

Council Meeting – 8 October 2019

Report of Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts – Leader of the Council

1. Coal Orchard

1.1 I am very pleased to say that Midas Construction began work on the Coal Orchard site at the end of August. The detailed plans to regenerate one of Taunton's prime riverside quarters were approved in September 2018, and preparatory work on the site started in spring 2019.

1.2 The plans include a mix of apartments, retail, workspace, and restaurants; and incorporate a riverfront plaza with a stepped terrace to make the most of its position on the River Tone.

2. Emergency Services Day

2.1 On 6 September, SWT marked national Emergency Services Day with a flag raising ceremony at Deane House. The flag was also flown at West Somerset House, Williton.

2.2 The ceremony at Deane House was hosted by the Mayor of Taunton, Cllr Francesca Smith and the Chair of SWT, Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey. They were joined by representatives from local emergency service organisations including the Police, Ambulance and Fire Brigade.

2.3 National Emergency Services Day takes place on 9th September every year. Two minutes silence is held at 9am (the 9th hour of the 9th day of the 9th month) to remember emergency services personnel killed as a result of their duties.

3. Engagement

3.1 On 17 September the Chief Executive and I spent the day visiting sites in Exmoor, such as the Dulverton Weir and Leat and meeting with officers of Exmoor National Park. Again, as part of my visit I met with District and Town Councillors to hear any concerns and issues they wished to raise in their respective areas.

3.2 I have been meeting with more local businesses such as Sangha House and I also met with Go Create, who have some very exciting ideas for Taunton Live 2020.

3.3 At the beginning of September I met with Sue Mountstephens, Police & Crime Commissioner and had a look around Police HQ, Portishead, which included a look around their control centre. I also met with the Community

Council for Somerset and the Citizens Advice Bureau and was pleased to attend the PCC and Police Public Forum Event in Minehead and the Somerset County Scout Council Annual General Meeting.

- 3.4 On 10 September, I attended a GWR drop-in session in London, along with Cllr Mike Rigby, Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning, to learn about some significant changes to their timetable. On 15 December this year GWR will be making the biggest change to their timetable in 40 years, with 75% of services changing. There will be over 40,000 more seats every day, with faster and more frequent services.

4 Service Delivery

4.1 Recruitment of new Directors

- 4.2 A review of organisational requirements and priorities identified the needs to focus and structure delivery against four key areas – Housing, Economic Development, Strategic Partnership and Climate Change. Recruitment for these roles began at the beginning of September and the closing date was 23 September. The interviews will be held later this month and early November.

Councillor Federica Smith-Roberts