of reference to a statement by the Leader of the Opposition to be inserted at the request of Councillor Pilkington.

6. **Receive any communications or announcements from the Chair of the Council**

The Chair read out the Chairman's announcements, and advised that as a mode of address 'Chair' or 'Chairman' would be acceptable and there was no need to prefix with 'Madam'.

Councillor Roger Habgood was invited to give a statement on the Somerset West and Taunton Charity Walk that was held on 12th May 2019. Around forty members of staff took part in an eighteen mile walk from The Deane House in

Taunton to West Somerset House in Williton along the Quantock Way, to mark the coming together of the two Councils. He was pleased to be able to report that over one thousand pounds had been raised for Somerset Unit for Radiotherapy Equipment (S.U.R.E). The thanks of the Council would go to those whose efforts were made in organising the event.

7. **Election of the Leader of the Council**

RESOLVED that the appointment of Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts as Leader of the Council be confirmed for a four year term of office.

8. **Receive any communications or announcements from the Leader of the Council**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts thanked Councillors for their support and stated that it was an honour to have been elected as the Leader of this new Council. She stated that there was much to achieve over the next four years but this was both challenging and exciting. She expressed a wish to work with each and every one of the Councillors to achieve more together for the areas we loved throughout this new District. She believed in honesty, openness and transparency, principles that were at the core of everything that we did. She affirmed that she was looking forward to working together with the great staff at the Council. She introduced her new team of Executive Councillors;

DEPUTY LEADER & COMMUNICATIONS AND CULTURE: Councillor Benet Allen

COMMUNITY: Councillor Chris Booth

HOUSING: Councillor Fran Smith

CORPORATE RESOURCES: Councillor Ross Henley

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION: Councillor Mike Rigby

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES: Councillor Alan Wedderkopp

CLIMATE CHANGE: Councillor Peter Pilkington

ASSET MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: Councillor Habib Farbahi

SPORTS, PARKS AND LEISURE: Councillor Richard Lees

9. **Election of the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee**

RESOLVED that Councillor Gwilym Wren be elected the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

Councillor Wren congratulated Councillor Smith-Roberts on her election as Leader of the Council, and looked forward to working closely over the next four years to take forward the whole area and make a considerable difference, with Scrutiny to have a key part in that.

10. **Public Participation**

(a) Mr Alan Debenham asked the following questions:-

- (i) As was unanimously agreed by the ex-Taunton Deane Council in October 2018, the name of the new merged council was wrong and an insult to Taunton, our County Town and Principal Urban Area, and the undemocratically determined "Somerset West and Taunton Council" name, demoting Taunton to secondary and inferior status, should be changed as soon as possible to the obvious "Taunton Deane and West Somerset Council". To stop this ill-conceived mistake living on in history any further, could this new merged Council now take this necessary name-changing action forthwith?
- (ii) Previous to the establishment of the new Council, regarding the undeveloped Firepool site in Taunton, the building of a hotel there using Council funding to the tune of a mooted £16 million was strongly opposed by all Liberal Democrat Councillors, most other non-Tory Councillors and many local residents and businesses, despite which the ex-Tory administration ploughed ahead regardless. Can I assume, as do many local residents, that his newly elected Council will now revoke this whole ex-Tory hotel proposal forthwith and replace it with a much more positive and meaningful alternative?
In line with the recently resolved declaration of "Climate Emergency" by the Shadow Council, could this be the construction of a visitors' centre for "PEACE" (People's Environmental Action for Climate Emergency) which would incorporate lively hands-on educational experiences, backed by a full library of publications and displays etc. like the WeTheCurious centre in Bristol Harbour Side - of course, plus a visitors 'promotional' vegetarian cafe-restaurant overlooking the river, a cycling centre, and a general repair and waste reduction-recycling large workshop?
- (iii) Until the onset of Westminster Tory mania for local government to adopt the very anti-democratic organisational practice of cabinet and mayoral single-party domination, in Taunton Deane and for other councils we had the far more democratic and easily run committee system – with every councillor involved in spending decisions relating to their chosen field of interest or speciality.

Surely now is the time to fully consider a return to this well understood, easily managed, and far more democratic committee system, giving every Councillor a distinct fairly equal role to play? Equally, within this renovated committee system the overall strategy-setting and financially controlling Executive Committee should comprise multi-party representation, as it used to, with seats allocated roughly pro rata to whole Council totals commanded by each party/group.

- (iv) The massacre of staff by the ex-Tory administration has left several departments struggling to efficiently fulfil their duties, especially in Planning and Building Control, and therefore, in the name of good management, I ask the new administration to conduct a thorough staffing review ASAP to redress these failings.

Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts thanked Alan Debenham for advance notice of his questions. She replied as follows:-

- (i) With regard to question (i) and the name of the Council the Leader appreciated the comments that had been made and that they had also been raised with her separately by others. However at present this administration had a lot to achieve and there was a need to focus on ensuring residents and businesses were receiving the services they expected.
- (ii) With regard to question (iv) in relation to Staffing, it was recognised there had been teething problems in the establishment of this Council and the staff were doing a brilliant job in the circumstances whilst services had been affected. The new administration was going to be working with the Chief Executive and his team to stabilise those services and ensure that residents received what they expected.
- (iii) With regard to question (iii) the 'committee system' way of working was going to be looked at but under the establishment of this new Council this could not be implemented within the first twelve months regardless.

Councillor Farbahi replied in relation to question (ii) on Firepool and assured the Council that the Hotel Venture on Firepool would not be progressed. He did not believe in playing monopoly with taxpayers money and that there was a belief that the sums were too tight and the money could be better used elsewhere.

- (b) Mr Sigurd Reimers made the following statement:-

Chair, Councillors, Officers and members of the public. Taunton Extinction Rebellion welcomes this opportunity to address you on the urgent issue of climate disaster. We are aware that a number of other local environment groups share our concerns. Today it is just eighty days since your predecessors declared a Climate Emergency, and the clock is ticking. We have three simple demands of

governments, including yourselves. First, to tell the truth about Climate Change. Second, to act now. Finally, to establish a Citizen's Assembly, to enable us to deal with the climate disaster that we are all facing. Our request of you today is to declare your intent to form a Citizen's Assembly and rapidly to take the necessary steps to achieve this. We realize that for such a motion to be passed by this Council, might require you to move beyond conventional ways of working. However, now that you, in common with many other Council's across the country have declared such a Climate Emergency, we believe it falls to you to take this further step. We consider that establishing a Citizen's Assembly represents a unique opportunity for you as our Council to establish a clear pathway for governing, and for ensuring that this area faces up to its responsibility, indeed our climate disaster and other linked environmental issues.

Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts thanked Sigurd Reimers for his question and responded that as the questioner was aware that the Council had declared a Climate Emergency, which was cross party and proposed by Councillor Mansell and seconded by herself. The new administration had taken that and put this issue at the core of what we do by appointing a Climate Change Executive Member. The Leader was interested in the Citizens Assembly proposal and would discuss this further with the Portfolio Holder for Climate Change.

