

You are requested to attend a meeting of the Full Council to be held in The Shire Hall, Shuttern, Taunton on 11 December 2018 at 6.30 pm.

Agenda

The meeting will be preceded by a Prayer to be offered by the Mayor's Chaplain.

- 1 Minutes of the previous meetings of Full Council held on 2 October 2018 and Special Full Council held on 14 November (Pages 7 - 24)
- 2 To report any apologies for absence.
- 3 To receive any communications.
- 4 Declaration of Interests.

To receive declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or personal or prejudicial interests, in accordance with the Code of Conduct, in relation to items on the agenda. Such interests need to be declared even if they have already been recorded in the Register of Interests. The personal interests of Councillors who are County Councillors or Town or Parish Councillors will automatically be recorded in the minutes.
- 5 To receive questions from Taunton Deane Electors under Standing Order 15.
- 6 To receive any petitions or deputations under Standing Orders 16 and 17.
- 7 Opposing the closure of Norton Manor Camp and relocation of 40 Commando Royal Marines out of Taunton Deane. To consider a Motion proposed by Councillor Marcia Hill, seconded by Councillor Simon Coles (attached). An assessment of the implications for the Council should the motion be carried is also attached. (Pages 25 - 30)
- 8 Firepool Hotel Development - Consultation with Local Businesses. Report of the Head of Commercial, Investment and Change (attached), to be presented by Councillor Mark Edwards. (Pages 31 - 50)
- 9 Heart of the South West - Joint Committee - Council Update. Report of the Head of Localities (attached), to be presented (Pages 51 - 64)

by Councillor John Williams.

- 10 Approval of Funding Request for the Transformation Programme. Report of the Chief Executive (attached) to be presented by Councillors John Williams and Andrew Sully. (Pages 65 - 90)
- 11 Confirmation of Appointment of Joint Chief Executive. Report of the Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer (attached), to be presented by Councillor John Williams. (Pages 91 - 94)
- 12 Approval of Redundancy (Transformation) where severance is over £100,000. Report of the Transformation HR Lead (attached), to be presented by Councillor Andrew Sully - see also Confidential Appendix at Item No. 16. (Pages 95 - 98)
- 13 Part I - To deal with written questions to the Executive.
- 14 Part II - To receive reports from the following Members of the Executive (attached):- (Pages 99 - 146)
- a) Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council;
 - b) Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams – Sports, Parks and Leisure
 - c) Councillor Andrew Sully – Corporate Resources
 - d) Councillor Jane Warmington - Community Leadership
 - e) Councillor Terry Beale – Housing Services
 - f) Councillor Patrick Berry – Environmental Services and Climate Change
 - g) Councillor Mark Edwards – Economic Development, Asset Management, Arts and Culture, Tourism and Communications;
 - h) Councillor Richard Parrish – Planning Policy and Transportation.
- 15 Exclusion of the Press and Public
- To consider excluding the press and public during consideration of the report if the press and public were present during this item, there would be likely to be a disclosure to them of exempt information of the class specified in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended as follows:
- Agenda item 16 contains information that could release confidential information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It is therefore proposed that after consideration of all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
- 16 Confidential Appendix - Approval of Redundancy (Transformation). See also Item No. 12. (Pages 147 - 148)

Bruce Lang
Assistant Chief Executive

3 December 2018

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 4 minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes. The Committee Administrator will keep a close watch on the time and the Chairman 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 Chairman will normally permit this to occur when that item is reached and before the Councillors begin to debate the item.

This is more usual at meetings of the Council's Planning Committee and details of the "rules" which apply at these meetings can be found in the leaflet "Having Your Say on Planning Applications". A copy can be obtained free of charge from the Planning Reception Desk at The Deane House or by contacting the telephone number or e-mail address below.

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, Committees and Task and Finish Review agendas, reports and minutes are available on our website: www.tauntondeane.gov.uk



The meeting rooms at both Brittons Ash Community Centre and West Monkton Primary School are on the ground floor and are fully accessible. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available.

Lift access to the Council Chamber on the first floor of Shire Hall, is available from the main ground floor entrance. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available through the door to the right hand side of the dais.



An induction loop operates at Shire Hall 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 on 01823 356356 or email democraticservices@tauntondeane.gov.uk

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Full Council Members:

Councillor C Herbert (Chairman and Mayor of Taunton Deane)

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

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)

Special Full Council - 14 November 2018

Present: Councillor C Herbert (Chair)

Councillors P Watson, A Sully, T Beale, R Lees, R Parrish, R Bowrah, W Brown, N Cavill, S Coles, W Coombes, D Cossey, M Edwards, H Farbahi, M Floyd, J Gage, E Gaines, R Habgood, T Hall, J Blatchford, M Hill, J Hunt, G James, L Lisgo, S Martin-Scott, I Morrell, S Nicholls, C Booth, H Prior-Sankey, J Reed, R Ryan, F Smith-Roberts, F Smith, V Stock-Williams, N Townsend, C Tucker, P Berry, D Webber, D Wedderkopp, J Williams and G Wren

Also Present: Mrs Anne Elder

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm)

11. **Apologies**

Councillors Mrs Adkins, M Adkins, Davies, D Durdan, Govier, Mrs Gunner, Hill, Horsley, Mansell and Mrs Warmington.

12. **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Mrs Smith-Roberts declared a personal interest due to her Charity which occupied as part of the Auction House located on the Firepool site.

13. **Public Participation**

- a) Mr Kit Chapman stated that the news of St Modwen pulling away from the Firepool Project was positive news. The project was a once in a lifetime opportunity, and all parties should now work together to focus on the future. Councillor Edwards had shown initiative with the idea of the conference centre and he would certainly encourage this. Work for the Hydrographic Office to have a base on the site was also positive news.

Mr Chapman went on to suggest that a visitor centre located on Firepool should also be considered to promote not only the Taunton Area but the unique surrounding areas such as the Quantock Hills, Exmoor National Park and the Brendon Hills.

- b) Mrs Jackie Calcroft was encouraged by recent plans which appeared to embrace a wider range of uses for the Firepool site. She made reference to the Business Consultation for the Firepool Hotel and Business Case considered at the last Full Council meeting in addition to the item on tackling anti-social behaviour. Initiatives such as the recruitment of Street Wardens was welcomed by both the public and retailers.

Mrs Calcroft put the following specific questions to the Council:-

- When did the Firepool Hotel Investment consultation finish?
- Would these results be made public and if so, when?
- Were there any proposals to link Firepool with direct road access to Trenchard Way?
- Would a shuttle service be considered between the new Railway Station and the Bus Station?
- Was there a Business Plan between Somerset County Council and Taunton Deane Borough Council to make changes to the existing Park and Ride scheme?
- Had the Task and Finish Group relating to tackling anti-social behaviour completed its brief? When was the decision to employ Street Wardens taken and by whom? What would the costs be and where would the funding come from?

Councillor Williams replied that any questions not answered as part of the forthcoming debate would be picked up outside of the meeting and would be sent to Mrs Calcroft in writing.

- c) Mr Ray Tulley criticised the lack of progress in developing the Firepool site over the last ten years. The loss of revenue over the lack of opportunity was questioned. It was very unsatisfactory that the site had not generated any revenue during this time.
- d) County Councillor John Hunt made a statement in favour of the option of a multi-purpose conference centre being built at Firepool. Retail units were not needed and if such units were provided this would inevitably lead to the loss of jobs from existing retail businesses in the main town centre. Greater inclusion of all parties, businesses, community leaders and stakeholders was needed to progress with the 'correct type' of development which would be of benefit to the residents of Taunton Deane.

14. **Firepool Report**

Reported that in accordance with Clause 27 of the Procedure Rules for Full Council, the Mayor had received and granted a requisition to convene a Special Meeting of Full Council to discuss a Motion relating to the Firepool Project following the withdrawal of St Modwen from the Development Agreement.

The Motion which had been submitted by Councillor Coles read as follows:-

“Dear Madam Mayor,

In light of the decision by St Modwen to withdraw from the Firepool development further delaying the delivery of Tauntons' Vision, we would request that a “Special Full Council” meeting is convened at the earliest opportunity to consider the implications of this move on the economic and commercial future of our County Town's regeneration.

As Leader of the Opposition I ask that the Leader of the Council and the Economic Development Asset Management Portfolio Holder consider standing down ahead of the Special Full Council and handing their roles over to other Members who would enjoy cross party support for this most important regeneration opportunity for the County Town in 150 years.

There is a desperate need for new thinking and transparency in the eyes of the public as well as a genuine desire to bring forward the benefits of the River Tone running through the heart of the County Town.

Simon Coles”.

In accordance with the terms of the Constitution, the requisition and associated Motion had been supported by Councillors Booth, Farbahi, Mrs Hill, Horsley and Mrs Lees.

The Motion was duly proposed by Councillor Coles and seconded by Councillor Farbahi.

A presentation was made to Members by the Head of Localities (Brendan Cleere) and the Head of Commercial, Investment and Change (James Barra) detailing the timeline of the Firepool site, the existing progress and future plans that were under consideration.

Following the presentation, Councillor Williams proposed an amendment to the second paragraph of Councillor Coles’s Motion so that it read as follows:-

“As Leader of the Opposition I ask that the Leader of the Council and the Economic Development Asset Management Portfolio Holder:-

- 1) Carry out a Market Assessment and engagement especially for non-residential uses;
- 2) In recognition of the above and greater Member involvement, we request officers to bring a report to Full Council setting out what resources and funds are required to manage the process and achieve delivery;
- 3) Once agreed, progress can be overseen by the Cross Party Steering Group which will allow clarity of approach and agree the treatment of plots within the context of the outline planning consent;
- 4) Commission specific work regarding the potential multi use Concert/Conference Centre taking account of The Brewhouse Theatre and cinema proposals;
- 5) Commission the necessary project resource and professional team to deliver; and
- 6) Establish a delivery plan for each phase.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Edwards.

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

- Members acknowledged that more needed to be done to work together to build a solution that residents and businesses wanted.
- There was a concern over the lack of commercial specialists within the Council and delays on the project could be encountered again as a result. Attracting the right people to enable the project to move forward was very important.
- The transport hub was considered vital to the success of any proposals on the site and resolving the existing issues with the Park and Ride.
- There appeared to be broad support and confidence in the amendment and the opportunity to reconsider options for the site.
- Greater communication with Councillors and members of the public was encouraged to make them aware of the project with a clear and transparent flow of information.

The amendment was put and was carried and became the substantive motion.

The substantive motion was put and was also carried.

(The Meeting ended at 8.24 pm)

Full Council – 11 December 2018

Opposing the closure of Norton Manor Camp and relocation of 40 Commando Royal Marines out of Taunton Deane

Motion proposed by Councillor Marcia Hill, seconded by Councillor Simon Coles

Preamble:-

The Council will be aware that the closure of Norton Manor Camp, with expected disposal in 2028, was announced by the Secretary of State for Defence in November 2016 in 'A Better Defence Estate', with a key objective to raise £1 billion from land sales, including the statement "opportunities to release value from surplus land and property must be maximised".

The Somerset County Gazette reported "False Hope"⁽¹⁾ after the Defence Secretary said in Parliament on 22 October 2018 that 40 Commando Royal Marines would remain in Taunton "for a long time into the future" but his Ministry of Defence (MOD) spokesperson then described these words as "vague" confirming the Camp remained scheduled for closure.

The National Audit Office (NAO) has said implementing the plan will be "extremely challenging" and there is a "significant risk" to defence capability.

No operational military reasons or objectives have been given by the MOD for the closure, and the Government's National Security Capability Review begun in summer 2017 has led to proposals to cut up to 2,000 Royal Marines over the next decade; cuts which the Defence Select Committee of the House of Commons described as "militarily illiterate"⁽²⁾.

At a time of significant reductions in footfall in Taunton Town Centre the value of 700-800 personnel at the Camp to the local economy has been estimated at £10 -14 million per annum (on the basis of the proportion of locally spent average family incomes).

Recommendations:-

- (1) The Council opposes the decision of the Government to close Norton Manor Camp and relocate the Royal Marines out of Taunton Deane; supports the retention of the 40 Commando Unit and stands behind the local 40 Commando community of serving and veteran Royal Marines who want the Camp to remain in the Borough;
- (2) The Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Defence strongly opposing the closure of the Camp, urging him to remove Norton

Manor Camp from the list of sites to be disposed of on the Ministry of Defence website; and

- (3) The Leader of the Council also writes to all of Somerset's Members of Parliament pointing out that the County is in danger of losing 40 Commando Royal Marines, urging them to take up the importance of Norton Manor Camp to the County of Somerset and to Taunton Deane in particular in Parliament and oppose its closure and the relocation of 40 Commando to another area and that the Chief Executive should report back to the whole Council placing copies of any replies received on the public record.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Motions to Council – Assessment Form

On receipt of a Motion from a Councillor, the Democratic Services Manager will carry out an assessment as to its contents to establish whether there are likely to be significant consequences to the Council should the Motion be carried at the subsequent Full Council meeting.

The first question to be addressed will be:-

“Can the Motion, if approved, be implemented without the need for any resource (financial and otherwise) to be identified outside existing budgets or staffing capacity?”

If the answer is ‘yes’, then the Motion can proceed towards discussion and resolution.

An example of a Motion which would fall into the above category would be where the Council is being asked to lobby the Government, Somerset County Council or other body on a particular issue. If the motion is carried, the action required will usually involve no more than a letter being prepared and sent to the intended recipient.

However, as in the case of the recent Motion on ‘Legal Hights’, the answer to the above question would clearly be ‘no’.

In such circumstances, detailed analysis of the wording of the Motion will be required to identify what will be needed if the Motion – when it comes before Full Council – is carried.

Such analysis will include:-

- What additional resource would be required to ensure the Motion (if approved) could be implemented?
- What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?
- Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?
- Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive? If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.

If such analysis is required, the Democratic Services Manager will arrange for the attached pro-forma to be completed and this will accompany the relevant Motion onto the agenda of the Full Council meeting so all Members are aware that further investigation will be required before the Motion – even if it is carried – can be implemented.

Motions to Council – Assessment Proforma

(To be used in circumstances where it appears the wording of a proposed Motion will commit the Council to providing further financial or staffing resources which cannot be met from existing budgets)

Brief Details of the Motion -

Motion

- (1) The Council opposes the decision of the Government to close Norton Manor Camp and relocate the Royal Marines out of Taunton Deane; supports the retention of the 40 Commando Unit and stands behind the local 40 Commando community of serving and veteran Royal Marines who want the Camp to remain in the Borough;

- (2) The Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Defence strongly opposing the closure of the Camp, urging him to remove Norton Manor Camp from the list of sites to be disposed of on the Ministry of Defence website; and

- (3) The Leader of the Council also writes to all of Somerset’s Members of Parliament pointing out that the County is in danger of losing 40 Commando Royal Marines, urging them to take up the importance of Norton Manor Camp to the County of Somerset and to Taunton Deane in particular in Parliament and oppose its closure and the relocation of 40 Commando to another area and that the Chief Executive should report back to the whole Council placing copies of any replies received on the public record.

Questions to be addressed

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What additional resource would be required to ensure the Motion (if approved) could be implemented?</i>
<p>Answer – None. All that would be required is to draft and send six letters. One to the Government and five to the Somerset Members of Parliament.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What needs to be done to identify the level of resource necessary both in financial and staff terms?</i>
<p>Answer – Not applicable</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Are any approvals needed to provide these resources?</i>
<p>Answer – Not applicable</p>

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Will this require reports to be submitted through Scrutiny and the Executive? If a Supplementary Estimate is required, Full Council approval will be required too.</i> |
|--|

Answer – Not applicable

Likely timescale involved - The six letters required could be drafted and sent within a week of the meeting of Full Council.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 11 December 2018

Firepool Hotel Development – Consultation with Local Businesses

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mark Edwards

Report Author: James Barrah - Head of Commercial, Investment and Change

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The feedback from consultation with local businesses, on the previous Council resolution to invest and develop a new mid-market hotel on Firepool south-side site, has been noted. The full results are attached at Appendix C.

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 In light of the response to the business consultation exercise and confirmation of the robustness of the original business case, it is proposed to continue with the Firepool Hotel Project in accordance with the approval of the 10 April 2018.

2 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 A working copy of risk matrix was contained within confidential Appendix D from the original Full Council report 10 April 2018. The assessment showed that identified risks can be mitigated to acceptable levels.
- 3.2 It is considered that the business case, together with wider economic and regeneration benefits of the proposal, significantly outweigh the identified risks.

3 Background and Full details of the Report

- 3.1 The original Hotel Report was approved by Full Council 10 April 2018. Minutes are available at:
<https://democracy.tauntondeane.gov.uk/Data/Full%20Council/201804101830/Agenda/Minutes.PDF>
- 3.2 Subsequently, at the Council meeting on 10 July 2018 a motion was agreed - "To defer the decision to build a hotel at Firepool and consult with businesses in Taunton Deane in order to safeguard public funds and to ensure the maximum return on our capital". Minutes are available at:
<https://democracy.tauntondeane.gov.uk/documents/s296/Council%20Minutes%2010%20July%202018.pdf>

- 3.3 The consultation process involved the creation of a 'Question and Answer' leaflet and an on-line survey – these can be found in Appendices A and B. The consultation period was 1 – 31 October 2018 and the Taunton business community was informed as follows:-
- TDBC Press release issued and published on TDBC and www.investtaunton websites (1 October and follow-up on 24 October 2018);
 - Sent e-mails directly to 312 Taunton / town centre businesses on the TDBC Business Development and Visitor Centre databases (together with sending a message directly to the Taunton Chamber of Commerce);
 - Social media - promoted regularly throughout October via Twitter (TDBC and Taunton Business Twitter accounts);
 - Taunton Business twitter feed = c.2700 followers; and
 - TDBC corporate twitter = c.4000 followers.
- 3.4 The feedback from consultation with local businesses, on the previous Council resolution to invest and develop a new mid-market hotel on Firepool south-side site, has been noted. The full results are attached at Appendix C.
- 3.5 As can be seen the response rate was very low despite extensive promotion by the team and direct contact with the business community. As such there is no clear pattern of response from which to draw definitive conclusions. Whilst the Hotel specific question brought a higher “no” response, if you allowed for the no response from the hotel/ bed and breakfast sector the responses are broadly even. There is support for the principle of Council investment to support the town and to generate income to support essential services. However on such a low response rate firm conclusions are clearly hard to draw and must be viewed accordingly.
- 3.6 The original decision was made based on delivery of the Council’s prime objectives, the investment secures longer term benefits for town centre and the Taunton area economy creating jobs and footfall, it spurs regeneration of the currently under-developed riverside site and critically it creates a new source of income for the Council to support service delivery.
- 3.7 Further work with professional construction and design advisors (AECOM) in planning the layout of new hotel and services on site would be required along with engaging with representatives of our preferred Hotel Brand and Management Operations organisations to identify the highest quality and affordable design for a hotel that best fits with our aspirations for the site and within an agreed budget, supported by a robust business case.
- 3.8 Pre-application consultations will need to be undertaken with local authority and highways planners to reach general consensus around a suitable site access, layout and services, before developing concept design into more detailed plans.

- 3.9 Members will be kept informed as proposals for new hotel develop into architect plans that can be shared and have commitment from both our preferred hotel brand and hotel operation management. The project is still in early stages and design and set up therefore it is likely issues will change - any changes that materially impact the business case will be reported to members.

4 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 4.1 The proposal aligns well with the following key themes in the Council's Corporate Strategy:
- **Key Theme 1: People:** facilitating employment opportunities in the construction and ongoing operation of the new hotel;
 - **Key Theme 2: Business and Enterprise:** enhancing the quantity and variety of accommodation in the Town Centre; attracting visitors and business, encouraging growth and potential investment. The hotel will also act as an important catalyst, attracting visitors, business and investment in the wider Town Centre.
 - **Key Theme 4: An Efficient and Modern Council:** generating a healthy return on investment, supporting financial sustainability of the Council and improving the appearance and prosperity of the area.

5 Finance / Resource Implications

- 5.1 There are no planned changes to the original Business Case that supports the planned investment in the hotel, which was based on robust information and uses informed estimates and assumptions. The details of the business case has been reported previously to councillors and remain confidential. This is important in protecting the Council's commercial interests and protecting the opportunity for securing value for money through the procurement of works and agreement of commercial contracts. Appropriate due diligence and risk assessment underpins the business case and previous decision of the Council to proceed with this project.
- 5.2 The investment in this project clearly brings a wide range of benefits, and from a financial perspective enables the Council to progress with regeneration of Firepool / riverside and development in the local economy, whilst also delivering a good return on capital investment and important additional income that can be used to help fund essential services to our community. This will be reported in due course upon completion of the build project and commercial agreements.
- 5.3 The Business Case demonstrates that the full costs of the upfront investment will be fully recovered and at the same time deliver a net income to the Council from asset rent and dividends. The Council will retain freehold ownership of the land and property asset which will provide long term asset value on balance sheet with the potential to realise long term value through rent and/or disposal into the foreseeable future.

- 5.4 The investment demonstrates the Council's priority of operating more commercially in delivering an important regeneration project – meeting core priorities and delivering important income generation that will help to maintain financially sustainable local services when other sources of funding – particularly government grant – has reduced so significantly.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 Key decisions and approvals of the Executive and Full Council will enable the necessary legal work to deliver the hotel project. This will involve delegation to the Head of Commercial, Investment and Change, and Finance (s151 Officer) to take all necessary steps to implement the decision of the Council and as appropriate as part of that to sign all necessary contracts; and to engage with solicitors working alongside external legal advisors where appropriate, to ensure delivery of the project and compliance with all relevant legislation.

7 Environmental Impact Implications

- 7.1 Environmental implications will be addressed through the planning process approved by statutory bodies such as the Environment Agency.

8 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

- 8.1 None related directly to this report. Any potential issues arising will be dealt with through the statutory planning and building control, including a health and safety site management plan.

9 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 Any equality and diversity implications of the development are being addressed through future consultation of detailed design process, compliant with planning and building regulations.

10 Social Value Implications

- 10.1 Social value is taken fully into account as part of wider discussions. We expect that further opportunities to add social value will be identified within future procurement of the building elements of this project, also future operations, management and supplies.

11 Partnership Implications

- 11.1 Officers and specialist advisors of the Hotel Project team would work together on best value mechanisms for Council delivery of this project.
- 11.2 Further consultation with our preferred hotel operator and brand on the appointment of specialist technical team will be required. We will work together on a detailed design and specification for a high quality build within budget

parameters, resulting in an efficient construction and management operation, attaining best value from the Council investment.

12 Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 12.1 No specific implications identified in this report, however this proposal will create new local employment opportunities and as such is considered likely to have a positive influence on the general health and wellbeing of the local community.