(c) Mr Jefferson Horsley asked the following questions:-

- (i) Can I congratulate all successful councillors on winning the newly contested wards on the revised boundaries? I have in mind especially the Leader of the Council who has the daunting challenge of implementing the Liberal Democrat manifesto against the background of even further diminishing resources and increasing responsibilities thrust upon it by central government and the continuation of austerity for public services making the delivery even more difficult?
- (ii) However, can she reassure me that as I was one of the co-sponsors to the Climate Emergency Motion unanimously passed at the Shadow Council on 21 February 2019, she will use all her endeavours to ensure that the new administration will focus on this as its top priority? Since 21 February the Extinction Rebellion has highlighted that there is no alternative than to act now against Global Heating. Will she therefore bring forward the goals of both lowering Carbon Emissions and the burning of fossil fuels? Will she bring forward the use of Renewable Energy targets by a combination of lower demand for consumption of damaging products and the acceleration of the targets for the use of sustainable energy from 2050 to 2035? Can she confirm that Recommendation 7 of the original motion namely to set aside a budget of £75,000 with £50,000 coming from general reserves and £25,000 from the HRA Maintenance Budget will be used for this purpose? Does she agree that hope is needed to attain these goals as has been pointed out by the extraordinary work undertaken by Greta Thunberg if we are to avoid the possibility of Global Heating making Planet Earth becoming uninhabitable for humans by the year 2070?

- (iii) Can she also explain to the public why so much money is still being spent on the Firepool site by grassing over areas when it could inhibit the attainment of the wider goal of becoming the centre of excellence for Taunton to continue its leadership on becoming a centre of learning for reducing our dependence on Plastic and the damage it is doing to the environment as highlighted by the Blue Planet series on BBC by David Attenborough? Has she considered putting all these items on hold especially when the sums involved of some £750,000 as per an officer report sent out on 15 March 2019 could well hold back the ambitious plans for Taunton to triumph as the county town of Somerset which all councillors should aspire to?

Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts thanked Jefferson Horsley for advance notice of his questions. She replied as follows:-

- (i) With regard to question (ii), the questioner was assured that the Leader held a strong environmental stance personally, and in the manifesto this was at the core, and we have now brought in a Climate Change Executive Member. We would now need to develop a Strategy to implement that and put the environment at the core of everything that the Council undertook. If it was a case of requiring more funding, then that would be brought back to Council for a further decision.
- (ii) With regard to question (iii) on the Firepool site, a Strategy was being developed and the detail was being worked on for the long term aspirations there. In the meantime, the funding given under the previous administration to build the access road and early works. The grassing over was a temporary community space whilst this detail was being developed.

Councillor Pilkington replied that Climate Change was going to be taken very seriously and everything would be looked at with that focus, and plans would be forthcoming.

In relation to Mr Reimers statement, he felt that Councillors were all citizens as well and he would be willing to work with existing and new groups in Somerset going forward on this policy, but the input of the people would be particularly important.

- (d) Mr Nigel Behan asked the following questions:-

In the Somerset West and Taunton Constitution - Access to Information Procedure Rules Part A – General

It is stated that:

“3. Rights to Attend Meetings

3.1 Members of the public and media are welcome and encouraged to attend all meetings, subject only to the exceptions in this Constitution.

3.2 The rights at 3.1 are without prejudice to the Council's power to suppress or prevent disorderly conduct or other misbehaviour at any meeting.

3.3 Third-party recording (including filming, audio recording and photography) is permitted of the public sessions of formal decision-making Council meetings subject to any reasonable protocols that may be in place."

And the Agenda of the meeting points out:

"Please note that this meeting will be recorded. At the start of the meeting the Chair will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being recorded. You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act 2018. Data collected during the recording will be retained in accordance with the Council's policy. Therefore unless you are advised otherwise, by entering the Council Chamber and speaking during Public Participation you are consenting to being recorded and to the possible use of the sound recording for access via the website or for training purposes. If you have any queries regarding this please contact the officer as detailed above."

"The Openness of Local Government Regulations 2014, which apply to England, give rights to members of the press and public to:

- use modern technology and communication methods such as filming, audio-recording, blogging and tweeting to report the proceedings of the meetings of their councils and other local government bodies
- see information relating to significant decisions made outside meetings by officers acting under a general or specific delegated power"

And in the Summary and Explanation of the Council's Constitution it is noted:

"The overriding duty of Councillors is to the whole community, but they have a special duty to their constituents, including those who did not vote for them."

- (i) Does the New Council intend to post the audio recordings of meetings on the website and retain the recording - after the minutes of meeting(s) are agreed – on the Council System's and the website? There was some controversy at Somerset County Council last week about Audio Recordings of meetings. The Somerset County Gazette reported on it.
- (ii) How will Citizens, Electors, Residents and Council Taxpayers etc. who don't have access to private transport and live on Bus Route 25 (Taunton-Milverton-Wiveliscombe-Dulverton) for example, be able to attend Meetings like this one – the last bus from Taunton Rail Station is at 17:52 to Dulverton? This meeting was scheduled to start at 18:15.

- (iii) Will/ how the New SWT Council webcast Council Meetings to make them more accessible, inclusive, transparent and improve democratic accountability?

Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts thanked Mr Behan for advance notice of his questions. She replied that she wholeheartedly agreed that if you want an honest, open and transparent Council and if you wanted greater public engagement audio recording and livestreaming was the way to go to show people the background to the decisions we take. At the moment the Local Democracy Reporter scheme was one way for people to have that insight. The Leader confirmed that the procurement process for the provision of the Audio-visual Kit to enable this Council to webcast. In terms of the bus route she could not comment as this was outside of this Council's control, however if the aforementioned measures were brought in this could lead to greater engagement.

11. **To receive any questions from Councillors in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13**

The Chair invited Councillor John Hunt to make his statement.

With the Climate Emergency having been declared it was particularly pleasing to see an Executive Member for Climate Change. As an Independent Councillor he did not see himself as being in opposition to the administration, and was happy to work with all Members and Officers to better the lives of those he represented and those throughout the District. He was pleased to hear the Hotel was to be stopped.

The continuance of Taunton's Park and Ride was a concern. The arrangement between SWT Council and Somerset County Council was due to expire in four months' time and a new agreement needed to be established sooner rather than later. He'd also ask for the service to be extended to weekends. If we really wanted to discourage cars from clogging up our County Town, enable people to get to their place of employment and enable easy access to Musgrove Park Hospital, it is clear this service needed to be continued and extended. The environment would suffer as well as people's health as well as gridlock caused by extra cars.

Taunton did not have the infrastructure to cope without the Park and Ride. This is clearly a priority and he was confident a successful solution could be found, and was willing to work with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport to keep this service going. Without it, we could not call ourselves a Garden Town and if we were serious about the environment this would be a no-brainer.

Councillor Mike Rigby, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation responded and thanked Cllr Hunt for his question. We would work very hard to keep the Park and Ride going. As was known the County Council last year felt it no longer had the resources to continue operating the service and the then

Taunton Deane Borough Council stepped in with a twelve month funding offer to keep the service going. We now had a four month period to find a sustainable long-term arrangement for the future of the Taunton Park and Ride. The conversations had already started between the District, County and Bus Operator and meetings were arranged. There had seemed to be an increase in usage recently which was good and would put the service on a more sustainable footing. An update report would be forthcoming in due course. It was a priority for him and the administration as a whole.

12. **Council Committees for 2019/2020 and their Terms of Reference**

Councillors considered the report to decide which Committees to establish for the Municipal Year and to decide their size and terms of reference. The numerical allocation of seats to political groups on Committees in accordance with the political balance rules had been calculated and they had made their proposed appointments to the Committees.

- Scrutiny Committee
- Audit, Governance and Standards Committee
- Planning Committee
- Licensing Committee
- Employment Committee

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and statements and asked questions which included:-

- Councillor Lisgo raised a question as to whether the Scrutiny arrangements were appropriate and whether they would be looked at, as under the former Taunton Deane Borough Council there had been two Scrutiny Committees, and under the new administration's desire to look at Climate Change in depth this could take up a lot of time in itself.
- Councillor Mansell and Weston supported Councillor Lisgo's comments but Councillor Weston also suggested a committee focused entirely on Climate Change and its cross-cutting impact.
- Councillor Mansell referred back to his motion passed earlier in the year on the Climate Emergency Declaration which did make reference to a Working Group being set up which would need to be established.
- The Monitoring Officer advised that the government had just released some new statutory guidance on Scrutiny which we would be planning to report back to Councillors on Scrutiny at the earliest opportunity.
- The Leader, Councillor Smith-Roberts, sympathised with the Councillors concerns having chaired Scrutiny previously, the time it takes to properly debate issues. She would speak to the Leadership team and the Monitoring Officer to keep a track on this and see if it is working or not.

RESOLVED that the nominations for Committee seats made by the political groups be ratified and that the composition of the Committees be as detailed below.

<p>Scrutiny Committee = 15 seats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cllr Keith Wheatley (LD) 2. Cllr Philip Stone (LD) 3. Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey (LD) 4. Cllr Marcus Kravis (LD) 5. Cllr Sue Lees (LD) 6. Cllr Danny Wedderkopp (LD) 7. Cllr Sue Buller (LD) 8. Cllr John Hassall (LD) 9. Cllr Gwilym Wren (I) 10. Cllr David Mansell (I) 11. Cllr John Hunt (I) 12. Cllr Ian Aldridge (I) 13. Cllr Nick Thwaites (C) 14. Cllr Norman Cavill (C) 15. Cllr Libby Lisgo (Lab) 	<p>Audit, Governance and Standards Committee = 11 seats (plus 2 Independent people and 2 Town and Parish Council representatives)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cllr Dixie Darch (LD) 2. Cllr Sue Buller (LD) 3. Cllr Sarah Wakefield (LD) 4. Cllr Lee Baker (LD) 5. Cllr Caroline Ellis (LD) 6. Cllr Simon Coles (LD) 7. Cllr Janet Lloyd (I) 8. Cllr Hugh Davies (I) 9. Cllr Terry Venner (I) 10. Cllr Vivienne Stock-Williams (C) 11. Cllr Steven Pugsley (C) 12. Independent Person – Anne Elder 13. Independent Person - Vacant 14. Town & Parish Representative – Bryn Wilson 15. Town & Parish Representative – Sally de Renzy-Martin
<p>Planning Committee = 15 seats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cllr Simon Coles (LD) 2. Cllr Marcia Hill (LD) 3. Cllr Mark Lithgow (LD) 4. Cllr Martin Hill (LD) 5. Cllr Sue Buller (LD) 6. Cllr Simon Nicholls (LD) 7. Cllr Ray Tully (LD) 8. Cllr Ed Firmin (LD) 9. Cllr Gwilym Wren (I) 10. Cllr Ian Aldridge (I) 11. Cllr Jean Adkins (I) 12. Cllr Janet Lloyd (I) 13. Cllr Christopher Morgan (C) 14. Cllr Roger Habgood (C) 15. Cllr Brenda Weston (Lab) 	<p>Licensing Committee = 15 seats</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cllr Martin Peters (LD) 2. Cllr Ray Tully (LD) 3. Cllr Marcus Kravis (LD) 4. Cllr Sue Lees (LD) 5. Cllr Caroline Ellis (LD) 6. Cllr Sarah Wakefield (LD) 7. Cllr Marcia Hill (LD) 8. Cllr Kelly Durdan (I) 9. Cllr Marcus Barr (I) 10. Cllr Loretta Whetlor (I) 11. Cllr Paul Bolton (I) 12. Cllr Andrew Hadley (C) 13. Cllr Catherine Herbert (C) 14. Cllr Andy Milne (C) 15. Cllr Libby Lisgo (Lab)
<p>Employment Committee</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts (LD) 2. Cllr Ross Henley (LD) 3. Cllr Lee Baker (LD) 4. Cllr Sue Buller (LD) 5. Cllr Gwilym Wren (I) 6. Cllr Craig Palmer (I) 7. Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew (C) 	

Planning Substitutes: Cllr A Govier (LAB) Cllr J Hassall (LD) Cllr Caroline Ellis (LD) Cllr Sarah Wakefield (LD) Cllr Andy Pritchard (I) Cllr John Hunt (I) Cllr Loretta Whetlor (I) Cllr Craig Palmer (I) Cllr Dave Mansell (I) Cllr Andrew Hadley (C) Cllr Anthony Trollope-Bellew (C)

Independent Person: By law the Council is required to appoint an Independent Person to work with the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee on complaints about Councillors. Louise Somerville

Independent Members for Audit, Governance and Standards Committee: Anne Elder wishes to continue as an Independent Member of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee. There will be one vacancy – it is recommended that the Council advertise for this position Town and Parish Council reps for the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee:

The former Town and Parish Reps were contacted to see if they wanted to be on the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee and all responded positively. It is suggested that 'first come, first served' basis be applied and that Bryn Wilson and Sally de Renzy-Martin be appointed from the list below: 1. Bryn Wilson – Wiveliscombe Parish Council 2. Sally de Renzy-Martin – Watchet Parish Council 3. John Davis – Cutcombe Parish Council 4. Mike Marshall – Ruishton Parish Council 5. Penny Webber – Selworthy and Minehead Without Parish Council

13. **Appointment of Representatives on Outside Bodies**

Councillors considered the report that had been circulated, which was a known list of those outside bodies that Councillors had served on from both Councils in the previous quadrennium.

During the discussion of this item, Members made comments and statements and asked questions which included:-

- Councillor Gwil Wren queried the mechanism for getting members of the Independent Group onto various bodies
- Councillor Smith-Roberts was happy to work with Group Leaders on this issue and get those with the best skill-set assigned and fill those vacancies. She was keen for those on Outside Bodies to report back to this Council on their activities which had not taken place previously.