13 Asset Management Implications

- 13.1 The proposed investment is assessed as attaining best value for the Council, supported by the findings of independent Feasibility Studies undertaken by Horwath LPP specialist in hotel sector, commercial valuations by Thomas Lister Limited (MRICS) and construction cost estimates from AECOM. A detailed review of the existing supply of hotels within Taunton provide positive income projections thereby supporting proposals to develop a new type of hotel in this preferred location.
- 13.2 The hotel as a commercial venture adds value to the capital Land and Building investments of the Council and provides a positive contribution to the TDBC General Fund. The Council as landowner has opportunity to develop and retain income from our new asset. The preferred model is for the Council to create a new Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to trade enabling surpluses generated to be returned to the Council (as shown in confidential appendix F – Council report 10 April).
- 13.3 Legal advice on the creation of a wholly owned Special Purpose Vehicle and trading company will lease from the Council a new build asset and contract with brand and operator to ensure franchise standards met and employ a General Manager and hotel team to manage day-to-day operations.
- 13.4 A new hotel with suitable franchise and management agreements can provide an attractive investment for Council, who could secure economic, regeneration and create an attractive income generating investment which could finance and repay any funding or borrowing for the scheme.

14 Consultation Implications

- 14.1 This report describes the approach taken and result arising from the business consultation process undertaken.

15 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s)

- 15.1 Comments from the Scrutiny committee meeting 22 March 2018 were included in the Full Council report 10 April 2018.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny** – 22 March 2018
- **Executive** – 5 April 2018
- **Full Council** – 10 April 2018, 10 July 2018

Reporting Frequency: One-off**List of Appendices**

Appendix A	Question & Answer leaflet
Appendix B	Survey questions
Appendix C	Consultation results

Contact Officers

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Taunton, the South West's
first Garden Town

Taunton 

Firepool Hotel

Business consultation 'Q & A' information – Autumn 2018

In April 2018, the Council announced its intention to invest in a new hotel at Firepool. In this Q&A leaflet you can find out more about the project, the reasons for it and the benefits it is expected to bring. You can also learn about the wider commercial approach the council is taking and how the proposed hotel investment is part of that.

Below is the link to the Full Council report:

<http://bit.ly/CouncilReportFirepool>

We want to hear your views about the points raised in this leaflet to help us shape our approach to the hotel project and other commercial ventures that the Council may develop in the future.

Please visit the consultation page on the TDBC website to complete the on-line feedback survey. <https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/consultations/>

Why is the Council proposing to build this hotel?

We are very ambitious for the Borough and the proposed hotel is a key part of our plans for the regeneration of Taunton and the Firepool site in particular - please see:

<https://www.investtaunton.co.uk/the-vision/>

This kind of internationally renowned hotel will be a huge asset, encouraging far more visitors and associated spend into the local economy and creating around 70 jobs for local people.

In addition to investing in vital regeneration, the Council, like all of local government, has to respond to challenges in funding. In 2010 the Council received £8.7m in core grant to fund local services. By 2019 this funding will have reduced to an estimated £2.6m – a reduction of £5.1m per year. We have made significant efficiency savings during this time, but also need to look for new ways to increase our income to fund important local services and investment in future.

We would like your views on the proposal - please visit the on-line consultation survey



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Artist's impression of Firepool development
– view along river's edge

Why has this site been chosen?

A hotel has long been part of the planned mixed use development of the Firepool site. Experts in the field tell us there is not enough hotel provision in the Borough.

Taunton's strength is its location and first-rate transport connections. Firepool is close to the station, M5 links and local attractions.

How does this relate to the wider plans for Taunton town centre?

This is very much part of the regeneration proposals that are making progress. Taunton Railway Station will be modernised, the proposals for Coal Orchard's redevelopment have detailed planning consent, we are working with Somerset County Council to improve our public space, Taunton Transport Strategy is out for consultation, and we continue to grow our Garden Town ambitions and will be consulting further in the autumn.

How does this fit with the wider Firepool scheme?

A hotel will play an important role in the wider development of Firepool, contributing to a successful scheme and a thriving town centre. We are at a crucial point in the Firepool journey. We have outline planning consent for a mixed use scheme. Following the departure of St Modwen as the Council's development partner, we will take the opportunity to reflect and listen to different ideas coming forward locally in shaping and developing this important town centre site. An hotel has always featured in the proposed mix of uses at Firepool and this is also consistent with the Council's adopted local plan.

How much will it cost? And will the Council get its money back?

The costs are commercially sensitive so we cannot publish the figures. Our councillors have seen the full business case and agreed the proposal after rigorous scrutiny and due diligence. The business case shows a solid return on the investment for the council – and – importantly, local tax payers. We would not undertake this venture without that reassurance. Prudent estimates indicate the investment will generate several £ million in income for the Council – funding that can serve to protect community services and fund investment in important local priorities.

The Council will own the hotel and hold all rights to the asset on Firepool, retaining long term value for tax payers. The hotel would also form an important element of the further site development – part of the bigger regeneration picture.

We would like your views on the principle of the Council making this sort of investment - please visit the on-line consultation survey

Is there a demand for a new hotel in Taunton?

Taunton has a number of excellent hotels suited to a range of needs and budgets. We do not expect that to change. However, research suggests there is demand for additional, modern, mid-range accommodation. The branded hotel market in Taunton is trading close to capacity Monday to Thursday, supported by strong demand Friday and Saturday, indicating significant unsatisfied demand. This is further supported by the quick absorption of new rooms entering the market over recent years.

How can you know whether this will be successful?

Our research, backed up by a rigorous procurement process, has found solid demand for a modern, mid-range hotel in Taunton. There has been strong interest from operators and brands to take on the project, indicating a strong belief in the Taunton hotel market. The council has succeeded in securing a global hotel brand for the site, as well as an experienced regional hotel operator for the project.

Have we taken soundings locally? What's the feeling among businesses and other hotels?

Independent hotel and leisure experts talked to a number of local businesses on the council's behalf as part of the feasibility study. They reviewed the project site, assessed the local hotel market, gathered information relating to the local economy, tourism industry and demand generators, and analysed key performance indicators for the market.

They concluded Taunton town centre needs additional modern quality hotel accommodation that reflects current market standards and guest expectations, to cater for business and leisure visitors.

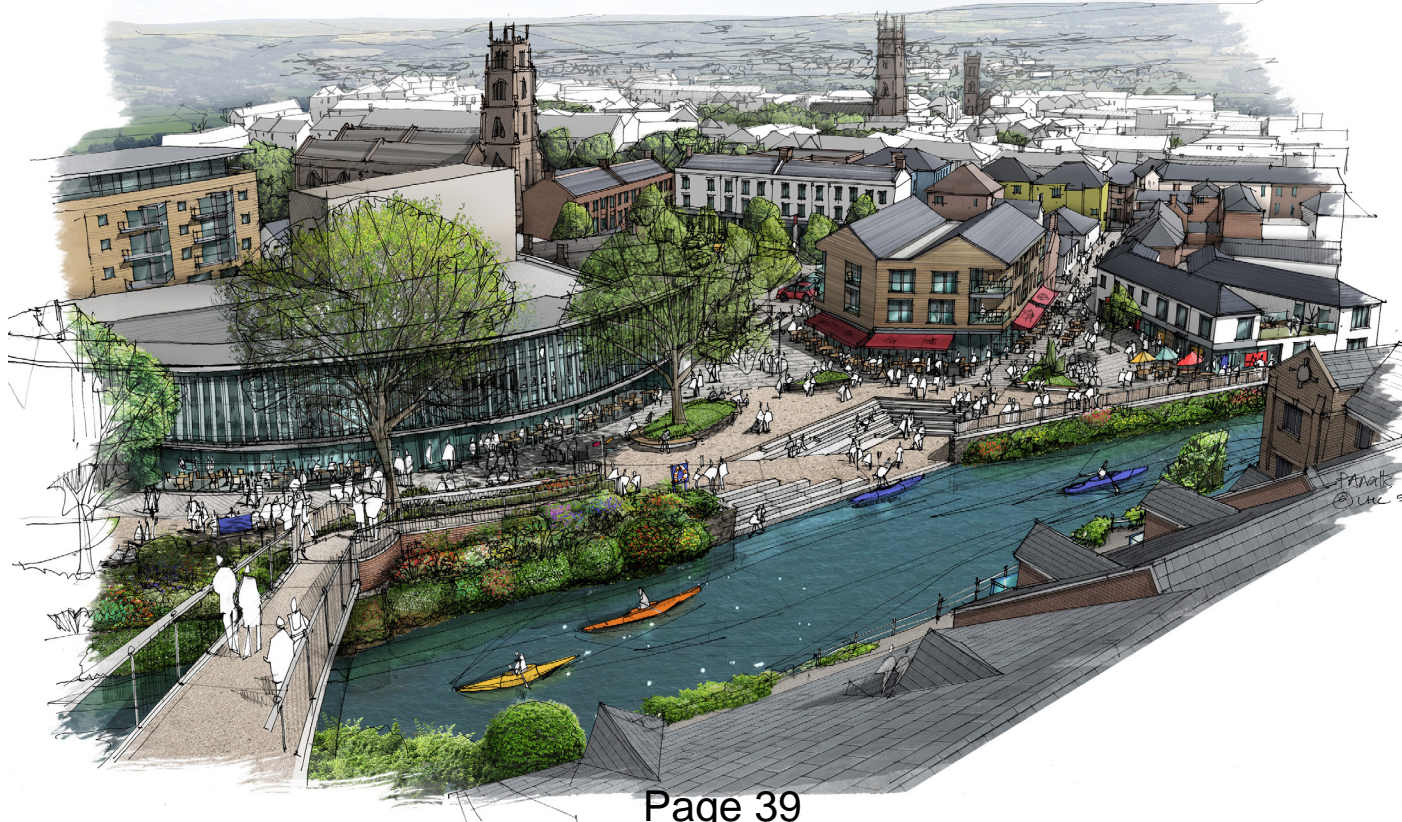
What's the timescale?

At present we are working towards the hotel being opened and operating by the summer of 2021.

If it is going to make money why isn't a private operator investing its own money?

The current economic climate makes it easier for us to borrow and we receive a good return on investments such as this, but there is a huge opportunity here and we are in a position to seize it by kick starting the project ourselves. It will also generate valuable income to support services that our residents value and deserve at a time when councils have to find new ways of raising funds.

Artists impression of new development at Coal Orchard with the refurbished Brewhouse Theatre.



And what happens if the hotel isn't a success?

Of course, every investment carries a degree of risk, but we see a huge opportunity to bring far reaching benefits to the area. And this plan is founded on a solid business case backed by industry experts. There is clearly a demand which is growing.

Are other councils investing in hotels and developments?

Yes – councils in Stockton-on-Tees, Aberdeen, Sevenoaks and Middlesborough, are examples where local authorities have invested directly in hotels. Nationally, councils are investing in developments to regenerate their areas, or to generate much-needed income. Some, like Taunton Deane, are investing for both these reasons.

We would like your ideas about how the council can develop new sources of income to maintain community services - please visit the on-line consultation survey

How does this fit with the council's approach to commercial development?

It's a strong fit – we are looking to invest where there's a strong business case to do so in common with other local authorities. This helps the local economy and provides a new stream of income for crucial community services now that Government funding is being phased out.

Will the recent announcement that St Modwen will no longer be the Council's development partner for the Firepool scheme affect the hotel proposal?

No. The hotel proposal has been led solely by the Council from the start and the business case and delivery plan is not affected.

The YMCA is developing Great Western House by the railway station - would this affect the Firepool proposal?

The regeneration of this important listed building will complement the council's hotel proposal. It will provide 15 boutique-style hotel rooms on the first floor. The ground and basement floors will provide collaboration and start-up space for new businesses, conference/meeting rooms and a café. The venue will be run as a social enterprise, backed by significant external funding and a commercial loan from TDBC. It will create jobs, traineeships and volunteering opportunities. The development will also form an important part of the railway station improvements due to get under way next year.

We would like your views on the principle of the council offering commercial loans to enable development - please visit the on-line consultation survey



Issued by Taunton Deane Borough Council
For more information about our services
visit us online at:
www.tauntondeane.gov.uk
www.investtaunton.co.uk

Firepool Hotel - Business Consultation - Autumn 2018

Please complete this survey by 31st October 2018

PLEASE NOTE: One single entry per business will be accepted. Any additional responses for the same business will automatically be deleted.

To view the Q&A document, please visit - www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/consultations/

Please complete the following information;

* Required

1. Business Name *

2. Nature of Business (e.g. manufacturing, retail) *

3. Location of Business (e.g. town and/or postal area) *

4. On balance do you agree with the proposal for a hotel on the Firepool site? *

Mark only one oval.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree

5. Please help us understand your response by providing further information below. (1000 character limit max = approx 200 words)

6. Do you agree with the Council investment in initiatives that are expected to directly benefit the town, its businesses and residents? *

Mark only one oval.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree

7. Please help us understand your response by providing further information below. (1000 character limit max = approx 200 words)

Five horizontal lines for text input.

8. Do you agree with council investment in initiatives that are expected to yield a solid return - in order to better fund community services? *

Mark only one oval.

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree

9. Please help us understand your response by providing further information below. (1000 character limit max = approx 200 words)

Five horizontal lines for text input.

10. How else do you think the council could or should develop new sources of income for the maintenance of public services? (1000 character limit max = approx 200 words)

Five horizontal lines for text input.

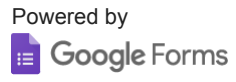
11. What do you think about the principle of the Council offering commercial loans to enable development? (1000 character limit max = approx 200 words)

Five horizontal lines for text input.

Please complete this survey by 31st October 2018.

Should you wish to submit additional information in support of your comments in this survey, please do this by email to ecdev@tauntondeane.gov.uk

To view the Q&A document, please visit - www.tauntondeane.gov.uk



Firepool Hotel

Summary of business consultation October 2018

Background

- Full Council decision to approve project mandate April 2018
- Full Council decision in June 2018 to defer April 2018 decision until a consultation process carried out

Consultation process

- Developed FAQs and on-line survey (BC, Project team, Media & Comms team, PFH) – FAQ informed by other council hotel projects
- Consultation period 1st – 31st October
- Informed the Taunton business community as follows
 - TDBC Press release issued and published on TDBC & www.investtaunton websites (1st Oct + follow-up 24th Oct)
 - Sent e-mails directly to 312 Taunton / town centre businesses on the TDBC Business Development & Visitor Centre databases (together with sending a message directly to the Taunton Chamber of Commerce)
 - Social media - promoted regularly throughout October via Twitter (TDBC and Taunton Business Twitter accounts)
 - Taunton Business twitter feed = c.2700 followers
 - TDBC corporate twitter = c.4000 followers

Analysis and findings

- Total responses = 35 (on-line survey) + 1 letter
- Breakdown of business type:
 - Professional services (eg Accountants, Architects, Insurance, Property) = 16
 - Leisure, tourism & transport = 8
 - Hotel and B & B = 6
 - Retail = 5

Q1) On balance do you agree with the proposal for a hotel on the Firepool site?

- Agree = 13/35 (37%)
- Neither agree nor disagree = 2/35 (6%)
- Disagree = 20/35 (57%)

Responses by business type:

- Professional services (total = 16)
 - Agree = 7/16 (44%)
 - Disagree = 9/16 (56%)
- Leisure, tourism & transport (total = 8)
 - Agree = 4/8 (50%)
 - Neither agree nor disagree = 2/8 (25%)
 - Disagree = 2/8 (25%)
- Hotel and B & B (total = 6)
 - Agree = 1/6 (17%)
 - Disagree = 5/6 (83%)
- Retail (total = 5)
 - Agree = 1/5 (20%)
 - Disagree = 4/5 (80%)

Key / most common topics/issues raised by those who AGREE:

- Complements Taunton town centre's regeneration / Firepool development
- A new quality hotel is needed in the town centre
- Existing provision is limited / inadequate, meaning visitors have to find inconvenient or costly accommodation in surrounding areas
- Highly advantageous in meeting SCCC's needs (eg supporting major events)
- Economic benefits, eg creating employment, local amenities will benefit, and it will bring custom to the night-time economy
- Environmental benefits – close proximity to railway station = reduces traffic and pollution

Key / most common topics/issues raised by those who DISAGREE:

- No clear direction for the development of the town centre / masterplan for Firepool
- Further Firepool development is required to attract more visitors to Taunton before a hotel is built (eg leisure & entertainment venue)
- Concerns that the proposal is high risk, low return (lack of transparency on proposal details)
- Private sector (not the council) should invest if there is a demand

- Council investment should concentrate on attracting new business investment, and focus on other areas, (eg attracting high quality jobs, empty shops, no business rates and cheaper rents)
- Plenty of hotels and available rooms in the town already
- Will risk the sustainability of current hotel operators (who are paying business rates to the council)
- Poor location due to traffic jams and inadequate parking in the centre of town

Q2) Do you agree with the Council investment in initiatives that are expected to directly benefit the town, its businesses and residents?

- Agree = 21/35 (60%)
- Neither agree nor disagree = 2/35 (6%)
- Disagree = 11/35 (31%)

Responses by business type:

- Professional services (total = 16)
 - Agree = 11/16 (69%)
 - Neither agree nor disagree = 1/16 (6%)
 - Disagree = 4/16 (25%)
- Leisure, tourism & transport (total = 8)
 - Agree = 7/8 (88%)
 - Disagree = 1/8 (12%)
- Hotel and B & B (total = 6)
 - Agree = 2/6 (33%)
 - Neither agree nor disagree = 1/6 (17%)
 - Disagree = 3/6 (50%)
- Retail (total = 5)
 - Agree = 1/5 (20%)
 - Neither agree nor disagree = 1/5 (20%)
 - Disagree = 3/5 (60%)

Key / most common topics/issues raised by those who AGREE:

- Principle of council investment supported as long as it genuinely benefits the town, businesses and residents
- However, some sceptical that investing in a hotel will directly benefit the town
- Council's should help kick-start / pump-prime quality growth schemes
- Must ensure there is a commercial case and the investment provides a return
- Positive economic development

Key / most common topics/issues raised by those who DISAGREE:

- This type of investment is not the council's job – should be private investment

- The council / public sector has a poor record of developing and being entrepreneurial
- This investment is bad as it won't benefit the town or deliver a return
- More imagination, bravery and drive in the vision and direction is needed

Q3) Do you agree with council investment in initiatives that are expected to yield a solid return - in order to better fund community services?

- Agree = 21/35 (60%)
- Neither agree nor disagree = 5/35 (14%)
- Disagree = 9/35 (26%)

Responses by business type:

- Professional services (total = 16)
 - Agree = 12/16 (75%)
 - Neither agree nor disagree = 1/16 (6%)
 - Disagree = 3/16 (19%)
- Leisure, tourism & transport (total = 8)
 - Agree = 5/8 (63%)
 - Neither agree nor disagree = 3/8 (37%)
- Hotel and B & B (total = 6)
 - Agree = 3/6 (50%)
 - Disagree = 3/6 (50%)
- Retail (total = 5)
 - Agree = 1/5 (20%)
 - Neither agree nor disagree = 1/5 (20%)
 - Disagree = 3/5 (60%)

Key / most common topics/issues raised by those who AGREE:

- Principle of council investment supported, however, some sceptical that investing in a hotel is appropriate for the council, and concerns expressed about the level of risk and that it is not a short-term speculative investment
- The council needs to establish a diverse income portfolio and use their assets to generate revenue to address council's funding cuts, and improve public infrastructure and services

Key / most common topics/issues raised by those who DISAGREE:

- This type of investment / business is not the council's job – should be private investment
- The council should support current businesses rather than make life more difficult for them

Q4) How else do you think the council could or should develop new sources of income for the maintenance of public services?

- 23 of the 35 respondents provided comments
- Invest in / encourage things to attract people and business to Taunton, eg:
 - a large conference/entertainment venue at Firepool,
 - other tourist/visitor attractions,
 - decent High Street markets, restaurants / cafes / stalls / places of entertainment etc along the river
- Invest in transport infrastructure, eg: roads, parking facilities, park & ride sites, public transport and coach facilities
- Help stimulate existing business growth, eg secured lending to local businesses
- Avoid high risk ventures, and only invest in projects expected to develop a long-term return
- Reduce business rates / offer rates holidays to encourage more start-ups
- Increase fines (eg littering, parking), and charge to park cars anywhere in a public place
- Charge more for large business planning applications
- Reduce car parking fees and bus fares to attract greater usage
- Purchase property assets or build new assets for rental income
- Increase council tax
- Invest in housing under new Govt initiatives

Q5) What do you think about the principle of the Council offering commercial loans to enable development?

- 29 of the 35 respondents provided comments
- 6 of these 29 explicitly stated they believed this is wrong / not appropriate for council's to do this
- 16 of these 29 stated they supported the principle
- 4 of the 29 stated that it depends on the development (ensure ethical investment and quality development), or the adequacy of the investment
- A good idea for young entrepreneurs
- The council does not have the skills or expertise to assess risk
- The council should fund development of council houses and affordable housing, and support local & self builders
- Several suggested that there should be loan conditions, such as:
 - never used to facilitate high-risk ventures;
 - not be offered to large / multi-national / well-funded companies;
 - priority given or exclusively available to local and smaller businesses;
 - the developments must enhance the town and benefit businesses and residents;
 - the company must employ local people;

- must be safeguards or insurance policy to ensure loans are not defaulted;
- should be a socially desirable imperative for the development;
- last resort – to only ever cover council costs;
- subject to due diligence and scrutiny of security and repayment;
- must provide a good / long-term return on investment

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Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 11 December 2018

Heart of the South West – Joint Committee – Council Update

Report of the Head of Localities – Brendan Cleere

This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council – Councillor John Williams

Recommendations: That Full Council be recommended to:-

- (a) Note the progress report setting out the work of the Heart of the South West (HotSW) Joint Committee since its establishment in March 2018;**
- (b) Agree to delegate the development and endorsement of the HotSW Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) to the HotSW Joint Committee (noting that final approval of the HotSW LIS rests with the HotSW Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Government);**
- (c) Note the Budget statement for 2018/2019 set out in Appendix B and that in accordance with the decisions taken at the time the Committee was established the Shadow Council will be asked to make an annual budgetary provision to meet the support costs of the Joint Committee in line with the Taunton Deane and West Somerset 2018/2019 contribution. Final clarification on any additional 2019/2020 budget requirement will be provided following the completion of the review of the Joint Committee's role, function and management support arrangements and development of its work programme for 2019/2020; and**
- (d) Agree the Budget and Cost-sharing Agreement set out in Appendix B to this report.**

1. Introduction and summary

- 1.1 In January 2018, the HotSW Joint Committee was formally established by the councils and organisations involved since 2015 in the devolution partnership. The Committee is tasked with improving productivity across the HotSW area in collaboration with the HotSW LEP and other organisations as necessary.
- 1.2 The Committee has met formally three times in 2018, in March, June and October. In addition to this the management structure that sits behind the Committee and involves Chief Executives and senior officers from across the partnership has met regularly to drive the business of the Committee. The Committee is chaired by Cllr David Fothergill, Leader of Somerset County Council and the Vice-Chair is Cllr John Tucker, Leader of South Hams District Council.

1.3 This report summarises the progress made by the Committee over recent months in key areas of activity and sets out actions proposed in the coming months. As part of this report there are specific recommendations for the constituent authorities to consider.

2. Key achievements

2.1 At each of our meetings the Committee has been briefed on recent inward investment successes achieved through the work of the local authorities and the LEP and it is these successes that we wish to add to through the work of the Joint Committee.

(a) Influencing Government

The partnership's original focus in 2015 was to explore opportunities on offer through devolution to improve productivity. Since the Committee was created the influencing role has continued to be central to the work of the Joint Committee and recent months have seen successes in this area. Government policy changes and Brexit have required the partnership to be flexible to present a united front to Government and respond to the changes. As an example, the Government has increasingly moved away from its devolution policy approach of 2015 and the partnership is now engaged in more flexible and targeted dialogues with Government. This approach is proving successful so demonstrating the benefits of presenting a single compelling partnership vision between the business and public sectors. The Committee is keen to demonstrate its ability to deliver Government objectives as well as local priorities so accessing help beyond our boundaries is critical to the success of the partnership. It is already apparent that the Joint Committee / LEP Partnership carries a critical mass that the Government is responding to through policy announcements and on-going dialogue with Government officials. The most significant announcement is the recent inclusion of the HotSW LEP area in wave 2 of developing Local Industrial Strategies (LIS). This success is due in large part to the close alignment of the Joint Committee and the LEP on the Productivity Strategy [see (b) below]. Much of the activity detailed below has resulted directly from discussions with Government.

(b) Approval of the HotSW Productivity Strategy

(i) In March the Committee and the LEP Board agreed a challenging HotSW Productivity Strategy which set an ambition of "Doubling the size of the Heart of the South West's economy over 20 years" with a vision of "Productivity and prosperity for all".

(ii) The Strategy identifies three strategic themes to improve productivity by strengthening and developing:-

a. the leadership and ideas within businesses in our area

- b. the housing, connectivity and infrastructure our people and businesses rely on for living, moving goods, accessing jobs and training, and exploiting new opportunities.
- c. the ability of people in our area to work, learn and improve their skills in a rapidly changing global economy, and to maximise their economic potential.

(iii) In addition, there are three cross-cutting themes, referred to throughout the Strategy:

- d. Inclusive growth for our people, communities and places
- e. Capitalising on our distinctive assets
- f. Maximising the potential from digital technology

The Strategy can be viewed at:-

<https://heartofswlep.co.uk/about-the-lep/how-we-work/productivity-strategy/>

- (c) Endorsement of the Delivery Plan. This document is key to the delivery of the Productivity Strategy and will be further developed as explained below. It is a live action plan that will be used to track performance locally and may also form the basis of annual progress reports to Government, as required under the recent national review of LEPs. It is broadly divided into two sections – a ‘core offer’ focussing on programmes that deliver Business Support and Employment and Skills, as well as ‘enablers’ including housing delivery, transport, and other infrastructure that is essential to support economic growth. These activities apply across the whole of the HotSW area. A further section focuses on programmes of activity linked to the agreed set of ‘opportunities’ that are specific to the HotSW area. The Plan incorporates current as well as future, planned activity, and is being produced in stages depending on how well developed the programmes of activity for each theme are. The current version features the opportunities that are at the most advanced stage, namely: Digital (Photonics); Advanced Engineering (marine and nuclear); High Value Tourism; Farming, Fishing and Food. By spring 2019 it will be expanded to include: Healthy Ageing; further Digital (Creative and Big Data); Advanced Engineering (aerospace); Construction; and Defence. Place markers have also been included for inclusive growth and natural capital to be developed as part of the next phase of work. The current version of the Delivery Plan can be viewed at:
<http://www.hotswjointcommittee.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/HotSW-Draft-Delivery-Plan-October-2018.pdf>
- (d) An Opportunities Prospectus has been extracted from the Delivery Plan and will be used with local MPs, Ministers and senior Government officials as part of continuing to raise the profile of the HotSW area at a critical time ahead of the 2019 Spending Review and the anticipated launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund towards the end of 2019. The document will be circulated to MPs prior to the Chancellor’s autumn

statement as part of the influencing approach. To ensure that the Prospectus document has some longevity, the key strategic 'asks' of Government have been set out in a covering letter, jointly signed by the Chairs of the Joint Committee and the LEP. As we develop the Delivery Plan, further asks will emerge and be submitted to Ministers. The list of asks submitted in October is attached as Appendix A to this report. The Prospectus document can be viewed at:-

<http://www.hotswjointcommittee.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/HotSW-Opportunities-Prospectus-October-2018.pdf>

- (e) Housing is a key enabling opportunity for the Joint Committee. Following a housing audit to gauge Local Plan progress on targets and delivery rates, a HotSW Housing Summit was held in September with key agencies including Homes England. The outcome of this successful event was an agreement to work closely with Homes England to develop a bespoke package of offers and asks with Government which will help us to successfully deliver the ambitious housing programmes we have across our area. A Housing Sector Task Force of strategic leaders and officers has been established to develop our proposition to Government and to work with Homes England which will report to the Joint Committee.
- (f) National Infrastructure Commission (NIC)
The Joint Committee is seeking to secure a growth corridor study following helpful discussions with the NIC. Initial discussions with the Chair of the Commission were well received and the Joint Committee was encouraged to submit a business case to the Chancellor who will ultimately make a decision as to whether to fund a study. A proposal was submitted to the Chancellor in October. The study would be similar to the one conducted by the NIC for Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford. It would help the HotSW partnership to better understand the constraints to higher levels of productivity by highlighting where investment in strategic infrastructure could unlock faster growth over the long term. The initial focus for the study would be along the A38/M5 transport spine, recognising that investment would have benefits for the whole of the HotSW area and wider south west.
- (g) Brexit Resilience Opportunities Group. The Joint Committee has consistently lobbied Government that any powers that move back from the EU under Brexit must not stop at Whitehall. This senior officer group was established by the Joint Committee to research and advise on the opportunities and risks to the HotSW. The Group has been collating evidence on some of the key risks and opportunities for our unique economy and has conducted research in the following areas: workforce, construction industry, agriculture and land management; food and farming, fisheries and post Brexit funding to support the economy. The Group is also collating the risk and impact analysis of Brexit on local government such as service delivery and community

resilience. The Group has fed directly into the Local Government Association briefing papers and to key Government departments to raise the profile of the area. With the Brexit departure date looming and several 'deal' scenarios still possible, this work has become ever more important. A Brexit Joint Regional Sounding Board event planned, as part of the 12th November LEP Conference, will be an opportunity for business and public sector to engage with Government representatives from Defra, BEIS, and MHCLG on preparedness. The Group is working with Cornwall on issues of mutual interest and concern.

- (h) Sub-National Transport Body. Linked to the Joint Committee's work on infrastructure is the imminent establishment of a South West Peninsula Shadow Sub-National Transport Body (covering Somerset, Devon, Cornwall, Plymouth and Torbay) which will develop a sub-national Transport Strategy to work with Government to deliver investment in our major transport infrastructure. In the short-term this will be an informal partnership, however a current 'ask' of Government is that they endorse the creation of a statutory Sub-National Transport Body for the Peninsula, and a separate body for the South West around the east of the region. These two new transport bodies will provide a platform for strategic discussions with Government on priorities for the region over the long term.

3. Next steps:

In addition to what is outlined above, the Joint Committee / LEP partnership will:-

- i. Develop an Investment Framework for the Delivery Plan so that priorities for delivery and project opportunities can be delivered via investment from a range of sources.
- ii. Review the roles and functions of both bodies through a governance review to acknowledge the revised and enhanced focus given to LEPs by the Government. This work will include a review of the management support arrangements. The Joint Committee and the LEP will continue to share responsibilities across the Productivity Strategy and the Delivery Plan with the LEP leading on areas closely linked to the LIS and the Joint Committee leading on other areas such as housing and infrastructure. The need for close collaboration between the two has never been more important as we look to further influence Government policy and actions over the next 12 months and beyond.

4. Local Industrial Strategy

- 4.1 The inclusion of the HotSW LEP area in the second wave of areas to benefit from working with the Government to develop their Local Industrial Strategies (LIS) is a considerable achievement for the Joint Committee and the LEP. The first wave 'trailblazers' were the urban conurbations of Greater Manchester, the West Midlands and

Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford. The partnership had been pushing to be in the second wave and had raised the ask with Government Ministers and officials over a number of months. It was therefore very welcome that HotSW was announced in July as being part of wave 2. By working closely with Government to develop our Local Industrial Strategy we will be able to jointly agree the long term transformational opportunities that will help deliver the asks specific to our area and influence wider Government policy and delivery.

- 4.2 Local Industrial Strategies will focus on the foundations of productivity and identify transformational opportunities with partners across Ideas, People, Infrastructure, Business Environment and Place. The Strategy will be led by local people and businesses, allowing local leaders to harness the strengths of their own areas; ensure that the benefits of growth are realised by all; and provide the right conditions for improving the prosperity of communities throughout the area.
- 4.3 Ultimate approval of the LIS rests with the LEP in collaboration with the Government. The LIS guidance requires the LEP to collaborate on the development of the LIS with a range of stakeholders including the local authorities and other partners.
- 4.4 The LEP's proposed timetable is to have the final LIS agreed between the LEP and the Government by June 2019. Fortunately, HotSW partners are better placed than many areas to meet this timetable as the work done by the Joint Committee and the LEP to build and test the evidence base for the Productivity Strategy and Delivery Plan has set the foundation; the LIS will be a natural extension of this.
- 4.5 The Joint Committee is ideally placed to provide both collective and council level input into the development of the LIS, although final approval rests with the LEP. The validity and positioning of the document would be immeasurably strengthened by the involvement and general endorsement of all the constituent authorities, and by other partners including the business community. To enable the development of the LIS to be taken forward at pace, and to demonstrate alignment with partners across the area, it is proposed that local authority input is developed, coordinated and signed off by the Joint Committee. The powers of (and delegations to) the Committee are tightly focussed around the Productivity Strategy under the current governance arrangements, so approval needs to be sought from the constituent authorities to formally delegate the Council's responsibilities for contributing to and signing off the HotSW Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) to the Joint Committee. The recommendations provide the opportunity for the Council to influence and shape the LIS as well as provide content. To ensure that there is wide buy-in to the development of the LIS across the constituent authorities, a portfolio holder engagement event is planned for 23 November 2018

5. Budget and Cost Sharing Agreement

- 5.1 The Joint Committee has been kept informed of its budgetary position to provide assurance that it is operating within its budget. This section of the report includes:-
- (a) a summary of the Committee's current budget position for 2018/19 – page 11 - Appendix B
 - (b) a Budget and Cost Sharing Agreement (B&CSA) which is a development of the Inter-Authority Agreement agreed by the constituent authorities at the time the Committee was established – pages 12 and 13 – Appendix B
 - (c) An indicative budget request for 2019/20 to the constituent authorities.
- 5.2 Page 11 – Appendix B - summarises the position on the operating and support budget of the Committee. It shows a variation of the income for 2018/19 expected at the time of the Committee's establishment with a larger than anticipated underspend carried forward from the work on devolution during the 2015 to 2018 period. This together with the contributions agreed by the constituent authorities have given the Committee a larger than anticipated budget for 2018/19.
- 5.3 In terms of the anticipated spend for 2018/19 the current position suggests that the Committee will be able to operate within budget and should achieve an underspend to be carried forward to 2019/20 to help offset the future budget requirement for the Joint Committee. The current underspend is around £40k. It should be noted however that not all commitments for 2018/19 have yet been identified.
- 5.4 At the time of the Committee's establishment the Inter Authority Agreement referred to the development of a B&CSA and included some headings to be included within it. Pages 12 and 13 - Appendix B - set out the draft B&CSA. It is a relatively simple document proportionate to the small size of the budget and the limited financial risk to each constituent authority. It explains the role of the administering authority as well as the responsibilities of the constituent authorities. The Joint Committee has approved the B&CSA and all Section 151 Officers of the constituent authorities have been consulted on its contents. The document now requires the formal approval of the constituent authorities.
- 5.5 In terms of the Joint Committee's budget for 2019/20 the work programme is unknown at this stage although a busy year is expected for the Committee to respond to Government policy initiatives and to support the Delivery Plan. To assist the constituent authorities to plan budget commitments for 2019/20, the minimum contribution levels for 2019/20 are set out below and are at the same level as for 2018/19. These contributions will generate sufficient budget to cover the costs of the administering authority to service the Joint Committee and leave a small surplus. Dependent on the underspend carried forward from the

current year and the outcome of the review of the management support arrangements, this may not be sufficient to fully cover any additional work, for example secondments, or externally commissioned work. The funding requirements will be clarified, as far as is possible, in advance of the 2019/20 financial year following the governance review and through a costed work programme and applied on a pro-rata basis.

- County Councils - £10,500
- Unitary Councils - £4,000
- District Councils and National Parks £1,400

6. Consultation, communication and engagement

6.1 Under the Communications and Engagement Plan, members of the constituent authorities, partners and the public have been kept informed of developments with the Joint Committee through newsletters published after each formal meeting and press releases on significant issues of interest. As we move towards Christmas, the Committee's engagement plans include seeking the support of relevant Ministers and all local MPs for the Communications document and specifically our 'asks' of Government. This engagement campaign will continue and accelerate as we move into 2019.

6.2 In addition the Committee has a website providing background information, links to latest news and publications and details of the membership. This can be accessed at:-
<http://www.hotswjointcommittee.org.uk/>

7. Equality Considerations

7.1 No adverse impact on any protected groups.

8. Public Health Considerations

8.1 There are no direct public health impacts of these recommendations. However, public health considerations will be an important consideration in the development of the LIS recognising that there is a strong correlation between economic prosperity and health of the population.

9. Risk Management Considerations

9.1 Given the participation in the Joint Committee as one of the constituent Local Authorities, the main risks are around failing to participate actively in this or any other related process, thus manifesting a failure of sub-regional or regional awareness of the Council's specific economic and productivity concerns. The risk from failing to participate is most likely to be a loss of the Council's influence at regional level and an inability to draw attention to the area's economic needs (across such areas as productivity, skills, infrastructure and related inward investment). It would also weaken the

wider partnership proposition, so affecting the ability of the HotSW partnership to speak with one voice and influence Government policy for the benefit of the wider area and including our residents, businesses and visitors.

10. Legal considerations

- 10.1 The HotSW Joint Committee is a Joint Committee of the local authorities across Devon and Somerset that comprise the HotSW area and established under Sections 101 to 103 of the Local Government Act 1972 and all other enabling legislation to undertake the following:
- 10.2 The key purpose of the Joint Committee is to be the vehicle through which the HotSW partners will ensure that the desired increase in productivity across the area is achieved.
- 10.3 The Committee is a single strategic public sector partnership providing cohesive, coherent leadership and governance to ensure delivery of the Productivity Strategy for the HotSW area. The specific objectives of the Joint Committee are to:
- Improve the economy and the prospects for the region by bringing together the public, private and education sectors;
 - Increase our understanding of the economy and what needs to be done to make it stronger;
 - Improve the efficiency and productivity of the public sector;
 - Identify and remove barriers to progress and maximise the opportunities/benefits available to the area from current and future government policy.

11. Financial considerations

- 11.1 The direct costs to the constituent authorities are set out above and in Appendix B. In addition to this the constituent authorities and partners continue to input considerable amounts of officer time into the partnership on an 'in kind' basis. The LEP continues to make a significant contribution to the work of the Committee and has met some direct costs.
- 11.2 The constituent authorities are reminded that the Joint Committee continues to provide a relatively low-cost option to meet the partnership's objectives compared to the Combined Authority alternative.
- 11.3 Subject to receiving the endorsement of the Shadow Executive and the two extant Councils, the Shadow Authority will be requested to include a sum of £1400 in its 2019/20 draft budget to cover the contribution for the new council.

12. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

- 12.1 It is essential that the local authorities contribute to the development and approval of the LIS working in collaboration with the LEP. The LIS will be a natural development of the Productivity Strategy and Delivery Plan for which

the Joint Committee already has delegated authority, and therefore it would seem appropriate to formally extend this authority to the development and approval of the LIS to the Joint Committee on behalf of the constituent authorities.

- 12.2 It is important that the constituent authorities are kept up to date on the Committee's budget situation and make provision for the 2019/20 budget commitment. It is also important that the Budget and Cost Sharing Agreement is formally agreed by the constituent authorities as part of the Committee's governance arrangements.

APPENDIX A

Heart of the South West Partnership's key strategic asks of Government

As part of the partnership's increased lobbying with MPs and with reference to the Great South West Partnership several 'policy asks' of Government have been identified to coincide with party conferences and the Autumn Budget. These will be socialised over the next few months and are:

1. Recognition of the Great South West Partnership in the Autumn Budget Statement together with a commitment to co-design a Rural Deal - a 'Rural Productivity Partnership' with GSW following publication of Rural Productivity Commission Report earlier in the year
2. Strategic Connectivity
 - a. Confirmation of Sub National Transport Body/ (ies)
 - b. Peninsula Rail priorities – e.g. commitment for funding Dawlish
 - c. Funding commitment for A303 improvements
 - d. Superfast Broadband and 5G trials
 - e. Joint working with the National Infrastructure Commission on an A38/M5 corridor study to explore how we can unlock our full potential and accelerate growth to transform our region.
3. Transforming Cities and Strength in Places bids agreed
4. EU Fisheries underspend proposal: an offer to work with Government to develop a proposal to utilise the projected underspend in the current EU Fisheries budget.
5. Nuclear Sector Deal (and others specifically Maritime and Defence) to have clear place-based elements/funding, recognising the HotSW opportunities.
6. Local Industrial Strategy specific: encourage joint working with WECA on Wave 2 Local Industrial Strategies particularly around connectivity and Smart specialisations e.g. Nuclear and Aerospace.

APPENDIX B

BUDGET STATEMENT – 2018/2019

Costs

At the time the Joint Committee was established it was estimated that its operating and support **costs** for 2018/19 (and to cover the remainder of 2017/18) would be £89,000 - excluding in-kind officer support. This estimate comprised:

1. £25,000 for work the Joint Committee would wish to commission to support the delivery of its work programme
2. £24,000 for the Brexit Resilience and Opportunities Group Secretariat
3. £40,000 for the Administering Authority to undertake its duties.

Budget

Current budget position summary:

18/19 Budget = <u>£117k</u> (an increase of £25k over the original estimate)	18/19 Expenditure - <u>£84.1k</u> (as at 24/10/18)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. £67k - devolution budget carry forward (as against the estimate of £42k) – transferred from PCC to SCC 2. £50k - funding contributions from the constituent authorities 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 £40k - for Administrative Authority costs including: direct meeting costs (including refreshments); staffing costs directly relating to HotSW meetings; JC communications and marketing; micro-site development 2 £19k - support costs of the Brexit Resilience Opportunities Group (BROG) including seconded part-time officer support (against an original budget allocation of £24k) 3 £6k – costs of Housing Summit 4 £9.8k – housing consultancy support 5 £9.3k – national corridor infrastructure corridor consultancy support

This reduces the level of potential underspend available to take forward to 2019/20 to approximately £33k.

For 2019/20 the Chief Executive's Advisory Group has decided at this stage that in relation to the budget for 2019/20:-

- . That, in the absence of a work programme being in place for the Joint Committee for 2019/20 at this time, authorities should be asked to plan to repeat their 2018/19 contribution to the Joint Committee's budget for 2019/20. This is in line with the request in the template report. This will raise £48.6k (slightly less than in 2018/19 as there will be one less constituent authority in the Joint Committee membership following the creation of Somerset West and Taunton Council) giving a maximum budget

of just over £80k if the full current underspend is carried forward. Once the support costs of the Joint Committee are accounted for this would give a budget to fund the Joint Committee's work programme of just over £40k for 2019/20.

Without a work programme in place it is not known whether this will be sufficient to fully cover the Joint Committee's requirements for procuring, for example secondments, or externally commissioned work. Every effort will be made to contain costs within budget but if work is subsequently identified for 2019/20 which cannot be met within budget or from another source, a further request for funding may be made to the constituent authorities (including in-year in exceptional circumstances) but only against a costed proposal or plan of activity and after all other potential sources of funding have been exhausted.

That a further update on an indicative work programme and the budget position will be sent to councils immediately after the 25th January formal Joint Committee meeting to give as much certainty as possible over the budget requirement in advance of the financial year.

BUDGET AND COST SHARING AGREEMENT

As part of the new Joint Committee working arrangements, the following clause was agreed in relation to the costs of operation of the Joint Committee. This clause was in the Inter-Authority Agreement.

4.0 JC Finance

4.1 The JC's budgetary arrangements shall be detailed in a budget and cost sharing agreement to be agreed by all the Constituent Authorities annually on the recommendation of the JC and in advance of the financial year. The only exception to this will be in the JC's first year of operation when the JC shall recommend a budget and cost sharing agreement to the Constituent Authorities for approval at the first opportunity following its establishment.

4.2 The budget and cost sharing agreement shall cover:

- (a) The responsibilities of the Constituent Authorities for providing funding for the JC
- (b) The anticipated level of expenditure for the JC for the year ahead
- (c) The cost sharing mechanism to be applied to the Constituent Authorities
- (d) Details of how the budget will be set and agreed each year
- (e) Who is to be responsible for maintaining financial records on behalf of the JC (the 'accountable body');
- (f) What financial records are to be maintained;
- (g) What financial reports are to be made, to whom and when;
- (h) What arrangements and responsibilities are to be made for:
 - auditing accounts;
 - insurance including ensuring all partners have sufficient cover;
- (i) How any financial assets held by the JC on behalf of the Constituent Authorities will be redistributed to the CAs in the event of the dissolution of the JC or in the event of a CA formally withdrawing from the CA.

How is the budget set and agreed each year?

In the February preceding each financial year, in consultation with the Somerset County Council Finance Advisory Team, the SCC Strategic Manager - Partnership Governance on behalf of the PMO will detail a budget plan for the JC income and expenditure. This will establish estimated amounts for that financial year and the timing of those financial transactions. This will be submitted by the administering authority to the Joint Committee for recommendation to the Constituent Authorities (CA) for approval.

Each CA will pay their agreed contribution to the Administering Authority (AA) in a timely manner on receipt of invoice details.

Who is to be responsible for maintaining financial records on behalf of the JC?
SCC Finance Advisory Team – Ian Tier, Finance Manager.**What financial records are to be maintained?**

Financial records, i.e. orders for supplies and services, payments made, invoices raised and receipts, will be kept electronically on the SCC financial system. This incorporates purchase orders, invoice scans, cashiers receipts and sales invoices.

What financial reports are to be made, to whom and when?

SCC Finance Advisory will present a quarterly income and expenditure report to the SCC Strategic Manager – Partnership Governance. This will be reported to the CEx Advisory Group for information. An income and expenditure report will be presented to the JC for information on at least an annual basis.

What arrangements and responsibilities are to be made for?

Auditing Accounts: The AA's accounts and audit arrangements will apply to JC business.

Insurance:

Each CA will ensure that it has sufficient insurance cover in place to provide protection for their members and officers participating in the work of the JC and in their capacity as officers or members of that authority. The AA will ensure that it has sufficient insurance cover in place to cover the AA role.