RESOLVED that the Members appointed to serve on Outside Bodies for the municipal year 2019-2020 be as follows, with the caveat that a final complete confirmatory report was to come back to the next Ordinary Meeting of Full Council:

- Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Panel – Cllr C Booth
- Blackdown Hills AONB Partnership Management Group – Cllr R Henley
- Blackdown Hills Joint Partnership Advisory Committee – Cllr R Henley
- Brewhouse Theatre Board Meetings – Cllr N Cavill
- District Councils Network Assembly Representative – Cllr F Smith-Roberts

- ENGAGE – West Somerset Voluntary Sector Development Agency – Cllr B Allen
- Exmoor National Park Authority – TBC
- Friends of Konigslutter – Cllr D Durdan
- Friends of Vivary Park – Cllr R Lees
- Harbour Board – Cllr A Wedderkopp, Cllr P Pilkington, Cllr L Whetlor & Cllr A Hadley
- Hestercombe Gardens Trust – Cllr Marcia Hill
- Hinkley Point Site Stakeholder Group – Cllr M Rigby, Cllr P Pilkington, Cllr C Morgan, Cllr L Whetlor
- Heart of the South West LEP Joint Committee – Cllr F Smith-Roberts
- Local Government Association General Assembly – Cllr R Henley & Cllr J Hassall
- Management Committee of Broadlands – VACANCY
- MATA Regal Theatre Co. Ltd – Cllr B Allen
- Minehead BID Board – To Be Confirmed
- Minehead Coastal Communities Team – Cllr H Farbahi (PFH), Cllr M Rigby, Cllr P Pilkington, Cllr C Palmer, 1 VACANCY
- Minehead EYE Management Committee – Cllr B Allen
- Monitoring and Evaluation Group – West Somerset Sports and Leisure – Cllr R Lees
- Parrett Catchment Project Management Committee – Cllr P Stone
- Parrett Internal Drainage Board – Cllr D Durdan & Cllr P Stone
- Quantock Hills Joint Advisory Committee – Cllr A Trollope-Bellew & Cllr G Wren & Cllr D Darch & Cllr H Davies
- Rural Services Network – Cllr M Blaker
- Safer Somerset Partnership – Cllr C Booth
- Somerset Armed Forces Community Covenant Champion and Partnership – Cllr A Milne
- Somerset Biodiversity Steering Group – Cllr G Wren
- Somerset Building Control Partnership – Cllr H Farbahi & Cllr A Wedderkopp
- Somerset Building Preservation Trust – Cllr Marcia Hill & Cllr S Coles
- Somerset Growth Board – Cllr H Farbahi
- Somerset Health and Wellbeing Board – Cllr C Booth
- Joint Scrutiny Panel of Somerset Waste Board – Cllr J Hassall & Cllr A Trollope-Bellew
- Somerset Levels and Moors Local Action For Rural Communities (LARC) Executive Board - VACANCY
- Somerset Local Access Forum – No rep required until 2023
- Somerset Pensions Committee – Cllr R Henley
- Somerset Passenger Transport Forum – Cllr J Hassall
- Somerset Playing Fields Association – Cllr R Lees
- Somerset Primary Care Trust – Cllr C Ellis

- Somerset Rivers Authority - Cllr F Smith-Roberts
- Somerset Rivers Authority Scrutiny Panel – Cllr S Coles (Cllr L Lisgo alternate)
- Somerset Strategic Housing Partnership – Cllr F Smith
- Somerset Waste Board – Cllr A Wedderkopp & Cllr D Mansell
- Somerset Water Management Board – Cllr D Durdan
- Somerset Waterways Advisory Committee – Cllr A Wedderkopp & Cllr D Durdan
- Somerset West Private Sector Housing Partnership – Cllr F Smith
- South West Audit Partnership (SWAP) Members Meeting & Board – Cllr S Lees & Cllr R Henley
- South West Councils Employers Panel – Cllr R Henley
- South West Councils Membership Representative – Cllr F Smith-Roberts
- Tacchi-Morris Management Committee – Cllr R Tully & Cllr N Cavill
- Taunton and Somerset NHS Trust – Foundation Trust Council of Governors - VACANCY
- Taunton Aid in Sickness Fund – Cllr R Lees
- Taunton Deane Bowling Club – Cllr F Smith
- Taunton Deane District Citizens Advice Bureau – Cllr S Lees
- Taunton Deane Domestic Abuse Forum – Cllr C Booth
- Taunton Garden Town Cultural Forum – Cllr B Allen & Cllr N Cavill
- Taunton Heritage Trust – Cllr A Pritchard & Cllr L Lisgo (Cllr R Habgood - Heritage Champion)
- Taunton Strategic Advisory Board – Cllr F Smith-Roberts
- The Albemarle Centre – Cllr C Ellis & Cllr Marcia Hill
- The Making It Local – Blackdown Hills and East Devon Local Action Group – Cllr R Henley
- Visit Exmoor Executive Board – Cllr P Pilkington & Cllr H Farbahi
- Watchet Coastal Communities Team – Cllr P Pilkington & Cllr L Whetlor
- Watchet Harbour Advisory Committee – Cllr L Whetlor
- West Somerset Advice Bureau – Cllr I Aldridge Dep: Cllr P Pilkington
- West Somerset Flood Group – Cllr Pilkington to Chair
- West Somerset Railway Partnership Development Group – Cllr B Allen & Cllr J Hassall.

14. **Meetings Timetable for 2019/2020**

RESOLVED that the Committee Meetings Timetable for 2019/2020 was approved with the caveat that the Planning Committee timings were to be reviewed in due course.

15. **To authorise the sealing or signing of documents to give effect to any decisions taken**

RESOLVED that the Common Seal of Somerset West and Taunton Council be authorised.

(The Meeting ended at 7.15 pm)

Full Council – 19 June 2019

A Council of Equality and Environmental Sustainability

Motion proposed by Councillor Brenda Weston, seconded by Councillor Libby Lisgo

Recommendations:-

- (1) Somerset West and Taunton Council welcomes the reaffirmation by the new administration of the Shadow Council's commitment to tackle climate change as a priority.
- (2) Council also welcomes the revised Corporate Equality Objectives approved by the Shadow Executive on 26th March alongside the statutory protected characteristics set out in Section 149 (the Public Sector Equality Duty) of the Equality Act 2010.
- (3) Council resolves to give effect, and make transparent its commitment to these aims by ensuring that, through the scrutiny process, all new policy proposals and reviews are assessed with due regard to their impact on:
 - economic and social disadvantage
 - climate change
 - rurality
 - digital exclusion
- (4) Council will seek to mitigate any identifiable adverse impacts as far as possible within the constraints of current legislation and available resources, and record any unmet needs as these emerge.

Somerset West and Taunton Council

Council - 19th June 2019

Regeneration of Firepool

This matter is the responsibility of Cllr Habib Farbahi

Report Author: James Barrah, Head of Commercial Investment

1 Executive Summary

This report is the next key step to progress delivery of the Firepool site. It sets out a programme of activity to deliver the outline planning consent. The report outlines a little of the history of the site, some lessons learned and the steps undertaken in the past 3 months to identify the likely most deliverable form of development in a relatively short programme.