How any financial assets held by the JC on behalf of the CA will be redistributed to the CAs in the event of the dissolution of the JC or in the event of a CA formally withdrawing from the CA?

Itemised records of contributions made by each of the CAs will be kept over the life of the JC. In the event of the dissolution of the JC or in the event of a CA formally withdrawing from the CA having given the required notice, financial assets will be returned to the CA or CAs on a proportionate basis.

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 11 December 2018

Approval of Funding Request for the Transformation Programme

This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, Councillor John Williams and Councillor Andy Sully, Portfolio Holder for Resources.

Report Author: Penny James, Chief Executive

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report requests additional funding for the Transformation programme. The revised Business Case increases the savings from £3,100,000 to £3,500,000 with a revised investment of circa £9,500,000 delivering an attractive return of investment whilst protecting front line services and improving the customer experience.
- 1.2 This means that overall costs for transformation are now estimated to exceed the original High Level Business Case estimates by £2,387,000, for which Taunton Deane's share is £1,880,000. It is proposed that the annual savings target is increased by £348,000. The updated Business Case provides a payback period, at 2.7 years, which is below the three year good practice benchmark the Council has used for this programme.
- 1.3 To maintain capacity, resilience and service standards there are some one-off transitional costs for both this year and the start of next year totalling £685,000, for which the Council's share is £564,000.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Note an increase to the Transformation Programme Budget of £2,387,000. Approve funding of £1,277,000 for Taunton Deane's General Fund and £603,000 for Taunton Deane's Housing Revenue Account. (Note £507,000 to be funded by West Somerset Council's General Fund);
- 2.2 Note an increase to service budgets for transitional costs totalling £685,000. Approve funding of £386,000 for Taunton Deane's General Fund and £178,000 for Taunton Deane's Housing Revenue Account. (Note £121,000 to be funded by West Somerset Council's General Fund);
- 2.3 To support the proposed increase of the annual savings target by £348,000 to £3,500,000.
- 2.4 Note the Shadow Executive to consider basis for allocating increased savings target within the new Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 The report (Appendix A) presented to Shadow Scrutiny on 26 November 2018 highlights the Top Programme risks. These are extracted from the detailed Programme Risk Register.

4 Background Information

- 4.1 Our Transformation plans aim to deliver a Council that is digitally enabled, customer focussed and commercially minded.
- 4.2 The High Level Business Case was approved in 2016. The option chosen, the creation of a new Council with Transformation, promised £3,100,000 savings with one – off costs of £7,100,000.
- 4.3 The original Business Case required a saving of 23% of staff costs. From recruitment to date (phase 1) and staff expressions of interest (phase 2) we are broadly on track to deliver this through the voluntary redundancy (VR) route. We estimate 23/4% of staff will have taken VR by the end of the process. This is counter to any narrative that we have an excessive number of staff leaving the organisation.
- 4.4 The additional costs mostly come from the average cost of redundancy not from higher numbers of redundancy. In 2016 we predicted the former to be £25,000 when in reality it has proven to be £34,000. This can be for a range of reasons the most likely being the age profile and length of service of the people involved. The profile of actual leavers is hard to predict. On reflection we should have included a range for the redundancy estimate stress testing the Business Case to the pay back of three years which of course we remain comfortably within.
- 4.5 We recognised the radical nature of the changes we are making to our ways of working. We are effectively building a brand new organisation. We have been clear on the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours we need to make our new organisational model a success.
- 4.6 We have built brand new functionality i.e. around digital, data, information management, business intelligence, governance, commerciality, and locality working. This has required new skills. Our ways of working have shifted the behaviours needed. We are working hard to support staff understanding, engagement and development in these areas. We also understand that our new ways of working are not for everybody and we respect that as well.
- 4.7 Whilst any redundancy is regrettable VR is always preferable to Compulsory Redundancy. The cost to the Council is exactly the same. We have therefore worked with staff to give them the opportunity to explore the new model and apply upfront for up to three roles and / or for VR. We cannot control or predict

people's choices or chances of success. We are managing the consequences from a transition and 'Business as Usual' (BAU) perspective.

- 4.8 Approximately £800,000 of the additional cost arises from the inclusion of the Deane DLO workforce into the Transformation Programme. They were not part of the original High Level Business Case. It became quickly apparent that this was not right. This was discussed at JPAG and the DLO were included in the original consultation document that went to all Members and staff colleagues.
- 4.9 Including the workforce has enabled us to grow and develop the Localities offer. It is also more inclusive as all staff have the opportunity to apply for any role and to benefit from the development on offer. The DLO also have one of the biggest interfaces with the public so embracing the Carol Carpenter customer work was important. Members were also keen to have a strong locality function to mitigate the risk of Somerset West and Taunton becoming remote from its communities.
- 4.10 We are recommending that the costs associated with this change be recovered along the same lines as planned in the original Business Case.
- 4.11 Prudent financial stewardship at both Councils has allowed us to be able to safely make this additional investment.

5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 5.1 The aims of the Transformation Project were set out in detail in the Business Case agreed by both Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council in 2016.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 As identified in the report to the Shadow Scrutiny Committee on 26 November 2018 the main factor in the request for increased funding is the updated estimate of redundancy costs. This is in part due to the extension of the scope of the Transformation programme to incorporate the whole organisation, as explained earlier in paragraphs 4.9 - 4.11. However it is acknowledged that, in hindsight, the original estimate of these costs is some way below our current estimates. Despite this fact the updated overall costs remain affordable, and the proposed additional financial savings present opportunities for Members to further protect and improve services and further improve the financial health of the new Council.
- 6.2 Importantly the updated Business Case provides a payback period, at 2.7 years, which is below the three year benchmark the Council has used for this programme. From a financial perspective – notwithstanding the other benefits of Transformation – the Business Case continues to demonstrate good value for money.
- 6.3 The Section 151 Officer and Transformation Accountant have worked with the Chief Executive to put together a funding plan for the additional costs. This

includes prudent use of current year underspends, contingency balances held in general reserves, gains from Business Rates pooling, and earmarked reserves, which are shown in the tables below.

6.4 Transformation Programme Variance:

	Variance Analysed by Fund (£'000's)			
	WSC GF	TDBC GF	TDBC HRA	Total Variance
Total Transformation Programme	507	1,277	603	2,387
Funded by:				
BRR Smoothing Reserve (Pooling Gain)	0	114	0	114
General Reserves	174	335	356	865
Earmarked Reserve (SWOne exit funding provision retained for redundancy risk)	0	176	0	176
Reprioritised Earmarked Reserves	309	652	75	1,036
Allocate in year budget underspend	24	0	172	196
Transformation Total	507	1,277	603	2,387

6.5 BAU Transitional Costs:

	Variance Analysed by Fund (£'000's)			
	WSC GF	TDBC GF	TDBC HRA	Total Variance
Transition costs – post go live	85	287	143	515
Transition costs – service capacity and phase recruitment	36	99	35	170
Total	121	386	178	685
Funded by:				
Allocate in year budget underspend	121	0	178	299
BRR Smoothing Reserve (Pooling Gain)	0	386	0	386
Total Funding	121	386	178	685

6.6 The planned use of earmarked reserves is set out in more detail in Appendix B. The use of these reserves has been analysed by the Strategic Finance Advisor/S151 Officer and his team, who have worked with relevant managers to determine potential balances that can be reprioritised at “no risk” or “low risk”. It is therefore considered the proposed funding is robust, and leaves adequate reserve balances for other planned priorities and risks.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 None.

8 Environmental Impact Implications

8.1 None associated with this report.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

9.1 None.

10 Equalities and Diversity Implications

10.1 None associated with this report.

11 Social Value Implications

11.1 None.

12 Partnership Implications

12.1 None for the purposes of this report.

13 Health & Wellbeing Implications

13.1 None.

14 Asset Management Implications

14.1 None.

15 Data Protection Implications

15.1 None.

16 Consultation Implications

16.1 None.

Democratic Path:

- **Corporate Scrutiny – No**
- **Executive – No**
- **Shadow Scrutiny 26 November 2018**
- **Full Council – 11 December 2018**

Reporting Frequency: One Off

Contact Officers:

Penny James
Emily Collacott
Chris Gage



Transformation Programme
Highlight Report

14th November 2018

Executive Summary

Programme Status Report

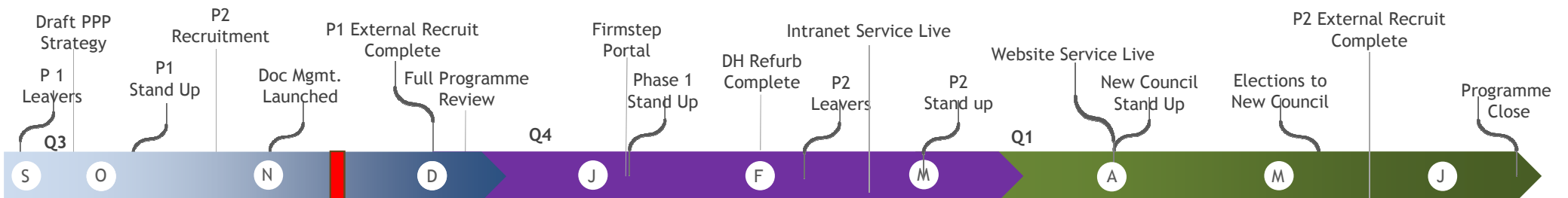
Programme Name	One Council Transformation
Senior Responsible Owner	Penny James
Programme Manager	Christopher Gage
Target Programme Completion	30/06/2019

Programme Cost	
Baseline Cost Transformation	(Accom) £7.1m (£7.5m)
Forecast Cost Transformation	(Accom) £9.5m (£7.5m)
% Spent To Date	49% (76%)
Transformation ROI	
Baseline	2.29 Years
Current	2.7 Years

Programme Status		
Benefit Delivery	Current Report	Previous Report
Saving >£3m/yr.	On Target	N/A
ROI <3 years	On Target	N/A
HL Business Case	On Target	N/A
Programme Delivery		
Resource	At Risk	N/A
Time	On Target	N/A
Cost	Off Target	N/A
Quality	On Target	N/A

Open Risks	
1 High	7 Med
12 Low	72 Complete
Overall Progress	
50%	
Process Redesign	42%
People & Change	55%
Accommodation	70%
New Council	42%
Technology	42%

Milestones



Chief Executive, BAU & Programme Commentary

Chief Executive	Commentary
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Redundancy Costs

My commentary in the September Scrutiny report made it clear that redundancy costs remained the key risk. At that point in time we had a picture of those in Phase 1 opting for voluntary redundancy (VR). We have now completed recruitment into Phase 1 (P1). In addition, we now have data for those in Phase 2 (P2) (the rest of the organisation) opting for voluntary redundancy. We have also completed recruitment to CIC (Commercial Investment and Change).

The original Business Case did not include the DLO workforce. However, it became quickly clear that to leave them wholly outside of transformation was wrong. Including them, and, redesigning the role as Localities Champions, gave us both an opportunity to drive the localities agenda further and to also ensure all colleagues embraced the Behaviour Framework and design principles especially around customer. The added benefits we're exploiting by taking this decision are:

- Applying trade and practical knowledge and expertise in the direct delivery of tasks to maintain/repair property, the environment and support people.
- Supporting customers with wider council enquiries and being a wider champion for the areas and people they are looking after.
- Enabling and encouraging customers to shift channels and self serve.

We now know 32 people (22.85 %) opted for redundancy in P1 and 121 people (24.25%) in P2. This number may increase as we continue recruitment to P2 if colleagues do not secure a role. The Business Case was predicated on an estimated saving equivalent to 23% of staff costs. In total approximately 23.9% of staff have opted for voluntary redundancy (VR). The Business Case included an estimate of £3 million to fund redundancies excluding the DLO workforce.

The redundancy cost attributable to the DLO is currently estimated at £798K. It is suggested that this cost is recovered on the same basis as the original Business Case of 2.29 Years. This requires annual saving of £348K and this will be achieved by reducing the number of Locality Champions recruited by 13. Whilst the Consultation Document shows approx. 150 Locality Champions on varying grades our financial model allows for approx. 167. Therefore the outcome can be delivered in line with the consultation document whilst meeting the additional savings target. The total savings target for the business case would be revised to £3.5m with a net pay back period of 2.7 years which is still regarded as acceptable in terms of value for money.

The revised estimate for total redundancy costs (excluding the DLO) is £4.48 million. The original Business Case included an average cost of redundancy of £25k. In reality this has proven to be £34k (excluding DLO). This has driven up the overall cost of redundancies. We are unable to restrict who takes or is made redundant and there was always a risk that this cost would increase.

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Chief Executive Commentary (Cont.)

Chief Executive	Commentary
	<p>The Section 151 Officer and Transformation Principal Accountant have worked with me to put together a funding plan for these additional costs. The total required will cover the known costs plus a revised estimate for those costs that won't entirely crystallise until recruitment is completed by the end of Feb 2019. The Plan is detailed in the Finance update. Additional budget approvals will be required by the two individual councils.</p> <p>Other costs and financial impacts</p> <p>There are also small increases in other programme costs. In addition, the timing of savings / transition costs during 2018/19 financial year means that whilst the year savings are broadly achieved in the design of the organisation, when taking into account transition costs to keep the 'business as usual' service capacity at acceptable levels there is a need for additional one-off funding.</p> <p>Recruitment</p> <p>Commercial, Investment and Change (CIC) has been recruited too and the structure chart annotated with the successful candidates is reproduced at Appendix 1. Recruitment of Specialists is the next step followed by Customer Champion and Case management Leads, then Case Managers and lastly Locality Champions.</p> <p>Transition</p> <p>The Heads of Function are working very closely with the Transformation Team to prepare for transition and implementation to our new model.</p> <p>Programme Sponsorship</p> <p>CIC will be the function responsible for business change in the future. Now that James Barraha has recruited to this team and as we move into transition and implementation it makes sense for him to now take on the Programme Sponsorship role.</p>



Business As Usual Commentary

Director of Operations	Commentary
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My commentary in September made it clear there would be an impact on service delivery during the implementation of our change programme. It reminded Councillors why capacity would be stretched during this period, and that this may mean re-phasing of work, stopping non-essential activity, or a temporary dip in performance.

Since the last update, the priority tasks have been:-

- **Managing the impact of the Phase 1 recruitment decisions.** We know that 24 people left the organisation at the end of September (and a further 9 Phase 1 posts will go later), and 59 people secured new roles. For both - the priority within BAU has been to understand their “old role” activity and identify true essential and priority tasks. These have been allocated to new temporary homes to allow these staff to take up their new roles (or leave the organisation). Some staff have started new roles in October, with the majority starting in December. The mapping of essential work to temporary homes, allocation of temp time management responsibilities and temp budget and health and safety responsibilities has been complex. To assist Councillors navigate the organisation during this transition phase, we have extended the “Member Case Management” pilot project until the end of February - and Dianne Blackmore will be the initial port of call for any queries.
- **Reviewing the List of Staff Choosing To Leave In Phase 2.** We have over 121 staff choosing to leave the organisation in phase 2. Their final date with the organisation varies - with the majority finishing at the end of February 2019. To ensure the impact of this is managed, we are currently looking at how their essential work will be covered for the short period between them leaving and the entire new model being populated.
- **Phase 2 Recruitment.** The first section of phase 2 (Commercial, Investment and Change) has now largely completed internal recruitment, with 21 staff securing roles in this area. We now need to plan the handover of their existing work as they move to take on their new responsibilities.
- **Extensions & Risk Areas.** There are some services that need additional capacity - on a temporary basis - beyond the end of February (eg there will still be 2 sets of Statements of Accounts to produce and support through external audit). We are currently putting arrangements in place to ensure these areas have sufficient capacity (on a temporary basis) to fulfil their essential tasks.

We continue to monitor high priority areas on a regular basis (collection of income, planning performance, support to vulnerable) and are managing any key vacancies by using agency resource. This continues to be a challenge in some areas as there is a national difficulty in sourcing some key specialist skill areas (e.g. Planning / Housing Options).

Staff are working extremely hard to keep services operating, in challenging circumstances. I am sure Councillors recognise this and continue to offer their support as we move into the largest phase of change in our programme.



Programme Commentary

Programme Manager	Commentary
	<p>Progress Since September Report</p> <p>Progress to date has been good with all work-streams delivering their key milestones despite a busy period of annual leave, interviewing and staff preparation for interviews. A test manager responsible for End to End testing of the Process Redesign & Technology Outputs was appointed this October and found the first 10 Outputs failed quality requirements required for day 1 readiness. The root cause was found to be based on reader accessibility. Based on these findings feedback has been given to the business analysts to prevent future noncompliance and continue with our right first time methodologies.</p> <p>A key outcome from the programme this month sits with initial benefits realisation. The Accommodation work-stream has successfully handed-over part of the Deane house to be occupied by the Police from December.</p> <p>Programme planning in the lead up to Christmas is two-fold; the first goal is to complete the Transition Plan. The programme needs to know when the Heads of Function are able to implement the capabilities delivered by each programme work-stream into the new organisation.</p> <p>Once the Transition Plan is established a Training plan can be developed to prepare staff throughout Q1 2019 in line with the new capabilities and ways of working.</p> <p>Following the September report recommendation to aid cost transparency the New Council Implementation budget will be included in the baseline programme cost dashboard (£6.81M to £7.1M). The ROI payback period for the programme has increased from the 2.3 years to 2.7 years (£9.528m/£3.5m).</p> <p>The forecast expenditure across 2 workstreams (Tech, People and Change) has increased with a total overspend of 0.9% compared to the original budget. This is however within the estimated overspend margins quoted in the September report (0.8-2%) which accounts for worst-case scenarios and risk budgeting.</p> <p>Risk mitigation has been a key focus of the programme which has successfully mitigated the strategic risk from the September Report. The latest strategic risk identified relate to potential gaps in personnel upon completion of interviews as well as risks found at the programme level. These risks assessed at programme level have been assessed as Amber and are continually being monitored.</p>

Programme Finances (£'000's)

As referred earlier in this report, we can now report with sufficient confidence an update on the projected programme costs. In particular the estimated costs of redundancy for staff exceeds the original business case estimates.

Financials (£'000's)					
Work Stream	Original Budget	Revised Budget	Actual to date	Current Forecast Total Spend	Variance to Revised Budget
Programme Management	1,244	1,186	859	1,185	(1)
People and Change	631	678	490	716	38
Customer Focus and Process Redesign	645	569	223	569	0
Technology	1,292	1,297	567	1,397	100
Redundancy	3,000	3,030	1,248	4,482	1,452
Redundancy - DLO workforce	-	-	-	798	798
Transformation Sub-Total	6,812	6,760	3,387	9,147	2,387
New Council	329	381	134	381	0
Total (inc New Council)	7,141	7,141	3,521	9,528	2,387
Accommodation	7,517	7,517	5,718	7,517	0

Programme Finances (£'000's)

The previous page reports an additional funding requirement for the transformation programme costs. The following table shows the recommended funding for these, allocated in proportion to existing cost sharing of programme costs (WSC 17%; TDBC GF 56%; TDBC HRA 27%). Allocations from reserves will require Council approval. Allocation of in year underspend may be approved by portfolio holders using delegated powers, but will be included in the request to Council for completeness.

Variance (£'000's)	Variance Analysed by Fund (£'000's)			
	Work Stream	WSC GF	TDBC GF	TDBC HRA
Total Transformation Programme	507	1,277	603	2,387
Funded by:				
BRR Smoothing Reserve (Pooling Gain)	0	114	0	114
General Reserves	174	335	356	865
Earmarked Reserve (SWONE exit funding provision retained for redundancy risk)	0	176	0	176
Reprioritised Earmarked Reserves	309	652	75	1,036
Allocate in year budget underspend	24	0	172	196
Transformation Total	507	1,277	603	2,387



BAU Finances (£'000's)

The commitment to maintaining service provision at acceptable levels during the transition period, the phasing of recruitment, and maintain support and service resilience for a short period after the new structure is 'live' requires additional funding. For example, we still need to produce two sets of accounts to produce and support through audit after the new single council structure is in place. It is recommended that these costs are funded through a combination of in year underspend and business rates pooling gain.

Transitional costs (£'000's)		Analysed by Fund (£'000's)			
Work Stream	WSC GF	TDBC GF	TDBC HRA	Total Variance	
Transition costs - post go live	85	287	143	515	
Transition costs - service capacity and phased recruitment	36	99	35	170	
Total	121	386	178	685	
Funded by:					
Allocate in year budget underspend	121	0	178	299	
BRR Smoothing Reserve (Pooling Gain)	0	386	0	386	
Total Funding	121	386	178	685	



Recommendations

Recommendations for Somerset West and Taunton Shadow Scrutiny:

- 1) Note the progress made in respect of (a) transformation programme overall, (b) business as usual, and (c) preparation for single new council implementation.
- 2) Note the position in terms of transformation, transition costs, and support recommendations to Taunton Deane and West Somerset Full Councils in respect of proposed additional funding allocations.
- 3) To support the proposed increase of the annual savings target by £348k to £3.5m.
- 4) Note that increased savings will make a positive contribution to the new Council Medium Term Financial Plan.

Proposed recommendations for Taunton Deane Borough Council:

- 1) Note an increase to the Transformation Programme Budget of £2.387m. Approve funding of £1.277m for TDBC General Fund and £603k for TDBC HRA. Note £507k to be funded by West Somerset Council General Fund.
- 2) Note an increase to service budgets for transitional costs totalling £685k. Approve funding of £386k for TDBC General Fund and £178k for TDBC HRA. Note £121k to be funded by West Somerset Council General Fund.
- 3) To support the proposed increase of the annual savings target by £348k to £3.5m.
- 4) Note the Shadow Executive to consider basis for allocating increased savings target within the new Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan.