Appendix 1 consists of the indicative conceptual block plan for the site which both builds on the outline planning approval and accords with current planning policy. This is not a prescriptive solution but it is work in progress. The site is to be divided into bite size blocks to assist greater flexibility and certainty of delivery. The intention is that the Council will act as the masterplan developer to deliver the public realm and infrastructure to remove the obvious barriers to progress the site and act as a catalyst to delivery.

The report seeks support for the broad direction of travel set out and the key recommendation is to seek authority to appoint a professional design team to help progress the masterplan delivery and to work up detailed business cases for Blocks 1,2 and 5. The report also sets the way forward for the hotel and to identify the market and commercial appetite for a performance venue together with the potential space requirements.

Key to the regeneration of the site is to build on the extensive consultation already undertaken with the previous planning applications but to focus now on delivery.

Our intention is to get the public realm and infrastructure elements on site next year and to have 2 or 3 Blocks started on site as well. The decisions within this report are a key and essential stage in the process and sets up the next key steps as follows:

June – September

- Design team appointed to further develop and cost the conceptual delivery block plan and create a Framework Masterplan ready for approval
- Commission expert studies into a performance venue
- Hard market test Hotel, Leisure and Residential blocks and seek commercial occupiers

Post October

- Review detailed business case for Blocks 1,2 and 5
- Council decision to work up, consult and submit planning applications as required
- Review business case for Performance Venue
- Review and decide on alternate delivery approach for Hotel
- Consult and submit planning applications in late 2019, early 2020 potentially in conjunction with plot developers
- Secure detailed planning approvals, conclude developer deals
- Major start on site mid 2020

2 Recommendations

That Council approves;

- That the broad principle of the conceptual block plan design is progressed to Framework Masterplan and that indicative designs for all of the blocks are developed. In-particular Blocks 1, 2, and 5 be progressed to detailed business case and to provide authority to appoint a design team following due process.
- To endorse the approach that the Council further considers the business case to act as the lead commercial and masterplan developer and to delegate authority to the Head of Commercial Investment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to enter into relevant transactions. This will include hard market testing of Blocks 1,2 and 5 to inform completion of business cases.
- To endorse the principle that the Council may also be the developer of some of the plots each being considered on a case by case basis and subject to a detailed business case and further Council approval.
- To note the review of the Hotel development project, to cease the current Council investment plans and cancel the existing budget approval and instead to seek a development partner/investor to deliver this scheme as an alternative to the previously approved Council development, and on a different part of the site. A specialist property adviser will be appointed to undertake a thorough hard marketing exercise
- To commission a suitable performance venue expert to establish the business case and conduct soft market testing with suitable operators for such a facility on site.
- To report back with progress as and when required and set up a project governance Board to oversee the direction of the project.

- Approval of a total budget of £275,000 to progress these work streams and this to be funded from New Homes Bonus funds

3 Risk Assessment

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
The council is unable to decide on the right, viable solution for the site and there is no activity	3	5	15
Council selects a single developer for the whole site whom is unable to perform	3	5	15
Lack of progress will mean lack of investment and job creation plus loss of potential Council Tax and Business Rates income	2	5	10
Poor quality scheme could undermine future of Town and area	1	5	5

Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
			Impact				

4 Background

The redevelopment of Firepool has been an element of Council plans for the centre of Taunton for a very significant period of time. The intention to create a new development in this location is described in the Council's Town Centre Action Plan adopted in 2008. This was further reinforced by the Taunton Rethink adopted in late 2014 which confirmed the importance of this site as a central point in the town centre growth plans

St Modwen were appointed in 2010 and whilst some progress has been made in regards to Firepool South. The development agreement with St Modwen came to an end in late 2018. St Modwen submitted an outline planning application in 2016 that was recommended for approval and the S106 for this was signed in March of this year. The permission is live.

5 Enabling Works

The initial enabling package of works is well underway within budget and programme. Concrete has been broken up, site fencing enhanced and some interim landscaping completed. The principle of the boulevard established with part of the interim footpath created and for the moment the whole site looking better cared for and feeling safer for the public. The grassed area is a temporary solution but is intended to make the area an attractive area for the public to use and enjoy pending development.

Further work utilising the existing budget approval over the coming weeks will address some further demolitions, completing the temporary footpath connection to the station and completion of the vehicular access from Trenchard Way by Somerset County Council on the Council's behalf.

The intention is that these works create considerable temporary improvement to the area and help make an underused public car park feel more welcome and useable as a long stay car park outside of cricket matches. That should help grow car park revenue. The enabling works are also intended to help build momentum a vital part of all projects and importantly to help illustrate to investors and occupiers the true value of the site.

6 Constraints and Vital Issues

The site presents various constraints and issues to be addressed. In summary key issues to be addressed are:

- Flood Risk – To reassess and ensure compliance with the flood risk strategy for the site which involves raising the level of the site
- Weir – Working with partners to consider some essential repairs to the Weir and Lock and to improve the appearance of the Lock area
- Utilities – To relocate services that severely restrict the optimum layout for the site and to provide services to each block
- Highway Access – To provide the optimum access to the site from the NIDR and as required Canal Road and resolve the level change

These issues will be addressed and solutions identified and costed for the next stage.

7 Title

The final acquisitions have now been made to deliver all of the site although legal completion of the acquisition of one property has not yet been achieved but is expected by end August. It has been exchanged though. This is the last remaining obstacle to complete control of the site.

8 Value of the Site to the Area

There is enormous economic and social regenerative benefits from bringing this site forward and quickly. This site could reasonably be producing £1,500,000 of Business Rates Income per year and in the region of £500,000 per annum in Council Tax. Then you add in the GVA of any business uses on site, employment created is a direct and indirect income to the area and wider Public Sector including the Council of at least £3m per annum. There is every reason to move on a regeneration scheme on this site quickly to capitalise on these considerable benefits. In addition despite the constraints there is considerable potential direct development value in the site that the Council can potentially benefit from as a developer and investor. In turn this return can then be re invested in our communities. Opportunities for such potential Council investments will be reported in due course.

9 Hotel – Background

Previous Council approvals supported the business case for the delivery of a 120 bed hotel. This project went through a long process of due diligence and an open tendering exercise. The Council hoped to find a developer to undertake the scheme but after market testing undertaken a few years ago there was little interest. There were some submissions but they were far from straight forward and involved adding in other sites and land of value plus loans and financial commitments. However the investment market changes quickly and we have been advised by specialist hotel agents that there is an increasing appetite in investors and developers for franchised type premium hotels and this may well extend to Taunton. The advice is clear enough to suggest that it is worth re-examining the potential for a third party to take all or some of the financial risk.

There have been a number of hotels developed by other Councils up and down the country. Council's have developed, owned and operated these hotels and have made a decent return from them. Generally this sort of franchised hotel does not have a simple lease arrangement and the market has moved towards a handful of specialist hotel operators whom occupy only on a management basis. There is also an emerging investment market for existing hotels run solely under management agreements. We have been advised that new build hotels have been sold within 6 months at prices comfortably above the costs.

10 Hotel – Way Forward

The original Firepool Hotel business case was well considered and had some considerable merit. However, a detailed review has been undertaken and there is specific concern over a number of key issues:

- Operating Risk with public funding albeit with strong independent advice that the demand is solid from third party specialist advisers
- Capital lockup – that is it may prove difficult to sell the Hotel given the lack of a traditional lessee paying a traditional rent
- Moreover the opportunity cost of committing significant amounts of capital to the Hotel

project when the rest of Firepool will certainly require additional considerable Council investment

A Four star hotel brand would be good for Taunton, particularly one that is an internationally recognised brand. It is recommended that we should re-review options to secure a direct developer/lessees /investor on the best possible terms but with the minimum financial commitment from the Council. There was clear evidence of a need for a circa 100 bed hotel in Taunton Town Centre to provide a much more sustainable, town centre alternative to a successfully trading Holiday Inn at Blackbrook Gate and the other motels and hotels in the Town.

Our recommendation is that a premium hotel is needed for the Town Centre and that Firepool is the perfect location. We though need to further test the appetite for a third party to fund and take on the operator risk. A specialist hotel agent will be appointed to further test the market. The results of this exercise and a recommended way forward will be reported back to Council.

11 Performance Venue

There has been a long held ambition for a major performance venue for Taunton. Firepool could be the ideal location. The Council wishes to review the market for a Performance Venue. This will likely be a multi-functional space that sits in Taunton and possibly at Firepool. Although there is no precise definition for what a Performance Venue should consist of in terms of this project it is probably easiest to define it as:

1. A space for live performances in all media
2. A covered seating arena to allow ideally tiered seating
3. A flexible space that could also accommodate conferences, events and fayres

A suitable expert in the field will be appointed to review the market for such a facility. They will also advise on likely size and car parking requirements. They will be asked to speak to suitable operators and assess the likelihood of securing commercial investment for such. It is noted that both Cardiff and Bristol have live schemes of between 12,000 and 15,000 capacity and these facilities can cost many tens of millions and often also require significant revenue support. It is expected that if this sort of proposal is viable then it would be possible to have such a facility fully funded by private commercial investment but a positive business case will be very challenging.

Once the expert consultant has reviewed the market place a report will be brought back to Council with a recommended way forward.

12 Recommended Delivery Block plan. (Please also refer to Appendix 1)

The proposed Block plan has the following key components, each individual block could be developed as follows. The site would be developed on the basis of six individual and distinct areas as shown on the attached plan but with these plots being connected through the principles established in the Master Plan and site high level business case. This plan is nothing more than indicative at this stage but follows some of the principles contained within the outline planning approval. It is important to note that the Block plan is very similar to the Town Centre Action Plan and subsequent design codes that are current Local Plan policy.

Block 1 - There is strong interest from residential developers for this part of the site this could be a start on site next year

- One block of apartments between the Acorn development and Viridor but positioned to create a gap to allow the space behind to enjoy the river aspect
- This first site is on the back of the river which should be 2 bed apartments with living spaces facing the river view and it is expected to achieve around 20 units
- The L shaped block shown on the plan is also apartments and is intended to enjoy a courtyard that faces out over the river and also over Somerset County Cricket Club

Block 2 – there is strong interest from residential developers for this part of the site – this could be a start on site next year

- We are potentially looking at a contemporary modular Terraced Town House building with some apartments.
- Town House types would be on a 4m, 4.5 and 5m width modules on 3 or 4 stories.

Block 3 – Not market tested as yet but will likely be a follow on to Block 2

- Office uses to complement the proposed innovation centre on Block 6 New access to turn into the site from the new access into NIDR/Trenchard Way
- Refurbishment of the Great Western Goods office into Food and Beverage
- Line the boulevard with buildings probably apartments above active ground floor space for cafes/bars/food related and possibly a local supermarket such as a Tesco Metro/Simply Food of say 4,000 sqft

Block 4 – There will be interest in this but not at the same time as Blocks 1 and 2

- The eastern block is a continuation of Block 2 so it will be housing led exactly as the brief listed above
- Where this block meets the boulevard it should be housing on its eastern and northern edge
- The southern and western edge will have active ground floor space possibly 2 storey in height in places with upto 4/5 stories above of apartment space above
- Parking for the apartments to be in the courtyard
- Block 4 could also be the best possible space for the Performance venue

Block 5 – There is good interest from occupiers – this could be a start on site next year

- The western edge to take a standard rectangular block for a Hotel
- The eastern edge to have a 5 screen cinema with each screen being somewhere around 10m wide by 20 m with a ground floor access foyer taking customers to a first floor reception space with screens beyond or something similar

Block 6 – there is good interest from occupiers but may take a little longer to put together

- Innovation Centre of circa 4,000 sqm
- Possible retention of no 9 Canal Road and providing a terrace of new houses next to it say 4 houses in total

The Block design approach will be further developed and indicative and costed designs worked up for decisions to proceed later in the year.

Blocks 1 and 2 will be taken to the market. The intention is that Block 5 could be easily developed by the Council and further work will be undertaken on bringing forward pre-lets and working up the detailed business case. The hotel part of this report also relates to this block.

Transport/Public Realm/Infrastructure requirements.

This is the key element in the scheme. This is the element that all members of the public can use and enjoy. This will include all of the main public areas of the scheme to include. The quality of the scheme is as much about the spaces around the buildings as the buildings themselves. Key components of this work stream are:

- Creation of the landmark boulevard linking train station with river and onto the Town Centre via Coal Orchard
- It includes all of the public realm area alongside the river and up into the scheme
- It delivers vehicles and pedestrian routes around the site

Service Strategy

- Need to create a surface water culvert along Canal Road until it outflows into Lock – this helps manage floods from Taunton Town Centre
- Review positioning surface water and mains drainage into the road/boulevard to clear the site for clean development
- Gas and power to run in main roads where possible to minimise land take
- Review well designed, high quality service duct approach to make it easier for utility companies to access infrastructure without digging up roads and pathways and leaving unmatched patches

Therefore it is recommended that the public realm and infrastructure elements should be taken forward for conceptual design by the Council together with development of the delivery masterplan to establish the required level of detail and retain the level of control required to deliver the best possible scheme, we will complete this over the next three months.

13 Recommended Masterplan Delivery Approach

It is recommended that a new single developer for the site is not the best way to proceed. This is because the St Modwen experience was a clear example of putting too many eggs into the one basket. The best possible solution is to look at the site not as one large development site but on a master plan basis where the site is shaped by the public realm, the boulevard the Lock and bridges and public spaces and the 400m of waterfront on both River and Canal. These elements can be enjoyed by all residents of Taunton. They should be delivered to the best possible quality and the only organisation that can honestly undertake that task to the benefit of all residents and visitors to the area is the Council. This route will also retain the greatest flexibility to respond quickly to changes in our operating environment.

The Council will produce a Framework Masterplan for the Firepool site. This Masterplan will be presented to the Council for approval and adoption in its role as landowner but also importantly as the Local Planning Authority. Upon adoption, the Masterplan will be a material planning consideration that can be taken into account in the determination of detailed planning applications for the individual plots within the site. It will also provide confidence to the Council in its planning authority role that detailed proposals sit within a broader framework for the wider site which is an important consideration in terms of securing an appropriate mix

of uses across the site and in ensuring that there is a coordinated approach to design and place-making.