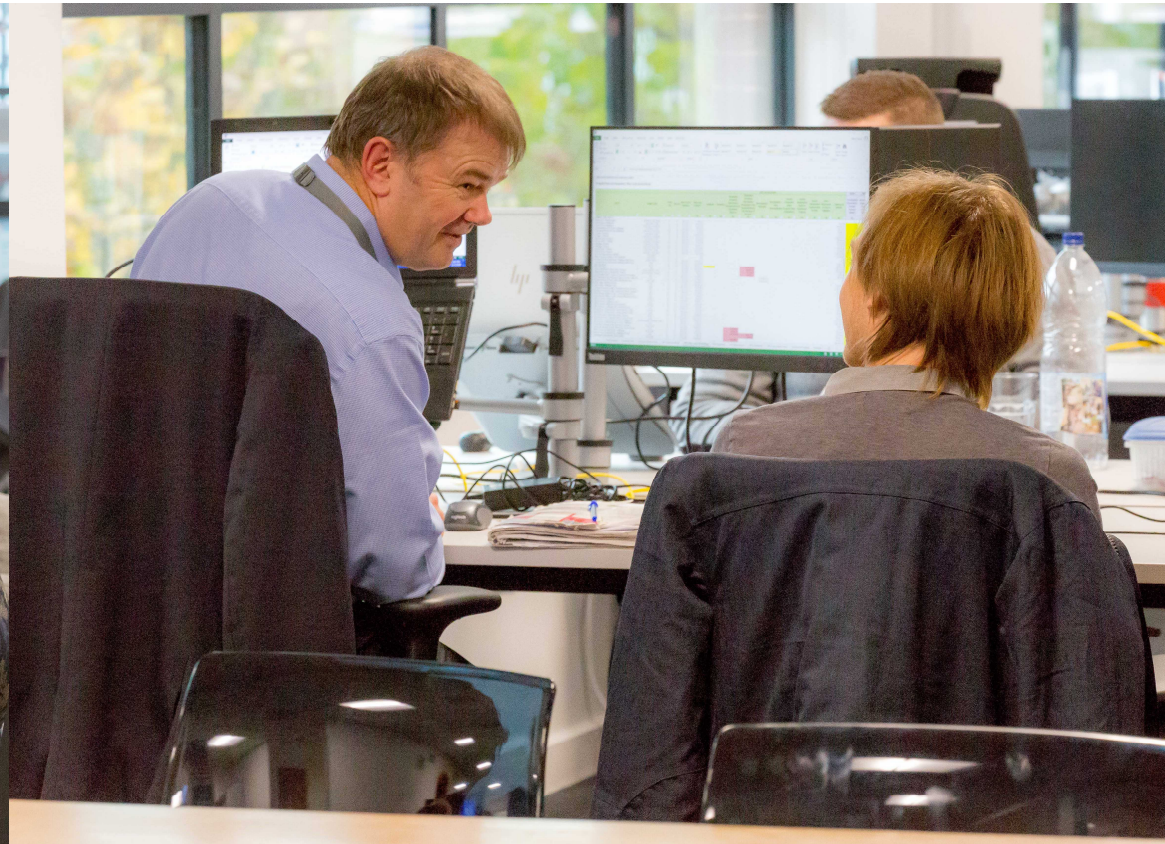
Proposed recommendations for West Somerset Council:

- 1) Note an increase to the Transformation Programme Budget of £2.387m. Approve funding of £507k for West Somerset Council General Fund. Note £1.277m to be funded by TDBC General Fund and £603k by TDBC HRA.
- 2) Note an increase to service budgets for transitional costs totalling £685k. Approve funding of £121k for West Somerset Council General Fund. Note £386k to be funded by TDBC General Fund and £178k by TDBC HRA.
- 3) To support the proposed increase of the annual savings target by £348k to £3.5m.
- 4) Note the Shadow Executive to consider basis for allocating increased savings target within the new Council's Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan.

Programme Top Risks

The below table shows the top RED (R) and Amber (A) risks extracted from the programme risk register. All risk are assigned an owner and actionee who will ensure the risk have an appropriate mitigation plan.

Title	Description	RAG	Path to Green/Closure	Strategic /Pgrm
High volume of staff gaps in new organisation	More Staff are taking VR and there is a risk that we will have more vacancies for case manager/customer/locality roles in the new organisation than expected. There is a risk that we will not have a fully resource organisation on the 1st April.	R	Forecast worst case scenario and build plan, (including resource demands). Breakdown interview plan via area/departments to highlight gaps immediately after interviews completion. Where gaps are known externally recruit as soon as practicable	S
Unbudgeted Redundancy Costs	The budget allowance for Voluntary Redundancies may be exceeded due to the numbers of individuals expressing an interest in accepting the offer of voluntary redundancy.	A	Now that the Phase 2 application deadline has passed we can confirm the total number of people requesting voluntary redundancy and hence calculate the total amount of funds required.	P
Additional Transition Costs	There may be a gap between the new organisation standing up on the 1st of April and when staff exit the organisation 1st March. Between the 1st March and the 1st April there will be a 4-6 week gap before the full channel & demand shift will occur.	A	Heads of Function to determine the gaps based on their activity and transition tracker. Assessment to be made based non essential activity (paused/stop) and if we will need additional staff to maintain the organisation.	P
SharePoint Platform	Our planned approach of building an on-premise SharePoint DMS is looking incorrect - our external SharePoint consultant has advised that we would waste significant time and money building an on-premise version based on already out-of-date technology. He advised that we should adopt SharePoint online (as part of a move to Office 365). There is therefore a risk that the timing of the SharePoint DMS build will need to be moved to later in 2019.	A	The DMS plan incorporates a 'Transition Drive' as an interim solution prior to migrating data to SharePoint. To enable the move to Office 365 this stage will be lengthened.	P
Scheduling of end to end testing	End to end testing of all the component parts brought together, i.e. new website, new intranet, Firmstep Portals - Service, Self and Dash; Firmstep self-serve forms, workflows, integrations with back office systems. All of this testing will require significant investment in resource and time to complete properly, but will come at a time in the programme where it is already extremely busy - from January onwards. Politically and reputationally it is important to get right..	A	Introduce a testing Identify a Test Manager to lead and co-ordinate activities? Revisit the plan to see when end to end testing could begin. Bring forward the delivery of as many products as possible in order for testing to start at the earliest opportunity. Test and release Firmstep products in batches over a period of time rather than in one go in April 2019.	P



New Council
Highlight Report
14th November 2018



New Council Workstream Lead Commentary

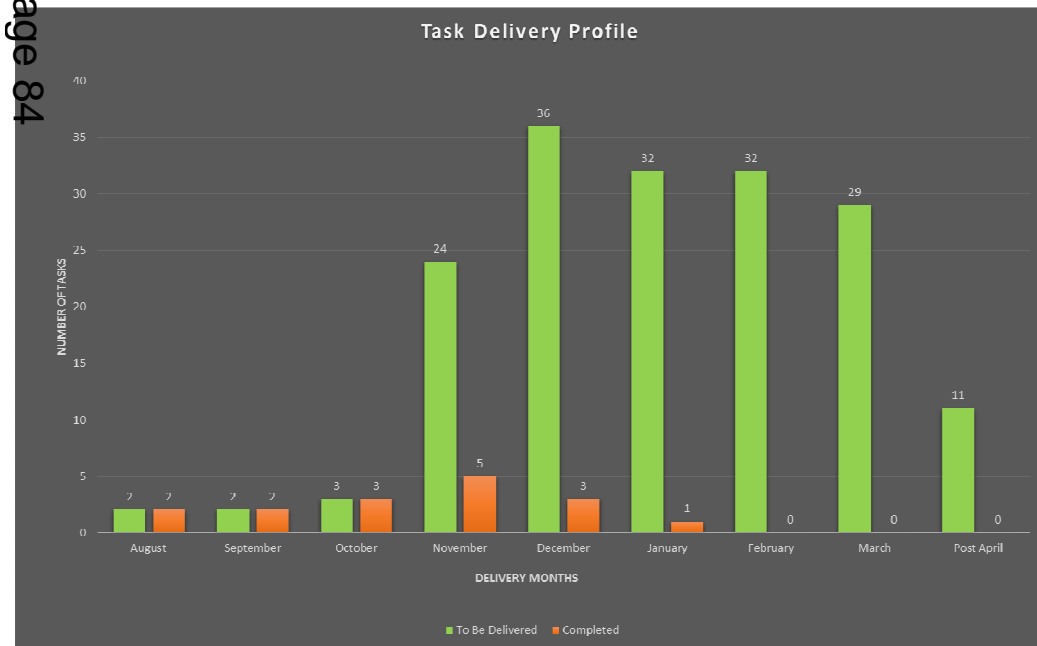
Workstream Lead	Commentary
	<p>Since the last report there has been progress in a number of areas.</p> <p>Firstly, the Somerset West and Taunton Implementation Plan was approved by the Shadow Council at its October meeting. A commitment has been made to share progress with Shadow Scrutiny on a monthly basis.</p> <p>The Boundary Commission warding review recommendations were published and shared with Members at the end of last month. Subject to parliamentary approval Somerset West and Taunton Council will be made up of 59 elected members. This is a key piece of work, essential to planning for the May 2019 elections, the next key milestone for which is the publication of the combined electoral register in February.</p> <p>Work on developing the Constitution has commenced with the first two parts of new constitution having been reviewed by the Constitution Sub-group of the New Council Member Working Group. Further parts will follow, as per an agreed schedule, with approval by Shadow Council anticipated in late March.</p> <p>There has also been positive news regarding the three consequential orders which we have been working with the Ministry of Housing Local Government and Communities (MHCLG) and the other ‘merging’ councils to develop. The General order which deals with the transfer of assets, liabilities, decisions, orders etc. was made by the Minister, laid on 2 November and will come into force on 26 November. SHAPE legal will be creating an ‘easy read’ guide to the order that we will share.</p> <p>The first draft of Finance order has been received from MHCLG. This primarily provides the rules around Council Tax equalisation. On 6 November we attended a meeting with MHCLG and the other ‘merging’ councils to review this draft. Further meetings are planned.</p> <p>Regarding the place-specific order we have submitted details of the areas we believe need covering within the order. The other councils have done likewise. However, unlike the other two orders, which cover all of the ‘merging councils’ this order will be unique to each new council. MHCLG lawyers are currently reviewing the potential content. We anticipate receiving a first draft shortly.</p> <p>Finally, there has been progress on closing actions within the Implementation Plan. 16 Actions are now completed. There has also been an increase in the number of actions that have commenced. Whilst there are many yet to start, in most instances these have a known dependency (e.g. branding being agreed) or cannot start yet (e.g. closure of the accounts) so are not cause for particular concern at this point.</p>

Somerset West and Taunton Council - Implementation Plan Summary

Implementation Plan Actions			
Not Started	In Progress	Completed	Total
82	73	16	171
48%	43%	9%	100%

Highlights this month
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation Plan approved by Shadow Council; 2. Boundary commission review recommendations published; 3. First two parts of new constitution reviewed by Constitution Sub-group; 4. Final draft of General order received from MHCLG; 5. First draft of Finance order received from MHCLG; 6. Meeting held with MHCLG and other 'merging' authorities re Finance order.

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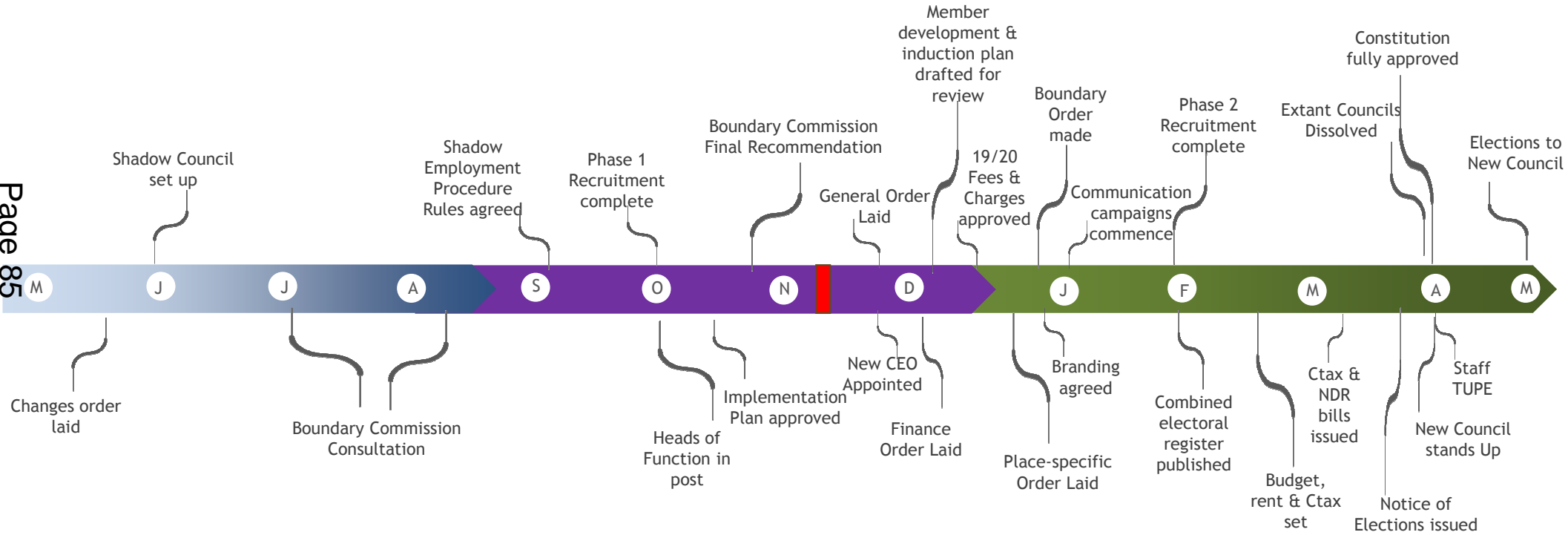


Risks and Issues
<p>Risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Dependencies on third parties (e.g. Government departments, technology providers, banks), causes delay beyond our control. <p>Issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Practicalities for decision making between 1 Apr and May 19; A Delay in finalising consequential orders; A Movement of staff within, and exiting, the council and their capacity.

New Council Cost			
Baseline Cost £329,000	Forecast Cost £381,000*	% Spent To Date 38%	*Variance relates to legal costs to ensure safe delivery of new council 14

Somerset West and Taunton Council Implementation - Critical Path

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Outcome From CIC Recruitment

Head of Commercial, Investment and Change
James Barrah

1 x Commercial
Manager
External Recruitment
from Nov 2018

3 x Programme Manager
Chris Gage (until June 2019)
Richard Wiseman
Joe Wharton

2 x Specialist -
Commercial
Investment
External Recruitment
from Nov 2018

8 x Case Manager
Richard Brown
Robert Downes
Natalie Kirbyshire
Sharon Kelly
Joanne O'Hara
Matthew Parr
Sue Tomlinson
Rosie Walsh

6 x Case Manager
Tsveta Atanasova
Chris Beswick
Mary Brice
Barry Hawkins
Jack Johnston
Marta Yeo

3 x Business Analyst
Sam Crowther
Kasia Hernik
Mark Hill

2 x Case Manager - PMO Support

Michelle Hall
Alistair Lang



Appendix

Organisational Structure	 Org Structure Update November

Appendix B

Planned use of Earmarked Reserves

	WSC	TDBC GF	TDBC HRA	Total
	£	£	£	£
Funding Requirement from Earmarked Reserves	309,320	652,000	75,000	1,036,320
WSC:				
Sustainability Reserve	200,000			200,000
Non-District Elections Reserve	13,536			13,536
Individual Electoral Registration Grant	6,437			6,437
CCTV (2013/14 underspend)	1,565			1,565
Assets of Community Value contingency	5,000			5,000
Planning policy (WSC local plan provision)	35,000			35,000
Business Support Grant	5,677			5,677
Publicly funded burials contingency	4,081			4,081
Planning advice contingency	20,000			20,000
Revs and Bens software	18,024			18,024
TDBC GF:				
Asset Management - Leisure		50,000		50,000
Asset Strategy		33,175		33,175
Debt recovery resources contingency		30,551		30,551
DLO trading reserve		21,136		21,136
Ec Dev Initiatives (BR Pooling Gain)		50,000		50,000
Mortgage repossessions contingency		10,378		10,378
Individual Electoral Registration Grant		45,913		45,913
Self Insurance Fund		285,404		285,404
Land charges surplus/deficit account		30,000		30,000
Planning policy (TDBC local plan provision)		60,000		60,000
Travel Plan		35,443		35,443
TDBC HRA:				
HRA Capital Financing Reserve			75,000	75,000
TOTALS	309,320	652,000	75,000	1,036,320

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 11 December 2018

Confirmation of Appointment of Joint Chief Executive

This matter is the responsibility of the Leader of the Council, Councillor John Williams

Report Author: Bruce Lang, Assistant Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 In the light of the decision of the Shadow Council to appoint a new Chief Executive designate with effect from 1 January 2019, this report is to enable the Council to regularise the position and formally appoint James Hassett as the Joint Chief Executive for the Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council with effect from 1 January 2019.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 To confirm the appointment of James Hassett as Chief Executive (including being Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer, Electoral Registration Officer and a Core Member of the Central Implementation Team) for Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council with effect from 1 January 2019.

3 Risk Assessment

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Risk: A potential lack of clarity over the hand-over arrangements following the appointment of the new Chief Executive by the Shadow Council.	3	5	15
<i>Mitigation: The mitigations for this are the proposals as set out in the report</i>	1	5	5

Risk Scoring Matrix

Like liho	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
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	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				

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 same 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%

4 Background and Full details of the Report

4.1 At the meeting of the Shadow Council held on 19 November 2018, it was agreed to appoint James Hassett as the Chief Executive Designate for the Somerset West and Taunton Council with effect from 1 January 2019 and as the permanent new Chief Executive of the new Council with effect from 1 April 2018. The link to the relevant report to the Shadow Council is provided below:

<https://www.westsomersetonline.gov.uk/getattachment/Council---Democracy/Council-Meetings/Shadow-Council-Meetings/Special-Shadow-Council---19-November-2018/Special-Shadow-Council-19-11-2018-.pdf.aspx>

4.2 This decision, by virtue of the provisions of the Local Government (Boundary Changes) Regulations 2018, determined that the current Chief Executive shall be treated as being dismissed by reason of redundancy.

4.3 It had always been the intention to try to facilitate the earliest start possible for any new Chief Executive to prepare for the establishment of the new Council with

effect from 1 April 2019 and arrangements have therefore been put in place for the new Chief Executive to take up full powers with effect from 1 January 2019. The current post-holder has therefore been given notice that their employment will cease with effect from 28th February, 2019.

- 4.4 Given that the Shadow Council does not have the powers to appoint staff to the extant authorities, for clarity and to ensure a smooth handover, as well as to be legally compliant, both Taunton Deane Borough Council and West Somerset Council will need to formally appoint James Hassett as their Joint Chief Executive with effect from 1 January 2019 as recommended in this report.

5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 5.1 The Councils are currently developing their corporate priorities in preparation for the New Council standing up in April 2019. The work to date has developed priorities focussing on the 3Ps – People, Place and Prosperity. The early installation of the new Chief Executive is vitally important in maintaining the work of the current post-holder in continuing to shape and direct the organisation to deliver the outputs and outcomes and intent to reflect the corporate priorities.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 The proposed arrangements provide the shortest overlap period in the circumstances to allow the earliest possible start for the new post-holder and thereby minimising costs.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 These are covered in Section 4 of the report.

8 Environmental Impact, Safeguarding and/or Community Safety, Equality and Diversity, Social Value, Partnership, Health and Wellbeing, Asset Management, Data Protection, and Consultation Implications

- 8.1 None in respect of this report.

Democratic Path: Full Council – 11 December 2018

Reporting Frequency: Once only

Contact Officers

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Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 11 December 2018

Approval of Redundancy (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 John Williams and Councillor Andy Sully, Portfolio Holder for Resources.

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report is requesting Council to approve the redundancy of the ICT and Information 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 Councils HR policies where severance costs exceed £100,000 per case.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Council approve the redundancy of the ICT and Information Manager with effect from 30 April 2019 in accordance with the financial details set out in the Confidential Appendix A.

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.	2	3	6
<i>Mitigation: These redundancy requests are within budget and are applying the appropriate policies of the Council and Regulations relating to the Local Government Pension Scheme</i>	1	3	3

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 redundancy of the ICT and Information Manager as at 30 April 2019.
- 4.2 There is a requirement for these redundancies to be approved by Full Council as the 2018/2019 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 Confidential Appendix A.

5 Business Continuity

- 5.1 Although the new structure created through transformation will come into effect at the end of February 2019 there is a requirement to retain the services of this employee until the 30 April 2019 to ensure that the significant risks associated with the IT Service can be managed appropriately.

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 Full Council's approved funding for the "High Level Business Case – Transformation" in 2016 (TDBC on 26 July 2016 and WSC on 07 September 2016) which included an allowance for estimated termination costs of £3m (WSC: £493k; TDBC General Fund: £1,673k, TDBC Housing Revenue Account: £834k). The overall costs regarding redundancy for the Transformation Programme are expected to exceed this budget. A separate report recommending the funding of £2.387m (WSC: £507k; TDBC General Fund: £1,277k, TDBC Housing Revenue Account: £603k) for the Transformation Programme is also being considered by this Full Council meeting. The total cost for this post is within the revised budget estimates.
- 7.2 The payback period is 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 for the Councils, both when considered in isolation and for the business case overall. The finance details are set out in the confidential Appendix A. If approved the costs will be 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.
- 7.3 Should this redundancy not be approved then the annual cost of retaining the post is shown within the confidential appendix, 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 holder. The savings target per the Business Case is already incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Plans for the two Councils, 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 these specific proposals to be considered by Members.
- 8.3 All other requests for redundancy have been considered against and accord with Council policies. Individually and together they pay 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 being monitored for equality purposes so that any equality impacts can be considered.

11.2 There are no equality issues arising from 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**
- **Full Council – 11 December 2018**

Reporting Frequency: One Off

Contact Officer

Name	Martin Griffin
Direct Dial	
Email	m.griffin@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Council Meeting – 11 December 2018

Report of Councillor John Williams – Leader of the Council

1. Chief Executive Designate

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Special Shadow Council on 19 November 2018, the appointment of James Hassett as Chief Executive Designate (including being Head of the Paid Service, Returning Officer, Electoral Registration Officer and a Core Member of the Central Implementation Team) for the Somerset West and Taunton Council was agreed with effect from 1 January 2019 and that he be confirmed as the new permanent Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service, Returning Officer, Electoral Registration Officer and a Core Member of the Central Implementation Team for the Somerset West and Taunton Council from 1 April, 2019.
- 1.2 On behalf of the Council I offer a warm welcome to James and we look forward to him taking up his post in the New Year.

2. New Council

- 2.1 Good progress is being made on preparations for the new Council which comes into being in April 2019.
- 2.2 The Boundary Commission's Warding Review recommendations have been published and, subject to Parliamentary approval, Somerset West and Taunton Council will be made up of 59 elected members. This a key milestone, essential to planning for the May 2019 elections.
- 2.3 Further constitutional orders are progressing through the system with the Ministry of Housing Local Government and Communities (MHCLG).

3. New Chair – Taunton Strategic Advisory Board

- 3.1 On 5 November Greg Saunders was appointed as the new Chair of the Taunton Strategic Advisory Board following an interview process.
- 3.2 Greg is a Commercial Dispute Resolution Partner, Notary Public and Accredited Mediator at Clarke Willmott. He is also Chairman of Somerset Chamber of Commerce and sits on other charitable and private company boards. After his appointment was confirmed he said: *"I am delighted to accept this position. I am passionate about Somerset and Taunton especially. It is home for my young family and I will do everything I can to offer guidance and support with the help of the Board to enable Taunton to go from strength to strength. I feel like these are incredibly exciting times with*

Garden Town status being announced and other initiatives ready to go and if we all work together we can deliver a vision to be immensely proud of.”

- 3.3 I welcome Greg as I am sure as an independent Chairman and his private sector experience he will contribute greatly towards the development and regeneration of Taunton and area.

4. Proposed Dualling of the A358 - Progress

- 4.1 The project team at Highways England are still undertaking assessment work around the route options for the proposed dualling of the A358 through Taunton Deane. I am advised that when they have completed this, they will need to gain formal approval before they can announce the preferred route. Highways England have stated that they hope to have an update on the timeline for the announcement shortly, which when pressed, they explained meant in the next few weeks. Based on conversations officers have had with Highways England, I would expect that the preferred route announcement date will now be in December towards the end of this year.
- 4.2 It has always been the intention that as soon as the preferred route has been announced, Highways England will proceed to formalise and inaugurate the ‘Community Liaison Forum’, which will help shape and influence decisions relating to the preferred route. This is now not expected to begin sitting until the New Year.
- 4.3 Meanwhile, Highways England have reached the Preliminary Meeting stage for the equivalent proposal for dualling of the A358/A303 within the South Somerset District Council area. This project has always been ahead of the stretch of the road running through Taunton Deane Borough Council’s jurisdiction. The purpose of the Preliminary Meeting is to discuss the examination procedure and enable views to be put to The Planning Inspectorate about the way in which the application is to be examined, not the merits of the application itself. Officers have agreed that this Council should take a watching brief at this stage. However, agreement has been reached with officers at South Somerset about joint co-operation on the two projects with a view to pooling knowledge and resources.

5. Refurbishment of The Deane House

- 5.1 Our Phase 2 works on the first floor were completed at the beginning of October 2018. We now occupy all three newly refurbished wings, with open plan working, hot desking and flexible meeting space. Everyone has settled in well and the heating issues are now fully resolved.
- 5.2 The Avon and Somerset Police (ASP) area on the ground floor of The Deane House reached sectional completion on Friday, 9 November 2018. Taunton Deane granted early access rights to ASP from Monday, 19 November 2018

for them to install furniture and IT kit. Lease completion is planned for Friday, 7 December 2018 and we will start receiving income from ASP in March 2019.

- 5.3 Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) have been marketing the available space at The Deane House and are having good discussions with various potential tenants, including serviced office providers.
- 5.4 Work on our new second lift continues from next week and as soon as it is complete Midas will start work on the existing lift, which will be completely replaced.
- 5.5 The John Meikle Room and Committee Rooms 1 and 2 are currently being refurbished and are scheduled to be completed during mid to end of February 2019, which means our Council meetings will return to The Deane House from March.
- 5.6 From the 14 point plan for Employment and Skills Plan (ESP), Midas have just two items to complete – (1) 'Work Placement Age 16+' which will be completed by Christmas as they have students due to join them for a week in December 2018 from Taunton and Bridgwater College and (2) 'Graduate' to have worked on the project, which unfortunately they will not achieve as they do not currently have any within the local business. They have over achieved in 10 of the 14 points which will in the view of the Construction Industry Training Board make up for the one which they are unable to do.
- 5.7 My sincere thanks to all staff for their resilience and fortitude when being relocated around the building as work progressed and for some uncomfortable days before the heating was operational. Your commitment was incredible... thank you all.

6. Retail Relief – Guidance from the Government

- 6.1 In the budget announced recently I am pleased to note some further help for businesses, as below, was announced. I can confirm that work has started to identify those businesses that may qualify in accordance with the following guidance.
- 6.2 The Government has announced a new relief scheme for retail properties that have a rateable value of below £51,000. Under the scheme, eligible ratepayers will receive a one third discount of their daily chargeable amount. The definition of retail properties will follow that adopted from the previous Retail Relief Scheme in 2014/2015 and 2015/2016.
- 6.3 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government plans to publish guidance on the operation of the relief scheme for retail shortly. However, local authorities should begin preparations for implementation on the basis of the definition of retail in the previous Retail Relief Scheme. The relief will have effect for 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 and should be applied from the start of the billing cycle. State aid rules will apply to the retail relief in the normal way.

- 6.4 Local authorities will be expected to use their Discretionary Relief powers (under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, as amended) to grant this new relief for retail properties in line with the relevant eligibility criteria. They will be compensated for the cost of granting the relief through a Section 31 Grant from the Government. No new legislation will be required to deliver the scheme.
- 6.5 We are working at present on the basis of existing guidance and the full guidance setting out the terms of this relief have yet to be issued so the advice, as above, has to be conditional until details are received and we are in a position to better understand these changes.
- 6.6 The important point is that we make all necessary preparations to deliver this relief to eligible businesses in a timely manner.

7. Proposed Development of the Tangier Site, Taunton with 182 New Homes

- 7.1 This site has a long and chequered history and I am pleased to say that that this revised scheme is coming forward to replace the extant permission since pre-2008 for 225 units in total. The current application is for a scheme of 182 units and is going to the Planning Committee for a decision on 5 December 2018 with a recommendation of Conditional Approval subject to a Section 106 Agreement for the implementation of a Travel Plan.
- 7.2 This has been a very complex site to bring forward but with time the issues have been resolved and, if approved, it will be great to see yet another brown field site in a prime position, being developed and delivering much needed homes for Taunton.

Finally, as it is our last Full Council Meeting before Christmas, may I wish all staff and Members a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Councillor John Williams

Council Meeting - 11 December 2018

Report of Councillor Mrs Vivienne Stock-Williams - Sports, Parks and Leisure

Good sports, parks and leisure facilities improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities.

1. Community Leisure

Play and Recreation

1.1 **The following works have been advanced**, since the last report, using either the Council's replacement play equipment budget and/or Section 106 Agreement funding:-

- Comeytrove Park – installation of a log cabin climber. These works are now complete;
- Victoria Park, Taunton - the 7.5 m tower slide has been manufactured and installation works are underway. The Baseball pitch is currently under construction, as is the Beach Volleyball court;
- Blackthorn Gardens - replacement swings;
- Carey Grove, Creech St Michael - Supernova roundabout and balance beam;
- Colman Road, Taunton - replacement flat swings and pod swing;
- Galmington Park, Taunton - replacement slide and multi-unit climbing frame;
- Gillards Close, Rockwell Green - replacement cradle swings;
- Lyngford Park, Taunton - replacement for removed under-5's springy tractor;
- Pyrland Avenue, Taunton - replacement for removed roundabout;
- Redlake Drive, Taunton - gravity bowl and mini nest swing; and
- Taunton Green - four redundant single red, green and blue arch swings have been replaced with a hexagonal swing unit.

Play Equipment Repairs

1.2 Work continues from within the Open Spaces Team on the maintenance of our play equipment stock. All known repairs to our play equipment are currently up-to-date or have the replacement parts on order. As far as is

reasonably practical, works are being carried out whenever possible (spares permitting) to ensure equipment is not out-of-service for longer than is necessary.

Section 106 Agreement Funding for Play, Sport, Allotments and Community Halls

- 1.3 Work continues monitoring housing developments for payment trigger points and assisting communities and organisations with their on-going projects.
- 1.4 Assistance has been offered to Creech St Michael Allotments in deciding on a suitable project for S106 Agreement funding, for which a decision from the allotment committee is awaited.
- 1.5 Stoke Road Allotments, Taunton continue to complete their improvement projects and are drawing down S106 Agreement funding.
- 1.6 West Monkton Village Hall are continuing on their agreed improvement works to the hall.

Capital grant scheme for Voluntary Village Halls, Sports Clubs and Allotments and the Parish Play Area Grant Scheme

- 1.7 The awards made to halls, sports clubs and parish play areas are being drawn down as projects complete. Assistance is being given to potential applicants for projects next year.

Friends of Netherclay (Bishops Hull)

- 1.8 A new group, the Friends of Netherclay, has been formed. Support and advice are being offered to the group as they start out together.

Carols around the Bandstand

- 1.9 The ever popular Carols around the Bandstand are planned to take place during the evening of Monday, 17 December 2018 in Vivary Park, Taunton.

Staffing

- 1.10 My thanks go to Debbie Arscott and Julie Watson for their dedication and unstinting enthusiasm for this community leisure work.

2. GLL (Taunton Deane)

Community Sport and Health

Walk Well in Taunton and Wellington

- 2.1 Six new Walk Leaders attended walk leader training at Blackbrook Leisure Centre and Spa at the beginning of October 2018. They all completed the session and have now started to lead walks in their local communities of Taunton and Wellington.

Escape Pain

- 2.2 Two Healthwise Instructors attended a training workshop for a brand new programme called Escape Pain. The programme is aimed at adults aged 45+ who are experiencing knee or hip pain. This is a six weeks course and attendance at two sessions per week is required. Wellsprings Leisure Centre and Wellington Sports Centre will be launching the programme in January 2019.

Facilities

Wellington Sports Centre

Wacky Wednesday - Wellington

- 2.3 An autumn themed Wacky Wednesday was held at Cades Farm during half term. Over 100 children and their parents attended the session and participated in sports, table tennis, arts and crafts. Police horses were also in attendance and proved a star attraction.
- 2.4 Wacky Wednesdays are supported by Wellington One Team and a number of local partners including GLL, Live West, Reminiscence Learning, Churches Together and the local getset staff.

Wellsprings Leisure Centre

Stand Up to Cancer

- 2.5 Wellsprings Leisure Centre held their Go Orange day on 26 October 2018 and encouraged all of their customers and staff to wear orange to support this fantastic campaign. A total of over £180 was raised.

3. Leisure Procurement Project

- 3.1 The project to secure an Operator for the new leisure contract from August 2019 continues to progress on target.
- 3.2 Following evaluation and moderation of submissions, the Authority decided to reduce the number of bidders to three following the receipt of detailed submissions. We have subsequently conducted Competitive Dialogue (CD) with each operator.
- 3.3 CD involved detailed meetings with each bidder to conclude any final clarification points and legal matters prior to the bidders being invited to develop their Final Tenders.
- 3.4 The Authority has now 'closed dialogue' and has invited bidders to submit their final tenders. These will be evaluated and moderated before Christmas 2018 and a preferred bidder will be identified early in 2019.
- 3.5 The Scrutiny Committee received a detailed report on the progress of the

project in November 2018 and all Councillors received an update via a newsletter shortly after the meeting.

- 3.6 The project remains on target in terms of timescales and in terms of meeting the major objectives of the Authority as set out at the start of the process.

4. Parks and Open Spaces

Staffing

- 4.1 This last quarter has seen Richard Burge take up a new role in the transformed organisation, where he is now responsible for customer contacts. Richard Brown has extended his role as a Project Manager responsible for the refurbishment of The Deane House to include oversight and leadership of the Open Spaces Team.
- 4.2 Transformation will see 18 members of the Open Spaces Team leave their roles: this includes 13 members of the external contracts team who will be taking voluntary redundancy.
- 4.3 Changes have been programmed to the flexi system to deal with the changes in staffing levels. This will mean that the flexi can be taken up to 31 March 2019, which will create capacity as the workforce reduces during this period.
- 4.4 With a view to increasing resilience and broadening knowledge, manager Darren Hill has organised training so that more members of staff can undertake additional tasks. This training has been very well received and further training is planned.
- 4.5 These photographs show some white line training – a key element of marking out school pitches for sports activities:-



Grass Cutting

- 4.6 The 2018 grass cutting season has now ended and the machines are undergoing their annual maintenance programme. The six oldest mowers were returned to the leasing company at the end of October 2018 and their replacements are eagerly anticipated by our Grounds Team in February 2019. The mowers' use in future will be scheduled carefully, so that their wear and tear is equalised.

Winter Planting

- 4.7 Our Parks Team have now planted out all the bulbs and winter bedding plants. The containers in the centres of Taunton and Wellington have also been replanted, brightening the winter scene.

Arboriculture

- 4.8 Both Mark Holloway, specialist Arboriculture Manager, and Simon Garrett, Tree Surgeon, have been welcomed back to the team after a long period of absence.
- 4.9 Arbortrack Limited have been appointed to examine 7,000 of our trees to ensure they are safe. This work will be completed by the end of the year.
- 4.10 The tree surgeons also work in partnership with the Council's Housing Grounds staff - for example, restoring a neglected garden into a safe environment, where it can be handed over to the new tenant to enjoy and maintain.

Langford Lakes Christmas Trees

- 4.11 Our thanks go to the Hendy family at Langford Lakes for the magnificent Christmas trees they have again so generously donated to enhance the centres of both Taunton and Wellington during the Christmas season.

Vivary Park, Taunton

- 4.12 A tree will shortly be planted in Vivary Park in memory of Cyril Rowe, the former Open Spaces Manager who died earlier this year, shortly after he retired. This tree will replace the Whitebeam which was lost in February 2018. It will be planted close to the War Memorial.
- 4.13 The postponed project to desilt the Lake in Vivary Park is now scheduled to take place in the first half of December and will result in a much improved watercourse for wildlife and the public's enjoyment. Any subsequent reinstatement works needed will be undertaken in early 2019.
- 4.14 For safety reasons, the bridge at Wilton Lands has been taken out of action. A temporary bridge has been installed until the work is completed.

Wellington Park

- 4.15 Work is about to start to clear out the rubbish and tidy the pond in Wellington Park.

Comeytrove Park

- 4.16 At the request of the hard working Friends of Comeytrove Park, an advisory notice has been put up at the gated entrance to this area that no vehicles should enter other than emergency vehicles. Two posts have also been installed at the open pedestrian entrance as a further deterrent to unauthorised vehicles damaging the grass.
- 4.17 Daffodil bulbs have been provided by Deane DLO to the Friends to help them further enhance this local haven.
- 4.18 The extensive roadside hedge is being trimmed by our Open Spaces Team before the bird nesting season.
- 4.19 It is very much hoped that the Friends of Comeytrove Park will enter the area into the Green Flag competition in 2019 and they are receiving guidance from our Open Spaces Team to help them achieve this ambition.

Somerset Wood

- 4.20 This memorial wood is being created for future generations to enjoy in memory of the fallen from Somerset who lost their lives in World War One.
- 4.21 The wood will cover 23 acres next to the planned Country Park west of Monkton Heathfield and east of Nerrols Farm, and is an integral part of Taunton's Garden Town status.
- 4.22 It will be planted with about 14,000 broad-leaved trees provided by The Woodland Trust and it is hoped that residents, especially local youngsters, will get involved in planting the trees.

Swains Lane Nature Reserve, Wellington

- 4.23 The hard working volunteer group at Swains Lane Nature Reserve (SLNR) have also received another sack of daffodil bulbs from Deane DLO to help ensure the further enhancement of this delightful area.
- 4.24 It was noticed, at the small ceremony to hand over this year's Green Neighbourhood Flag, that the supporting front beam of SLNR's well used barn was showing signs of movement. Repairs have thus been carried out to ensure it is safe.
- 4.25 Transition Town Wellington held an enthusiastically attended apple pressing afternoon in the barn in October 2018, when everyone who took part in the fun was able to take home a bottle or two of fresh apple juice.

Abandoned Vehicles

- 4.26 During the past 3 months, there have been service reports of 114 abandoned vehicles. These include cars, motorcycles and caravans in both Taunton Deane and West Somerset. Five cars and one caravan were removed and disposed of. The remainder were either removed by the owner or ownership was claimed.

These photographs show a car, caravan and van that have been removed to make areas safer:



5. Property

Station Road Swimming Pool, Taunton

- 5.1 Repairs have been carried out to the exterior wall damaged by a fire started by a rough sleeper. This has enabled the external redecoration of the whole building to take place.

Vivary Park Golf Course, Taunton

- 5.2 Essential tree surgery work has been carried out on the golf course.

Wellington Sports Centre

- 5.3 Tarmac repairs are being carried out in this popular car park.
- 5.4 Extensive work is also being carried out on the exterior of Wellington Sports Centre. Panels are being re-rendered, brickwork repairs and pointing are being executed and the whole outside of the building will then be repainted and refreshed.

Wishing you all a happy and relaxing time at Christmas.

Councillor Vivienne Stock-Williams

Council Meeting – 11 December 2018

Report of Councillor Andrew Sully – Corporate Resources

1. Corporate Performance

1.1 General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) / Data Protection:-

- Work to implement the GDPR Compliance Action plan continues. A recent South West Audit Partnership Audit on post implementation of GDPR has given the Council a reasonable assurance rating although there is still work to be done in order to become fully compliant.
- A new temporary shared Data Protection Officer arrangement with South Somerset District Council is now in place. Jan Gamon (SSDC) will cover this role until April 2019.

1.2 The current Audit Plan for 2018/2019 is showing good progress. The Corporate Governance Officers Group are meeting this month (November 2018) to discuss drafting and agreeing a new Annual Governance Statement (2019/2020) for the new Council. This needs to be signed off by 31 March 2019.

1.3 The Quarter 2 Performance Update will be shared with the Scrutiny Committee in December 2018. Areas of concern are responsiveness to complaints, and the increased number of homelessness applications.

2. Customer Services

2.1 The service continues to look at new ways of supporting our customer contact, and is upskilling both teams to do more in-depth support in key areas.

2.2 Calls are now being shared across West Somerset and Taunton Deane Councils – with the technology allowing calls to be redirected to the larger resourced team in busy times.

2.3 Housing repairs calls and IT Helpdesk calls are now being supported by this team.

2.4 The team are heavily involved in the work to support the content of new website.

2.5 The new Customer Hub in The Deane House is running well and we are continuing to refine the approach.

2.6 We are aware of the challenging resourcing levels in the team and need to keep this under review as we move into the next phase of our Transformation recruitment.

3. Facilities Management (FM)

- 3.1 The FM Team are currently working closely with colleagues within Avon and Somerset Police in the lead up to the Police moving in and being operational on 10 December 2018. An operational Service Level Agreement is soon to be finalised.
- 3.2 Practical operational details for the new Council are well underway and we aim to launch our digital mailroom as part of the Transformational changes.
- 3.3 We will be supporting some policy considerations including 'How we use our buildings in future' and 'Pool Vehicles Policy' to ensure we meet our aspirations of agile working.

4. ICT/Technology

- 4.1 The ICT Team continue to support the delivery of critical 'business as usual' and "Transformation" projects. Current key projects include:-
 - Transformation focussed work:- Firmstep, single security domain, new web site, New Intranet, information management, E5 Finance system, new device roll out, wifi upgrade;
 - Work to support the new Council:- Joint ICT usage policy, software licence transfers; and
 - Business as usual focussed work:- IT Health Check for West Somerset Public Services Network compliance, server patching, 2nd / 3rd line support activities – as well as continuing to provide a responsive "helpdesk" service.

5. Members Case Management

- 5.1 This pilot project has been extended to support Members through to the end of February 2018, when the new structure will take over.
- 5.2 Members are encouraged to contact Dianne Blackmore with any questions they need assistance with (contact details:- D.Blackmore@tauntondeane.gov.uk 01823 785048).
- 5.3 Dianne will find the right person to answer your question, and will chase until resolved. Please make contact if you need help resolving any issue.

6. Human Resources (HR)

- 6.1 The six new apprentices recruited in the last quarter have now started in post and completed their induction and we have also arranged for four of our existing employees to start apprenticeships. The apprentices are based in Building Services and will become: carpenters; plasterers; painters and decorators; plumbers and electricians. They are studying on either two or four year courses and will build the skill base in our workforce for the future. Funding for these courses is from the Apprenticeship Levy.
- 6.2 We continue to support the internal recruitment for the Commercial, Investment and Change function, Specialist posts, the external recruitment of Phase 1 vacancies and the new Chief Executive role. Each appointment then results in changes to the

payroll system and organisational structure together with the issuing of new statements of particulars. Additionally we continue to support unsuccessful candidates with advice on their options as they go through the recruitment process and our leavers.

7. Finance

- 7.1 An updated Medium Term Financial Plan including up to date budgetary assumptions together with the proposed fees and charges for next year will be presented to the forthcoming Shadow Scrutiny and Executive during November and December.
- 7.2 Alongside our continuing financial activities we have continued to support a number of potential capital projects particularly those with a commercial and regeneration aspect including:-
- Firepool Project including new Hotel;
 - Coal Orchard, Taunton;
 - The Collar Factory, Taunton;
 - Somerset Flood Alleviation;
 - Taunton Station Regeneration;
 - The Deane House Accommodation Project; and
 - North Taunton Housing Project.
- 7.3 This work includes updating existing business cases for these capital projects to determine that they are affordable and meet investment criteria. The Finance Team have also continued to be involved in the current Leisure Contract Procurement exercise.
- 7.4 The Finance Team has continued to support the business transformation process and to support the preparation and delivery of financial processes for a new single Council.

8. Revenues and Benefits

Revenues

- 8.1 Capacity issues are impacting on workflows and we are focussing on backlog reduction before the end of the year.
- 8.2 The team will need temporary agency resource to assist and is also upskilling colleagues in Customer Services to support with calls.
- 8.3 Collection Rates are being monitored and we are slightly behind this time last year.

Benefits

- 8.4 The Benefits service is stable and we are now preparing for the end of the financial year.

- 8.5 There are two reports going forward for approval in the very near future – the Council Tax Support Scheme and the Discretionary Payments Scheme.

9. The Mayoralty and Democratic Services

- 9.1 Alongside the Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, The Mayor led the wreath laying at the War Memorial in Vivary Park, Taunton on Remembrance Sunday to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the First World War coming to an end.
- 9.2 This very poignant ceremony was observed by literally hundreds of local residents. It is probably not since the ending of the Second World War in 1945 that such a crowd has attended this event.
- 9.3 As Christmas approaches, the Mayor will be extremely busy attending numerous Carol Concerts – including her own on Thursday, 13 December 2018 at 6.30 p.m. in St Mary Magdalene Church, Taunton – as well as other festive events.
- 9.4 As usual the Mayor will be paying goodwill visits to the emergency services, the hospital and various other organisations during the morning of Christmas Day.

Councillor Andy Sully

Council Meeting – 11 December 2018

Report of Councillor Mrs Jane Warmington - Community Leadership

THINK DIFFERENTLY, DO DIFFERENTLY ~ The strategic vision for Taunton Deane's more disadvantaged areas is that residents lives will improve significantly and that these priority areas will look better, feel safer and in the future place a more proportionate demand on public services. These services are already being delivered differently in our disadvantaged urban areas through co-ordinated, frontline, problem-solving, multiagency one teams providing early help working closely together in the area they serve. Rural parishes with more scattered communities are being helped to access services through community centres and local village agents who identify, signpost and support isolated residents to get the help they need. Urban priority areas need excellent education and health facilities within them if we are to build independence, resilience and raise aspirations in individuals, families and communities to sustain improvements and reduce the need and costs of interventions in the future.

1. Taunton Town Centre

- 1.1 Town centres get busier as Christmas draws near with late night shopping, festive markets, seasonal entertainment, carol singing, school and church carol services, Christmas lights, office parties, free parking (Saturday afternoons in Taunton), excited children and the bustle of people shopping for presents, eating out and buying special food to celebrate with their families on Christmas day.
- 1.2 Not everyone has somewhere to go to at Christmas though and some spend Christmas on their own and a few others with no home rely on the kindness of others and Open Door, Taunton's Day Centre for rough sleepers in Mount Street. Open Door provides meals, showers, laundry and support to rough sleepers and other people at risk throughout the year.
- 1.3 Earlier in the year Avon and Somerset Police and Taunton Deane Borough Council teamed up and launched a diverted giving scheme to help people who are homeless rather than giving to anyone begging on the streets. Funds go directly to Open Door either via the collection box at Taunton Visitor Centre, or by donating online at www.mydonate.bt.com and search for Taunton Open Door, or through the post (or in person) at Taunton Open Door, 1A Mount Street, Taunton, TA1 3QB. Thank you.