Professional officers will provide technical planning and urban design input and guidance to the Team preparing the masterplan in order that the document can be recommended to the Council for adoption in late Summer / early Autumn.

14 Governance - Key Principles

The intention is that a handful of key principles will guide the regeneration of this key site. The masterplan has been broken down into logical blocks each individual block will have its own business case.

It is proposed that all components of the project will be tested by clearly drawn parameters to provide the structure to keep the project focussed and deliverable in quick time. The intent is to have a mechanism to sift proposals that balances market interest, deliverability, viability and quality. The suggested parameters are light touch and are as follows:

1. Financials	:	30%
2. Delivery	:	20%
3. Fits the Masterplan	:	15%
4. Regeneration	:	15%
5. Design	:	20%

The intention is that every use proposal that comes forward either promoted internally or proposed externally is tested against these parameters. Those proposals that score well will enter a traffic light system to assess likely deliverability and resource allocation.

Red is stop this proposal will not achieve the projects objectives. Amber is this is marginal and needs more work. Green is go to business case.

Parameters in a little more Detail

Financials

The intention is to agree a basic block plan that creates some order on the site but keeps flexibility. Each block will have a likely use although not definitive certainly indicative. For the optimum use and block a likely density is assumed. From this data and the wider understanding of the site in relation to infrastructure costs a financial appraisal is produced. Each Block will have its own business plan and delivery plan which will include selling to a developer, a JV or Council self-development. The risks and rewards will be considered block by block.

Delivery

This assesses the deliverability in the following measures:

- i. Likelihood of planning success
- ii. Covenant – ability of occupier to deliver, track record etc
- iii. Funding – proof of funding and level of conditionality of that funding
- iv. Appetite and evidence for pace of delivery

Fits the Plan

The base masterplan is produced as part of the action plan. This will fit with the strategic context of the outline approval from 2018, the Town Centre Action Plan from 2008 and design codes that are current Local Plan Policy. This should also fit the emerging conceptual block plan which will form the conceptual masterplan. Options that do not accord with these plans risk a refusal at planning or compromise key objectives such as the boulevard and will be scored accordingly.

Regeneration

Key drivers are uses that produce highly skilled jobs, general employment, complimentary commercial space (complimentary to the Town), driving GVA. Delivering enhanced and quality and accessible waterfront areas and a significant area of increased public realm. Creating secure space that creates an enhanced environment for locals and visitors to enjoy is an essential outcome.

Design/Quality

The Town and the scheme demands high quality architecture and scoring will reflect this. This will also include issues of sustainability. It is essential that the scheme reflects all of the qualities of our Garden Town status and our emerging waterfront first strategies. We want a Firepool that both respects the architecture in Taunton but also helps to take it forward as well.

15 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

The Council is currently preparing a new Corporate Plan. The regeneration of Taunton Town Centre with Firepool as a key component will undoubtedly be a key feature for the benefits and reasons as set out in the main body of this report.

16 Finance / Resource Implications

The Finance implications are to be further considered at business case stage. The budget of £275K allows for the continued funding of the project management team, architect and urban designer, engineers, quantity surveyors and specialist advisers for the Performance Venue and the Hotel and commercial agents together with a suitable contingency.

17 Legal Implications

The decision relating to this report will enable the commencement of legal work to deliver the necessary development approach.

The choice of option will also enable procurement processes to commence, which delivers that option and ensure that the council is fully compliant with the appropriate legislation.

18 Environmental Impact Implications

The environmental implications will be addressed through the planning process which runs parallel to this decision, and our core delivery principles set out above.

19 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

None related directly to this report. As stated above these issues will be dealt with through the planning process and final design considerations within the build.

20 Equality and Diversity Implications

This report relates to financing the development. The equality and diversity implications of the development are addressed through the design and planning process.

21 Social Value Implications

At this stage we have not carried out a detailed analysis in this area. However we are aware that when we seek a delivery partner there will be opportunities to explore social value within the procurement and building elements of the project. We will ensure social value is taken fully into account in later stages of the project whichever option is taken.

22 Partnership Implications

There are no direct implications for this report at this stage but maybe later in the project.

23 Health and Wellbeing Implications

No known implications in this report

24 Asset Management Implications

The land which is proposed for development is in the ownership of the Council, with one remaining land transaction due to complete imminently. This detailed business case and the chosen development option will therefore be key to future management or disposal of the asset. The asset management team will be involved in the project and have acted as advisors throughout the production of the outline planning application.

25 Consultation Implications

This report relates to the choice of method for delivery of the scheme by the council. The decision is therefore one for councillors to determine so does not require consultation outside of the Council at this stage. Any subsequent planning application will be subject to proper consultation which will be a full and thorough exercise later in the year. There has already been considerable consultation in past years and the content of this proposal is similar to both the outline consented scheme and the preceding Town Centre Action Plan.

26 Scrutiny Comments

Comments from the Scrutiny meeting will be reported verbally at the time of the meeting.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny - Yes**
- **Executive – Yes**
- **Full Council – Yes**