2. Street Wardens

- 2.1 People like to feel comfortable and safe especially on dark winter mornings and dark afternoons in the winter. Street wardens have been deployed in Taunton Town Centre to provide reassurance for shoppers and visitors following concerns over rough sleeping and some associated anti-social behaviour. They are well trained, visible and easily identifiable wearing Taunton Deane Borough Council badges.
- 2.2 The wardens are initially working for various day and night shifts in a random working pattern which will focus on key hotspots in the town. They will then operate on a regular daily basis throughout December and cover the traditional late night shopping evenings in the run-up to Christmas.

- 2.3 This complements what we are already doing with others through the coordinated multi-agency Rough Sleeper Team, outreach workers supporting the most vulnerable who find themselves without a permanent home and on the streets of Taunton.
- 2.4 Together the team is able to identify the issues which lie behind rough sleeping and with help from additional Government funding has developed a joined-up Rough Sleeping Reduction Plan to help break the cycle of homelessness, poor mental and physical health and addiction.

3. Rough Sleeping Reduction Plan Overview

3.1 The aim is to reduce the number of people sleeping rough to single figures over this autumn/ winter. This will be achieved by jointly delivering a reduction programme between the enhanced frontline multi-agency rough sleeping [outreach] team now meeting daily supported by Streetwise (the renamed Rough Sleeping One Team) meeting fortnightly. This is underpinned by a grant of £231,000 from central Government which is being used to increase accommodation with prompt enhanced support alongside for homeless people in the district.

3.2 The team are focusing on five key priorities:-

Priority 1 - Early interventions with people from out of area - *to identify and adopt an assertive approach towards people from out of area who are associating with the street community, regardless of their housing status.*

- * Providing assertive homeless prevention advice for those with no local connection;
- * Early identification of people who are not local and in housing need;
- * Early contact and assessment for those identified;
- * Reducing the movement of anyone around services prior to assessment; and
- * Single service offer of reconnection to those without a local connection.

3.3 **Priority 2** - Quick dispersal of rough sleeping sites - *have a low tolerance of the negative impact that hotspot sites and encampments have on the wider community as well as the health and wellbeing of vulnerable rough sleepers.*

- * Having a single point of contact for intelligence gathering;
- * Holding daily briefings for the Rough Sleeping Team;
- * Effectively operating the rough sleeping sites policy and procedures; and
- * Prioritising most influential members of rough sleeping cohorts for interventions.

3.4 **Priority 3** - Reduction of revolving door cases and refusal to engage - *recognise the need for personalised and sustainable offers of housing and support the wishes of our rough sleepers who prefer to wait for the right offer to become available.*

- * Operating an assertive outreach team;
- * Reducing the amount of unsustainable referrals; and
- * Increasing the number of complex cases providers can manage;

3.5 **Priority 4** - Separate services for non-entrenched and entrenched rough sleepers - *services will not inadvertently introduce newly homeless people to an entrenched lifestyle where they are subjected to substance misuse, violence and exploitation.*

- * Providing emergency bed spaces away from a hostel environment;
- * Fast track those approved into independent accommodation;
- * Help people to maximise income and maintain/access employment;
- * Increased speed of response to rough sleeping reports.

3.6 **Priority 5** - A multi-agency approach to tackling Anti-Social Behaviour linked to the rough sleeping community - *we will not tolerate the negative impact street level anti-social behaviour has on the wider community and individual people. The team are committed to working together to promote respect in the community.*

- * Prevention interventions;
- * Setting daily priorities; and
- * Targeting enforcement action on priorities.

3.7 Improvements already made include:-

- The multi-agency Rough Sleeping Team sharing an office in the town centre;
- Daily communication between the Police and Rough Sleeping Team;
- Morning briefings to update the Rough Sleeping Team;
- Increased use of flexible working hours for Rough Sleeping Team members;
- Improving the health and wellbeing of those on the streets through specialist mental health and drug and alcohol support (dual diagnosis);
- Providing personalised housing and support plans;
- Identifying exact needs regarding accommodation type and supervision;
- Considering a person's wishes if they want to wait longer for the right option;
- Making planned offers of realistic and sustainable accommodation and using the flexible budget to help with right options;
- Four long term rough sleepers into housing each with an individual support package; and
- Fortnightly oversight through Streetwise (the renamed Rough Sleepers One Team of managers to differentiate between the operational Rough Sleeping Team).

3.8 Key partners making up the frontline Rough Sleeping Team are:-

- Taunton Deane Borough Council - Rough Sleeping Coordinator; Streetwise Coordinator; Reconnections Officer; and Parks and Open Spaces Manager;
- ARC (formally Taunton Association for the Homeless) - three outreach workers;
- Community Mental Health Team (CMHT) - dual diagnosis team;
- Somerset Drugs and Alcohol Service (SDAS) - additional outreach worker;
- YMCA Coast - No First Night Out officer;
- Avon and Somerset Police - town centre team; and
- Open Door - service manager and staff team.

3.9 Preventing homelessness is also a part of this whilst finding solutions with the right support to ease those back into housing and help them to sustain this and turn their lives around.

4. Streetwise Rough Sleepers Night Cafe

- 4.1 Agencies across Taunton have come together for a week of action during the first week in December in support of the rough sleeping community in the town. There is much to celebrate with the excellent work individual agencies are doing working really closely together, but this is an opportunity for everyone to concentrate their efforts, share resources, experience and expertise at a time of year when the weather gets colder and the rough sleeping community is at increased risk.
- 4.2 Amongst other things offered during this week are health screening by primary healthcare teams, social needs assessments, additional out of hours accommodation, and a night cafe/ safe space in the town supported by many volunteers of those involved. This is an opportunity for partners to try out some initiatives to more effectively meet the needs of this community.
- 4.3 The night cafe is a week long, warm, safe space where rough sleepers are welcomed to escape the cold and its operating during the first week of December, Monday to Friday between 9 pm and 7 am in partnership with the wider church in Taunton, key agencies and RoC Taunton Deane (Redeeming our Communities).
- 4.4 We would especially like to thank Pastor Simon Billington from Taunton Vineyard Church for coordinating this week of activity, Pentecostal Canon Street Church for hosting the cafe, the rough sleeping team and all those who have volunteered to help. Last minute volunteers please visit www.tauntonvineyard.org and details are on the home page.

5. Wood to commemorate the Fallen of World War One

- 5.1 A memorial wood is being created for future generations to enjoy in memory of the Fallen from Somerset who lost their lives in the First World War.
- 5.2 Twenty-three acres will be planted with 14,000 mixed broad-leaved trees to create a community wood in commemoration of the 11,281 Somerset residents who died.
- 5.3 The 'Somerset Wood' is being established within the new Country Park which is located to the west of Monkton Heathfield and to the east of Nerrols Farm through a joint partnership of Taunton Deane Borough Council, Somerset County Council, Cheddon Fitzpaine Parish Council and West Monkton Parish Council.
- 5.4 It is intended to be a peaceful place for wildlife and people and form part of a much larger green wedge. It is hoped that residents, especially local youngsters, will get involved in planting the trees. The trees are being provided by the Woodland Trust and as many as possible will be planted this year between December 2018 and March 2019. Further information will be provided on the planting timetable for those who wish to help.
- 5.5 Councillor Norman Cavill, long standing Ward Member for West Monkton and project champion said "this is a wonderful example of partnership working to achieve something truly worthwhile. It will provide a peaceful recreational space for

everyone to enjoy, protecting our green spaces for future generations while honouring those who gave their lives in the Great War.”

6. Green Forum

- 6.1 Thank you to Helen Lawy (Somerset Wildlife Trust trustee and Friends of Longrun Meadow) and fellow friends of other park groups who make up the Green Forum for showing Councillor Patrick Berry and this Portfolio-holder around some of north-west Taunton’s green spaces.
- 6.2 We had both visited Longrun Meadow before but Frieze Hill Community Orchard and Netherclay Community Woodland were new to us. We were impressed by the knowledge and enthusiasm about each area and the enormous value these green spaces provide to both local and wider communities. They are well used for general recreation and special events and are connected by dedicated footpaths.
- 6.3 The Green Forum has undertaken to provide a map of Taunton’s green spaces; how they are connected and whether they have friends’ groups operating; what tasks the Council’s Open Spaces Team currently undertake for each green space; and asks what Taunton’s vision is for green spaces as a Garden Town; and who are the Councillor and officer contacts for the Green Forum.
- 6.4 We want to ensure there is a good conduit between the Green Forum and the Council with key members (local Ward Councillors and/or Portfolio-holders) and key officer contacts in place. The new Engagement Champions ought to be best placed to familiarise themselves with their local parks, green spaces and friends groups and liaise with the Open Spaces Team who help maintain these. We envisage periodic meetings probably through the locality/ area panels to keep up with progress and help to unblock things.

Wishing you all a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Councillor Jane Warmington

Council Meeting – 11 December 2018

Report of Councillor Terry Beale – Housing Services

1. Deane Housing Development

There are numerous work streams being undertaken by the Housing Enabling and Development Team. The following is a highlight summary for key areas of ongoing work.

Weavers Arms, Rockwell Green, Wellington

- 1.1 I am aware of some comments and disquiet with regards to this development and I am delighted to report that 13 homes were handed over from the developer WRW Construction on the 29 November 2018 with the remaining 13 homes being handed over early in 2019.
- 1.2 The team are working closely with the three returning decants and preparing to advertise eight for rent through Homefinder Somerset and launch two for shared ownership.

North Taunton

- 1.3 The Project is progressing very well.
- 1.4 A fourth Public Consultation event was held on the 5 October 2018 and was well attended by the local residents. The team continue to work closely with the community with invaluable support from the residents' Design Group.
- 1.5 So far we have interacted with over 90% with over one to one visits, opportunities for people to attend the drop in at the Project Office in Rochester Road located in the centre of the community and the four public consultation events that have been held.
- 1.6 Regular newsletters have been distributed and project updates maintained through the Council's website on the dedicated North Taunton Woolaway Regeneration page.
- 1.7 The planning application is imminent. The design was presented to the Design Review Panel on the 15 November 2018 and was very well received. We are waiting on a written report to incorporate recommendations as appropriate into the application. There will be an outline application anticipated to be for up to 280 dwellings and a detailed Phase 1 application for 48 dwellings.
- 1.8 A final Council Report is being prepared and will travel through the following meeting schedule:
 - Tenant Services Management Board – 14 January 2019;
 - Taunton Deane Scrutiny – 15 January 2019;
 - Taunton Deane Executive – 7 February 2019;

- Shadow Executive – 11 February 2019;
- Taunton Deane Full Council –20 March 2019.

Oake

- 1.9 The Pilot project for the Woolaway repair is progressing with a contractor being selected and details of the contract being drawn up.

12 Moorland Close, Taunton

- 1.10 Three flats were handed over in July 2018. The lease is being progressed between the Taunton East Development Trust and Assets to enable the Link Centre to move across. This should be signed off within the next few weeks.

Outer Circle, Taunton

- 1.11 Planning for the scheme was granted in April 2018 and work will begin shortly to progress the development of 4 x 1 bed units where the Link Centre is currently located.

Laxton Road, Taunton

- 1.12 Work has started again to progress the development of eight flats on part of the garage sites. It is anticipated we will go out to tender for a contractor in early 2019.

Future Council Development Pipeline

- 1.13 Work continues to build up the future pipeline to increase Council housing provision. We are currently looking at acquiring three properties which total 38 bed spaces from a private sector landlord. We are also working on a couple of potential land acquisitions for the new build pipeline.

Affordable Housing Completions

- 1.14 Over 200 affordable homes are anticipated to complete in 2018/2019 with affordable housing discussions continuing on numerous planning applications at various stages to maintain a strong pipeline for delivery.

General Enabling

- 1.15 Regrettably we still have a continued increase in viability challenges in relation to affordable housing requirements resulting in lengthy negotiations.

Large Scales Sites of interest

- 1.16 Jurston Farm, Wellington is on site and we anticipate the first of the 50 affordable homes completing in 2020.
- 1.17 Comeytrove and Staplegrove – Section 106 Agreement affordable housing terms are 99% agreed, just waiting on final comments.
- 1.18 Killams, Taunton - Phase 2 on site. Discounted open market homes are selling well. The rented properties will be marketed through a Housing Association for letting through Homefinder.
- 1.19 Nerrols, Taunton – Last tranche of affordable housing is due by 31 March 2019.

Others sites of interest

- 1.20 Cornhill, Wellington – We are working closely with the developer and a Housing Association to bring forward 38 new homes which we anticipate will all be affordable.
- 1.21 It is extremely exciting and gratifying that Housing Associations remain committed to the area and LiveWest have a particularly strong pipeline of new build development. There are potentially over 250 homes under discussion with the Housing Associations for sites they are leading on. There will inevitably be some which drop but it is still a fantastic volume.
- 1.22 I congratulate the team once again for a job well done!

2. Deane Housing Repairs and Maintenance

- 2.1 The recent STAR survey has highlighted that overall leaseholder satisfaction remains very good. However there have been issues highlighted at Langham Gardens, Taunton with regards to overcharging.
- 2.2 Following on from the last meeting at Langham Gardens, the leaseholders have asked for somebody from Property Services to sign off the next tranche of rechargeable routine repairs, making sure the prices are reasonable before giving this information to the Accountant who will prepare the Annual Service Charges.
- 2.3 In addition I have asked officers to prepare a full report on the charges and I will ensure the residents are updated.
- 2.4 I would like to take this opportunity to thank Claire Thackray who has been overseeing the leasehold schemes for some time and is taking up another post within the Council. She has carried out her duties with expertise and a sense of humour. She will be sorely missed and we wish her well for the future. She will maintain some involvement until a decision is taken as to the way forward.

3. Welfare Reform

Universal Credit (UC)

- 3.1 Managed Migration of Universal Credit was due to take place from July 2019, however, the Government have recently delayed this to early 2020. This means claimants who are still in receipt of Legacy Benefits will be transferred onto Universal Credit.
- 3.2 We have already experienced difficulties with our tenants who are in receipt of Universal Credit making it important that we prepare ourselves as best as we can for the full migration. Preparation is underway to put together literature advising tenants of the best ways to prepare themselves for these changes and the help that is on offer to them.
- 3.3 We have been active in supporting our Council tenants with Discretionary Housing Payments and so far during 2018/2019 financial year we have received £17,250.65 towards topping up continuing Housing Costs and Rent arrears.
- 3.4 We have recently been enrolled onto the Universal Credit Landlord portal which allows us to verify tenants Housing Costs. It also gives us the ability to apply for Alternative Payments Arrangements (APA) and Rent Arrears deductions without having to wait for it to be agreed by Universal Credit staff. They have placed a responsibility on us to ensure we are applying for an APA responsibly as the Government want to empower Universal Credit claimants to manage their own money.
- 3.5 Future Universal Credit changes:-
 - From December 2018, 18-21 year olds will be entitled to claim Housing Costs through Universal Credit. 18-21 year olds were previously restricted from claiming Housing Costs unless they were in a specified group;
 - From 1 February 2019, families with more than two children who make new claims for Universal Credit will no longer be directed to claim Child Tax Credit instead. The two child limit will apply to those families. Families who have been awarded Universal Credit after April 2017 and have two or fewer children but who then have a third or subsequent child will have the two-child limit applied.
 - From April 2019, Work allowances which are the amount of your earnings from employment that you are allowed to keep before it is taken into account as income for Universal Credit will increase. These will increase by £1,000 for the year, meaning that people in work who have children or have limited capability for work (or their partner has limited capability for work) will benefit by up to £630 per year. However if you are a worker who has no children or you or your partner have not been assessed as having limited capability for work, you will still not receive help in the form of work allowances.

- From October 2019, the maximum rate at which deductions can be made from Universal Credit, to repay an advance payment, will be reduced from 40% to 30% of the standard allowance of Universal Credit. The period over which advances can be recovered will be extended from 12 to 16 months, from October 2021.

4. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Service

- 4.1 In the last quarter, the ASB Team has gone through a significant period of change. Andy Smith has got himself established in the team but is planning to move to a management position as part of the Transformation process so is closing cases where appropriate. Jack Madge left the team (and closed many of his cases) and Sue Morrison has taken up his post and is getting herself established.
- 4.2 When cases are closed, the “victim” is informed and sent a feedback survey. Regrettably the return rates for the survey forms is very low. Analysis of those forms returned indicate the percentage of tenants who have reported ASB in the past 12 months rating the advice and support they received as excellent or good is currently 89% (last quarter 91%). An explanation for the slight drop may be the change of officer dealing with their complaint – in the main our customers do not like change because they feel they have to relate the facts and the emotional impact on them to another person.
- 4.3 The percentage of ASB cases closed as “resolved” is 95%. With some cases we simply cannot realistically resolve the case to everyone’s satisfaction but a full explanation (of our limitations) are given to victims.
- 4.4 Cases of note:-
- Reports from eight separate neighbours of ASB in the Taunton area. On 21 September 2018, warrant of possession granted by the County Court and perpetrator has been evicted.
 - Domestic abuse. ASB Team and Sheltered Housing Officer dealt with the most sensitive and complicated report of domestic abuse involving a very elderly victim. A Non Molestation Order was obtained and an abusive partner removed from the Council’s property.
 - Report from neighbour about ASB in house occupied by a young single mother. The ASB Team worked with Social Services and child placed in care. Support put in for single mother involving Leaving Care, Somerset Drugs and Alcohol service, Police and education authority. The single mother signed an Acceptable Behaviour Contract with Housing and has now enrolled on a University Course. No reports of ASB for six weeks.
 - On-going work in Duke Street flats, Taunton to combat drug abuse and reports of “cuckooing”/ County lines drug misuse.

As Christmas approaches, I would like to say a tremendous thank you to all my colleagues and especially the officers. They work tirelessly, often under extreme stress, and frankly the pressure they are put under is often unnecessary. It is due to their dedication and professionalism that this Council is doing well and will thrive in the future.

Council Meeting – 11 December 2018

Report of Councillor Patrick Berry – Environmental Services and Climate Change

1. Street Sweeping and Toilet Cleaning

- 1.1 The contract continues to run smoothly as we approach the third year. This year has seen the completion of the zonal maps for code of practice and our own PQMS survey system which will allow us to inspect and score cleansing levels across Taunton Deane. The information will then be collated on the Idverde web page. A link will be provided once inspections have been completed. The first inspections will be joint and carried out by a Council Client Manager and Idverde Contract Manager. In the future any officer from the Council will be welcome to join the monthly randomly generated inspections.
- 1.2 The contractor continues to support community/Parish litter picking groups, and supply a considerable amount of litter pickers, bags, personal protective equipment as well as collection of the waste. These events are also supported by ensuring that a mechanical road sweeper is within the area as the event is happening. Groups that have had support throughout the year and will continue to be supported are: - The Canal and Waterways Trust, Otterford Parish Council, North Curry Parish Council, Somerset Wildlife Trust, Holway Local Action Team, Wellington Transitional Group, Milverton Parish Council, Priorswood Community Centre, Hardy's Road (Monkton Heathfield Community Group) and many more.
- 1.3 Litter/rubbish collected in Wellington and Taunton Town Centres is now sorted and where possible recycled. This system is working well, after beginning the sorting process at the earlier part of the year. Materials that are sorted are cans, plastic and cardboard/paper.
- 1.4 Fly tipping is still occurring but not increasing. Cameras to catch offenders continue to be deployed and all fly tip material is examined for evidence of ownership.

2. Somerset Waste Partnership (SWP)

- Tonnages of waste generated by Somerset households have continued to decline – a 1.6% (-4,080 tonnes) decrease in overall household waste arisings. The majority of this decrease occurred at the recycling sites;
- SWP's overall recycling rate at the kerbside and at recycling sites was 52.3% (down 0.4% on the previous year). The kerbside sort system meant that, even in the face of global challenges to the recycling industry, over 90% of everything we collected was recycled in the UK;

- Because of how we recycle (our kerbside sort system) and how much we recycle, SWP remain independently ranked in the top 10% nationally in terms of our carbon saving;
- Missed collections at the kerbside have been an area of particular concern during the year. This has been driven by staff shortages (affected by the national driver shortage and the challenging labour market in Somerset), the ageing vehicle fleet and the hot weather we saw over the summer. SWP have worked closely and robustly with Kier to ensure improvement plans are put in place;
- SWP's recycling rate of 77% is amongst the highest in the Country. 79% of what could be recycled stayed in Somerset and 94% stayed in the UK. The number of visits to recycling sites was slightly down on the previous year. This is believed to be largely due to the success of the permit scheme in reducing trade waste abuse and out-of-County usage; and
- It is noted that the numbers of reported flytips across Somerset fell by 4.6% (226 fewer flytips) compared to 2016-2017.

So far in the current financial year (April 2018 – November 2018) key achievements are:-

- Enabling the recycling of plastic pots, tubs and trays at all Somerset recycling sites – this is all processed in the UK at a state-of-the-art facility in Kent;
- Sharing tens of thousands of copies of our 'Pledge Against Preventable Plastic' with Somerset residents, giving them top tips on how to reduce their unnecessary use of plastic. It also reminds residents what they can recycle at the kerbside;
- Acting as Somerset co-ordinator for the Refill campaign, encouraging local cafes and retailers to enable people to refill their reusable water bottles, with the aim of reducing the reliance on single-use plastic water bottles;
- Agreeing a contract extension with Viridor which delivers considerable savings to Somerset County Council. All of our recycling sites will remain open but with amended opening hours to better reflect need and demand (including opening all sites all weekend, all year round); and
- Significantly increasing SWP's reach on social media (in particular Facebook), so that we can keep residents up to date and influence their behaviours. This will become increasingly important as we get ready to roll out the Recycle More programme.

Ongoing major projects and key pieces of work coming up over the next 12 months include:-

- Getting ready to stop using landfill as the disposal route for residual waste by 2020. Our commitment to reuse and recycling will not be diminished by this move;

- Completing the procurement of a new collection contractor in Spring 2019, ahead of them commencing service in Spring 2020;
- Preparing for the rollout of Recycle More from 2020 onwards, including a very significant communications and marketing campaign; and
- Continuing to work with planning authorities to ensure that new developments are built with waste in mind.

It is also an intention to address the difficult situation for multi-occupancy buildings where space for recycle storage is limited or non-existent. Currently we have limited resources and will only investigate where the residents are interested since the schemes depend on active participation by them.

3. Cemetery and Crematorium:

- 3.1 All the initial projects have now been completed.
- 3.2 We are placing additional planting into the woodland walk to beautify the area and give it a good softer landscape start while we are in the planting season.
- 3.3 The cremation walkway has seen several sales already and we expect this to be a very popular choice.
- 3.4 Both St Mary's and Wellington Cemeteries new graves are ready for sale and have now been formally numbered and mapped. Wellington Cemetery also has the addition of 48 columbaria niches (above-ground ashes depositories) for further cremation memorialisation choice.
- 3.5 The Babies (dear Mum) Garden is now ready and being rested for the planting/turfing to have a chance to establish but will be ready for an official opening in the New Year.
- 3.6 The Crematorium Waiting Room Extension had made good progress, as follows:-
 - i) The outside lavatories have now been completely refurbished making it possible for the existing internal waiting room toilets to be closed;
 - ii) The temporary waiting room is now in place and the surrounding area has been substantially remodelled to facilitate the workforce relocation and future retail opportunities on site; and
 - iii) We have created a safer pedestrian walkway from the car park to the Chapel. We are now ready to tender the internal remodel of the waiting room element of the project. We are working with the Procurement Team in doing this and expect to have a tender out before the end of January 2019.

- 3.7 The Crematorium Manager, Garry Bowles, is leaving the Council's employment in January 2019 and he wanted to make the following statement:-

“As you may be aware I am leaving Taunton Deane and it would be remiss of me not to thank you all for the support the service has received from the political body. I absolutely believe that our Bereavement Service is now in a position to become a market leader in our sector. This could not have happened without the assistance, support and belief from you all.

I have enjoyed my time at Taunton Deane immensely and only hope I have been an asset to the Council and am sorry to be leaving. I am leaving a dedicated team who I am sure will continue the good work.”

- 3.8 We have seen a considerable change at the Crematorium since Garry arrived with us and we appreciate the effort and thought he has put into improving these facilities. I am sure that all of us appreciate the results.

4. Environmental Health (EH)

Health and Safety

- 4.1 A successful prosecution of WH Smith relating to an accident that occurred in 2014 has recently been concluded. The EH team are to be congratulated for their perseverance in this case and finally bringing WH Smith to face up to their responsibilities.
- 4.2 WH Smith (Retail Holdings) Limited has been ordered to pay fines and costs totalling not far short of £½ million after a member of the public was left with life-changing injuries caused by falling into a basement through a trapdoor on the shop floor at the Taunton WH Smith store, which had been opened during trading hours.
- 4.3 After the accident at Taunton, WH Smith moved the items that had been stored in the basement to a store room, locked the basement out of use and completed a written risk assessment for accessing it should the need arise.
- 4.4 Food Hygiene Inspections remain on track although we may be behind by the end of the financial year due to staff involvement in recruitment.

Private Water Supplies (PWS)

- 4.5 The legislation around PWSs has recently changed in 2018 and as one Council we will be in the top five in the country for the number of supplies and people relying on these for their drinking water.
- 4.6 The new Council will have just over 1,594 supplies to look after including risk assessment plus sampling every one-five years. One third of the population

in West Somerset is on a PWS. New legislation will require accreditation with the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI) for officers carrying out this role.

Safety Advisory Group

- 4.7 Officers attended the Safety Advisory Group for Christmas events in Taunton on 6 November 2018, where advice was given regarding public safety at the light switch on event.
- 4.8 The team is extremely busy at present.

5. Licensing

- 5.1 The Licensing service achieved its performance target between July and September by completing over 95% applications within 14 days.
- 5.2 Officers are getting to grips with new changes in animal licensing legislation, which were introduced in October 2018. Kennels, catteries, dog breeders, pet shops and so on, can now expect clearer guidelines and more comprehensive inspections, which will inform and control an out-of-five star rating and length of licence they receive, the maximum being three years where previously it was one.
- 5.3 Preparations are being made to enable officers to use the National Register of Taxi Licence Revocations and Refusals, or 'NR3' for short.
- 5.4 Once the Licensing Committee has adopted a policy governing how it will be used, officers will write to those who have had licences refused/revoked to inform them that their details will be submitted and make them aware of their rights in relation to the General Data Protection Regulations.

Councillor Patrick Berry

Council Meeting – 11 December 2018

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

Section 1 – Communications

- 1.1 The new team are starting to come together under the new Head of Communications and Engagement, Robert Hillier.
- 1.2 Robert has worked in journalism and communication for more than 20 years, from BBC Spotlight, to the United Arab Emirates Government and most recently Falmouth University and Cornwall Council.
- 1.3 Alongside building the new team, he has begun a process of modernising our communications operation to build on the success of our own channels to become less reliant on traditional local media. Charlotte Winmill has received training in social media video production and her short film on the arrival of this year's Taunton Christmas tree managed 8,000 views in the first few days on the Council's own Facebook page – against zero coverage in the local press. This has been followed up by a detailed online campaign to increase awareness of Taunton's Christmas offer in conjunction with local businesses. This includes new content on You Tube and LinkedIn. We have set an engagement target in excess of 100,000 for the pre-Christmas period.
- 1.4 The new fortnightly publication "Transformation Tuesday" has been designed to give staff and Members, insights and stories in to the transformation process with a special focus on those individual case studies of personal change. Other face to face meetings with staff representatives have provided an excellent opportunity to cascade information and "myth-bust" to improve positive engagement with the transformation process.
- 1.5 As more members of the team move in to their roles full time and capacity is increased there will be wider focus on increasing coverage outside of Taunton to amplify and support positive stories across the area. This will include support and capacity building to Members to aid them in communicating directly with residents through popular social media channels.
- 1.6 The new website project is continuing at pace and user testing for the site will begin early in the New Year.
- 1.7 We continue to work closely with the organising committee of the Cricket World Cup to ensure Taunton and Somerset benefits from the global exposure the event offers. In addition, we continue to offer support and guidance on a daily basis to all Council functions and our external stakeholders.

- 1.8 Press interest has been generated by several key projects including:-
- The demolition of St James Street Pool, Taunton marking the first stage in the implementation of new plans for Coal Orchard;
 - The introduction of the Pay on Exit system in seven Taunton Town Centre Car Parks which is now due to be launched on 14 January 2019, following comprehensive testing of the system and its links to the Variable Messaging System;
 - The regeneration project at North Taunton where an option has been agreed to refurbish two areas west of Dorchester Road and North of Ludlow Avenue, and undertake a complete regeneration project in the central area which will involve the demolition of existing homes and replacement with new, energy efficient homes;
 - The Public Realm Improvement Project to make Taunton Town Centre more user friendly and improve the area for pedestrians and cyclists. Phase one covering the permanent closure of St James Street between North Street and Lower Middle Street will begin in the New Year. Phase two which will see an 18-month trial closure of Hammet Street and East Street to all vehicles except buses and cyclists, will follow;
 - The introduction of Street Wardens to provide reassurance for shoppers and visitors to Taunton Town Centre following concerns over rough sleeping and anti-social behaviour. The wardens began by working various day and night shifts with a focus on key hotspots in the town. They have been operating on a regular daily basis from 29 November and will continue through to 31 December 2018; and
 - Additionally there has been interest in the recent appointment of the new Chief Executive James Hassett. Arrangements are in hand for media interviews when he takes up his post in the New Year.
- 1.9 The team has also been promoting Christmas news including this years' event 'Winterfest' which incorporated the official switch-on of the Christmas tree lights; late night shopping and the free parking offer on the four Saturdays before Christmas.
- 1.10 This week has seen another milestone in the Accommodation Project with the Police moving in (10 December 2018). The communication teams for both authorities have been working together to promote the shared space and new opening hours.

Section 2 - Events, Place, Retail Marketing and Visitor Centre

Events

- 2.1 **Feast:** Castle Green, Taunton was home to a two day festival on 29 and 30 September 2018, which celebrated local produce with chef demonstrations.

The day was a huge success for the organisers Michelle Beck and Annabel McCabe....and it even attracted ITV West Country News! The success has lead the organisers to look at running this event more frequently.

2.2 **Carnival:** Taunton Carnival saw a large turnout to support the organisers and the charities they were raising money for, with vintage cars and racing cars in the High Street to help with footfall along with raffles and a tombola.

2.3 **Winterfest:** Ben and Charmaine De'vey along with Phil and Rachel Morgan of Pro Sound Solutions teamed up to present Winterfest on 25 November 2018. A mid-winter festival to support the turning on of the Christmas tree and Projector lights in Taunton Town Centre. The switch on was by local man and true hero Jim Booth and was enjoyed by 1000's of people.

2.4 **Cricket World Cup:** Plans for the Fan Zone and Cricket World Cup are progressing well. Craig Stone will be liaising with local schools and colleges to assist with raising the awareness of the event. Sub groups are also being organised to deal with specific tasks and the first Committee Steering Group took place on Tuesday, 20 November 2018. The plan is to close North Street, Corporation Street, Hammet Street, East Street and create a Fan Zone in the centre of the town. The Zone will have interactive games promoting cricket for children and families. We will be joining Visit Somerset to increase our reach for engaging and inspiring non cricket fans.

2.5 **Future Events:**

- Gin Festival: The Great British Gin Festival have made a provisional booking for Vivary Park, Taunton for 30 March 2019;
- Ciderthon: To help celebrate Somerset Day, a booking to hold a Ciderthon is planned for 5 May 2019;
- Party in the Park: Following the success of 2018, LCC Live will be returning to hold another three day music festival in Vivary Park on 12, 13 and 14 July 2019; and
- Fake Festivals: With two highly successful years, Fake Festivals plan to return to Longrun Meadow, Bishops Hull for a third year.

2.6 **Place Marketing:** A new Visitor Guide for 2019 is being commissioned. Social Media: 1.2% growth from the previous month.

Facebook (Followers)	10217
Twitter	7213
Instagram	2311

Section 3 - Growth Strategy and Specific Projects

Coal Orchard Redevelopment

3.1 The detailed planning application was granted on 26 September 2018. We started on site with the demolition of St James Swimming Pool on 3 October

with completion due on 3 December 2018.

- 3.2 Our commercial agents have secured one pre-let on the scheme for a wine/tapas bar. We have strong interest from a gym operator, who are currently seeking a franchisee to operate it prior to agreeing terms. We are progressing a Marketing Strategy for both the residential and commercial units in readiness for work commencing. The show flat is due to be ready by the end of September 2019, although the Agents will be starting to market off plan from June. Marketing of the commercial units is already underway but activity will increase from early next year.
- 3.3 Tenders for the main contractor are due to be opened on 7 December 2018. Following this, we will qualify the tenders and hopefully award the contract by 7 January 2019, to achieve a start on site on programme for 4 February 2019. The construction will be undertaken in five phases and is programmed to be completed by the beginning of September 2020.
- 3.4 25 car spaces are due to be completed in Phase 1 of the contract by 31 March 2019, however we will seek to avoid a complete closure of the car park from the beginning of February until these spaces are ready by working with the contractor to provide some spaces on site or close by to assist with parking for the local businesses.

The Brewhouse Development

- 3.5 Architects (MICA) and Project Managers / Cost Consultants (Mace) were appointed in October 2018. Initial kick off and the first design team meetings have been held with the Taunton Theatre Association senior team to start the process of developing the strategic brief for the redevelopment of the building including an increase in the number of seats in the main auditorium and other potential new spaces.
- 3.6 MICA Architects have worked on a number of high profile cultural projects, including the Lyric Theatre in London and bring a wealth of ideas and specialist knowledge to the project. The initial strategic brief stage will be completed by Spring next year after which the output will be subject to a gateway review before proceeding to the next stage.

Firepool Development, Taunton

- 3.7 Since the previous report, the St Modwen and Taunton Deane Partnership has ceased. The Firepool Project is now led by the Commercial Investment and Change functional area of the Council. Since the announcement of St Modwen's departure we have had significant market and stakeholder interest so we will fully explore these opportunities.
- 3.8 The Council as landowner and promoter of the local economy is in a strong position to formulate and take forward a revised Development Strategy to work together with stakeholders to implement the outline planning consent for a mixed use scheme on this prime site. We have cleared the regulatory

hurdles, including flooding issues and ecology, and are in the process of finalising conditions, completing essential land assembly and will be testing the market to identify the most viable and sustainable uses across the site.

- 3.9 Following the recent Full Council meeting on this subject and recent feedback and Member involvement officers now have some clear next steps to progress.
- 3.10 Officers have been asked to bring a report to Council setting out what resources and funds are required to manage the process and achieve a delivery plan. A new approach using the Growth Steering Group to oversee emerging proposals for each development plot, within the context of the outline consent but with a wider Board of experts to help and assist in achieving our aims.
- 3.11 Existing place-making proposals including a cinema will be looked at again in conjunction with other flexible assets providing multi-uses, such as a potential option for new Concert Space or Conference Centre. Project resource and a professional team will be commissioned to establish and deliver a revised development programme.

Firepool Land Assembly

- 3.12 Agreement has been reached to acquire the land and interests from the remaining third parties. We are on course to finalise contracts and anticipate these will be completed by the end of 2018. The completion of land assembly will give the Council full control of the whole of the Firepool Development site, enables progress to continue with design and planned installation of key infrastructure, such as the boulevard adjacent to the Railway Station.

Firepool Section 106 Agreement

- 3.13 The Council as landowner and Local Planning Authority and Somerset County Council Highways have reached an agreement on the key conditions for the comprehensive Firepool Development to be progressed. This is due to be finalised by Legal ideally before Christmas 2018.

Section 4 - Asset Management Service Update

- 4.1 Resourcing of the Asset Management Team has been sustained with the replacement of the Principal Estates Surveyor at the end of October 2018 as well as a Senior Estates Surveyor, both to replace staff who have moved on to take up other external roles. Asset Management have welcomed these new members of the team as well as the replacement Technical Compliance Manager, and two replacement Asset / Stock Condition Surveyors (resulting in a team of four Asset Surveyors).
- 4.2 With two existing team members (GIS Technician – work going with them – and Leasehold Estates Officer) starting roles in the new structure on 1

December 2018 and one voluntary redundancy at the end of December (a West Somerset Council Estates Officer) we are recruiting interim contract resource to cover the two roles not taking their work to the new structure.

4.3 The delegation of authority of the Corporate Property Function has been updated with delegation from the Director to the Asset Manager/ Head of Asset Manager (or interim) and provisions for managers reporting into this role to provide authority alongside a Director in the absence of the Asset Manager/ Head of Asset Management.

4.4 Key project work updates include:-

- **New Asset Management System**

The new Asset Management System contract was completed at the end of September 2018 and implementation has commenced to ensure the new system will be up and running in March 2019 ready for the New Council. Beyond April 2019 the system will gradually be developed to integrate various Asset related data sets.

- **Leisure Procurement Facilities – Assets and Leases**

Asset Management has continued to support the Leisure Procurement Team with the Leisure Procurement tender process which is at an advanced stage, recently attending the Competitive Dialogue.

- **Proposed Country Park (Near Nerrols Farm, Taunton)**

Land near Nerrols Farm, Taunton was acquired in October and a licence was granted to the Parish Councils for the World War One Memorial Works. The Parishes of West Monkton and Cheddon Fitzpaine plan to undertake extensive tree planting with sponsorship and support from external Charities.

The Parish Councils will take maintenance and management responsibility for the park. The intention is that a Trust and Management Agreement between Taunton Deane and the Parish Councils currently in draft will be implemented before the end of March 2019.

4.5 Other ongoing service area project work:

- **Annual Asset and Insurance Valuations**

Asset Management have instructed Wilkes Head Eve to commence the Annual Asset Valuations for completion by the end of March 2019. The phased programme of Insurance Reinstatement Valuations commenced with the first tranche of assets in October 2018.

- **Landlord and Tenant Advice for Projects Managed by Development and Regeneration Teams**

In addition to continuing Estates Case Work, Asset Management continues to provide advice and support where required on Estates, Asset and Landlord and Tenant matters for Council led development and regeneration projects.

- **Income Recovery Efficiency Improvements**

A project to improve efficiency in this area has already seen improvements in Asset related income recovery, however more work is planned in this area related to existing General Fund Assets and tenant contractual obligations.

- **Unauthorised Traveller Encampments**

Incidents of unauthorised traveller encampments have reduced since the end of September 2018. However Asset Management and Planning are liaising with Somerset County Council on potential solutions to improving continuing management challenges in this area as well as investigating possible ways to reduce impact on the local community where there has been concern in some cases.

Councillor Mark Edwards

Council Meeting – 11 December 2018

Report of Councillor Richard Parrish – Planning Policy and Transport Strategy

1. Tonedale Mill, Wellington

- 1.1 Following the serving of the Urgent Works Notice (UWN) for emergency measures to secure Tonedale House, due to non-compliance by the current owners, the Council are currently negotiating with the owners to undertake repairs to secure the preservation of the building. These works will allow the structural scaffolding erected for the UWN to be removed.
- 1.2 The security of the site has been updated by the owners' contractors on site. We are trying to work with the owners on several other urgent works on site at Tonedale Mill, although progress is slow, and the condition of the buildings are deteriorating with the winter approaching. We are assessing the other options available on site in line with our long-term approach to the site.
- 1.3 In addition, the Council (with Building Control) have erected a cordon in the car park at Tonedale Mill due to a fear of a collapse of one of the derelict buildings onto a public area. This has caused some tension with local business owners and we are trying to resolve the matter in a safe and appropriate way.
- 1.4 The Wellington Mills Community Interest Company (CIC), who recently incorporated as a community trust, held a public consultation to understand the wishes of the community for the building known as Block H. They had a very good attendance rate of approximately 270 visitors who commented on their plans for the building (if the CIC are able to acquire the building in the long-term). They are looking to share their findings more widely in the coming weeks.

2. Car Parks

- 2.1 The last late-night shopping evening is Thursday, 20 December, 2018 with some shops also opening late on Friday, 21 December and Saturday, 22 December.
- 2.2 The Council is once again offering free parking in its car parks on the four Saturdays before Christmas. There will be no charge from 2 pm in all Taunton Car Parks, except for Kilkenny, on Saturdays 1,8,15 and 22 December 2018.

Variable Message Signing (VMS) and Pay on Foot

- 2.3 Following extensive discussions with the various partners and service

providers delivering the Pay on Foot part of the project, it was decided to delay the go live date of 3 December 2018.

- 2.4 The primary reason for this being that the network configuration and testing has yet to be fully completed to the necessary standards, which has a knock-on effect to the final configuration and testing of the back end systems, including card payments and links back to the VMS signs. We are also concerned that any faults found in the system might disrupt the busy Christmas shopping period.
- 2.5 Go live is now set to be Monday, 14 January 2019 which will give enough time to get the system fully configured and tested and staff trained on the relevant hardware and software. Until the go live, the equipment needs to be adequately protected in the car parks for this period.

3. Neighbourhood Plans

- 3.1. In the Taunton Deane area we have one neighbourhood plan at examination. The Creech St Michael Neighbourhood Plan is progressing amid interesting changes to legislation on Habitats Regulations. This has been a challenge, but the Council is working with Natural England and the Independent Examiner to find a solution which resolves the challenges and allows the examination to progress.
- 3.2 We have three neighbourhood plans in development: Ruishton and Thornfalcon; Wiveliscombe and Oake. Wellington Town Council is also considering progressing their Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.3 Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders continue to be a tool which Government see as a way that communities can have a say in the future of the places where they live and work. It gives them the right to produce a plan with legal weight that directs development in their local area.

4. Public Space Improvements

- 4.1 Taunton becoming a Garden Town gives a real opportunity to review our town centre and look at how we can create a better environment for residents, shoppers and visitors, which will help attract investment and allow businesses to thrive.
- 4.2 This works well in other areas, and we are keen that traffic is redirected to more appropriate routes. We want to free up space for new and improved public areas that are attractive and inviting for everyone with fewer vehicles, less pollution and reduced noise.
- 4.3 The Council is moving ahead with plans to make Taunton Town Centre more user friendly, improving the area for pedestrians and cyclists in line with its status as the first Garden Town in the South West.

St James Street

- 4.4 The Traffic Regulation Order was published on 22 November 2018 with a six week period of consultation. Should it pass we will be looking to implement the closure from late January or early February next year. This is subject to discussions with the Highways Authority as there are roadworks planned on East Reach/Bridge Street in the New Year so an exact date is yet to be fixed.
- 4.5 The public space project will generate opportunities for businesses, event organisers and artists to explore creative uses of the town's most attractive areas. It forms part of a much wider plan to enhance Taunton's appeal along with the regeneration of Coal Orchard and Firepool.
- 4.6 A Web page and press release was issued on Friday, 16 November 2018. This included links to the original consultation data and feasibility reports from 2017 to ensure the public have full access to the history of the project, particularly as there has been a delay since the original consultation period.

Hammet Street

- 4.7 Design issues raised from the Somerset County Council Safety Audit have meant the original proposed date for implementation of 19 January 2019 is not achievable. Instead Hammet Street will be put back to August/September 2019 along with East Street.

East Street

- 4.8 The initial draft design will be discussed with bus providers on 10 December 2018 to consider the overall concepts.
- 4.9 Both Hammet Street and East Street will be subject to public consultation, which is scheduled for May 2019.

5. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Update

- 5.1 The CIL Governance recommendations were agreed by Scrutiny on 18 September 2018 and Full Council on 2 October 2018.
- 5.2 At the time of writing the CIL position is as follows:-

- Total CIL currently held in the Strategic Fund: £3,341,239.34;
- Total CIL passed to Parish Councils to date: £495,810.71; and
- Total passed to the Taunton Unparished Area to date: £92,402.94.

6. Garden Town Plan

- 6.1 Consultants Hyas have been commissioned to complete work on the Garden Town Plan. A workshop with the Taunton Strategic Advisory Board (TSAB)

was held on 12 November 2018. Hyas are reviewing the comment's raised by the TSAB and pulling this together in a final vision statement for the Plan.

Borough-wide Design Guide

- 6.2 Mark Pearson and Richard Guise have been commissioned to work on the Design Guide for Taunton and the Borough and will work closely with Hyas to ensure this work informs and aligns with the Garden Town Plan.

Arts and Culture Strategy

- 6.3 Arts Taunton, in partnership with the Council, held an arts and culture stakeholder event on Thursday, 22 November 2018 at Hestercombe House. This event sought to gather views and input from members of the arts and culture community to inform a cultural strategy for Taunton.

Housing Infrastructure Fund – Forward Fund

- 6.4 Officers are working closely with Somerset County Council and Sedgemoor District Council officers to progress work on the Housing Infrastructure Forward Fund bid. This is on schedule to be completed for the submission deadline in March 2019.

Employment, Retail and Leisure Study

- 6.5 This study is now available on the TDBC website:

<https://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/media/2581/employment-retail-and-leisure-study-october-2018.pdf>

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

- 6.6 Consultants WSP have been appointed to undertake the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to inform the plan review. This work has been commissioned in partnership with South Somerset and West Somerset districts. This project is at a very early stage with the consultants currently collating data from public bodies and organisations (Environment Agency, Somerset County Council, Water Providers, and the Local Authorities). Further updates will be provided as this work progresses.

I would like to congratulate and thank our hard working and resilient officers for their dedicated service over the past year and to those Councillor colleagues who have supported our employees and positively promoted Taunton Deane as the gem that it is.

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2019.

Councillor Richard Parrish

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

Document is Restricted