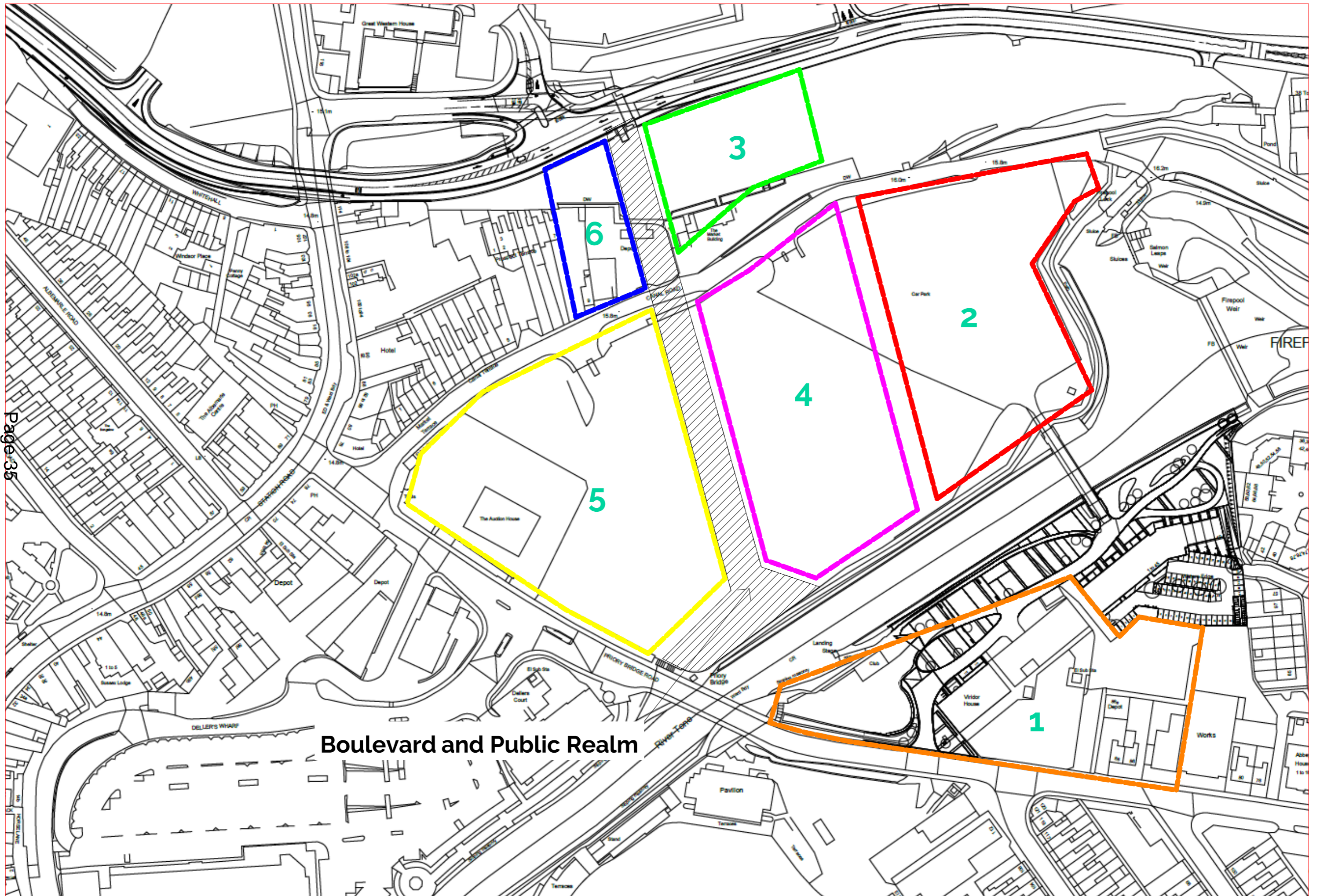
Reporting Frequency: Once only

List of Appendices

Appendix 1	Block Masterplan
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Boulevard and Public Realm

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Somerset West and Taunton Council

Special Council – 19 June 2019

Approval of Redundancies (Transformation) where Severance Is Over £100,000

Report of the Transformation HR Lead

This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts and Cllr Ross Henley, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources.

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is requesting Council to approve the redundancies of the Principal Planning Officer and Digital Services Manager. The necessary financial approvals are already in place via the Business Case for Transformation and these costs are already included within reported figures. This request for Full Council approval is a separate requirement of the Council's HR policies where severance costs exceed £100,000 per case.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council approve the redundancies of both posts with effective end dates of 20 September 2019 in accordance with the financial details set out in Confidential Appendices A and B.

3 Risk Assessment

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Risk: Challenge from the employee if not approved and decision relates to cost which in turn relates to age.	4	3	12
<i>Mitigation: These redundancy requests are within the current forecast spend within the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts and are applying the appropriate policies of the Council and Regulations relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme</i>			

Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Very Likely	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Feasible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)

	2	Slight	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Very Unlikely	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
Impact							

Likelihood of risk occurring	Indicator	Description (chance of occurrence)
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at some time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily/weekly/monthly)	> 75%

- 3.1 The legal comments highlight potential risks of challenge from the affected employees if Council decide not to approve the redundancy. In addition to this risk such a decision would also reduce the financial savings made.

4 Background Information

- 4.1 The purpose of this report is to request that Council agree the redundancies of:

the Principal Planning Officer and the Digital Services Manager posts as at 20 September 2019.

- 4.2 There is a requirement for these redundancies to be approved by Full Council as the 2019/20 Pay Policy Statements contain the following:

‘That where severance payments for staff exceed £100,000 they will be reported to Full Council for approval and in presenting information to Full Council the components of the relevant severance package will be clearly set out. These components may include salary paid in lieu, redundancy compensation, pension entitlements, holiday pay and any bonuses, fees or allowances paid.’

- 4.3 The financial details are set out in Appendix A and B.

5 Business Continuity

- 5.1 Although the new structure created through transformation came into effect at the end of February 2019 there was a statutory trial period for staff appointed to new roles. At the end of that trial period the postholders determined that the post was not suitable but the timing of this coincided with district elections and it was not possible to bring a report to Full Council. The postholders have continued to support the Planning Service and Transformation projects during this period.

6 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 6.1 This proposal is in response to the Transformation Project, whose aims were set out in detail in the Business Case agreed by both Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council in 2016. Among the aims in the business case is to deliver financial savings which involves reducing staff costs.

7 Finance / Resource Implications

- 7.1 Both TDBC and WSC Full Council's approved funding for the "High Level Business Case – Transformation" in 2016, which included an allowance for estimated termination costs of £3.03m. The budget for redundancy was increased to £5.28m by both Full Councils in December 2018. Current forecast costs for redundancy are included within the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts for TDBC and WSC at a combined £6.35m. The total costs for these posts are included within this sum.
- 7.2 The payback periods are under 3 years and therefore within normal acceptable boundaries and in line with the business case. It is therefore considered the proposals achieve value for money, both when considered in isolation and for the business case overall. The finance details are set out in the confidential appendix A. The costs have been disclosed in the annual statement of accounts for 2018/19, which as standard includes a note regarding remuneration costs that exceed £50,000 in any one financial year – including severance costs.
- 4.3 Should this redundancy not be approved then the annual cost of retaining the post is shown within the confidential appendices, which would reduce the ongoing savings proposed within the business case. There could also be further costs incurred if the decision is challenged by the post holders. The savings target per the Business Case are already incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Plans for Somerset West and Taunton, therefore any shortfall will increase the budget gap that would need to be addressed in other ways.

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 All relevant employment legislation and HR policy has been complied with.
- 8.2 The creation of the staffing structures has been delegated to the Chief Executive but, due to the requirement for all redundancies over £100,000 to be approved by Full Council, there is a need for this specific proposal to be considered by Members.
- 8.3 Those included in this report and all other requests for redundancy have been considered against and accord with Council policies. Individually this case pays back within a three year period but it should be remembered that these are part of the wider transformation project.
- 8.4 Should the Council determine that any of the redundancies should not be approved then there is a risk of challenge by the affected post holders as this decision may be deemed to be discriminatory.

9 Environmental Impact Implications

9.1 None associated with this report.

10 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

10.1 None.

11 Equalities and Diversity Implications

11.1 All aspects of the Transformation Programme which are HR related, such as recruitment, redundancy etc, are being monitored for equality purposes so that any equality impacts can be considered.

11.2 There are no adverse equality issues arising from the recommendation within this report.

12 Social Value Implications

12.1 None.

13 Partnership Implications

13.1 None for the purposes of this report.

14 Health & Wellbeing Implications

14.1 None.

15 Asset Management Implications

15.1 None.

16 Consultation Implications

16.1 None.

Democratic Path:

- **Corporate Scrutiny – No**
- **Executive – No**
- **Special Council – 19 June 2019**

Reporting Frequency: One Off

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