

Taunton Shadow Town Council

**Thursday, 1st December, 2022,
6.15 pm**

**Somerset West
and Taunton**

**The John Meikle Room - The Deane
House**

[SWT MEETING WEBCAST LINK](#)

Members: Tom Deakin (Chair), Brian Larcombe (Vice-Chair), Lee Baker, Chris Booth, Norman Cavill, Simon Coles, Dixie Darch, Caroline Ellis, Habib Farbahi, David Fothergill, Marcia Hill, Robert Isaacs, John Hunt, Dawn Johnson, Richard Lees, Sue Lees, Libby Lisgo, Derek Perry, Martin Peters, Hazel Prior-Sankey, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts, Ian Talbot, Danny Wedderkopp, Brenda Weston and Keith Woodmason

Agenda

1. Apologies

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting of the Taunton Shadow Town Council

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 3rd November 2022.

(Pages 7 - 14)

3. Declarations of Interest

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

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

4. Public Participation

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

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

We are now live webcasting most of our committee meetings and you are welcome to view and listen to the discussion. The link to each webcast will be available on the meeting webpage, but you can also access them on the [Somerset West and Taunton webcasting website](#).

5. Programme Vision Statement

(Pages 15 - 36)

At the first meeting of the Shadow Town Council Councillors considered the suggested Programme Vision Statement which would provide a concise summary of the future state the Programme would deliver.

Officers presented the following statement at that meeting for comment:

“To create a safe, legal and functioning Town Council for the residents of Taunton that provides a representative body for the community that:

- *Enables the effective promotion of the well-being of residents,*
- *Contributes to the provision of services in the area in an economic and efficient manner*
- *Promotes community engagement and effective and convenient local government.”*

Councillors held a discussion and requested that this was placed on the next Agenda for a fuller discussion and finalisation. Comment was made on the Vision Statement and whilst it was understood and agreeable that the Council going forward was safe and legal it was considered important to add ‘and creating a viable future for this organisation’. Rather than a comment on financial stability the phrasing had been interpreted as ensuring any body was ‘fit’ for the future. Some concern was raised that the statement as originally presented was not sufficiently visionary or aspirational. Comment was made that ‘safe and legal’ couldn’t just mean that the Shadow handed over to elected members, it was important to caveat that it must be functioning e.g., if public conveniences are transferred on the 1st April, they can’t be locked and unclean etc.

The Shadow Town Council is recommended to:

- Approve and adopt a Programme Vision Statement.

6. Taunton Town Council Office Accommodation

(Pages 37 - 42)

This report sets out an option for accommodating the office and meeting space needs of the to be created Taunton Town Council.

Taunton Shadow Town Council are requested to make comment on the report and recommendations.

7. Technical Advisor - Project Overview and Assurance

Reg Williams, Technical Advisor to the Project from the Society of Local Council Clerks will provide an overview/assurance of the project for Councillors.

Reg is an experienced freelance consultant to the Parish Council Sector and works for SLCC with the National Association of Local Councils on various initiatives. Reg was the City Clerk to Salisbury City Council between 2009 – 2017 and was an instrumental figure in its formation after its creation when Wiltshire went Unitary. He had experience of immediate and close liaison with the Unitary Authority to ensure the new Council would operate correctly and oversaw all aspects of the transfer of functions and services from Wiltshire Council to the City Council at the time. He also set up systems and procedures such as financial, payroll, IT, Audit, employment policies, sourcing equipment identifying and acquiring office and depot accommodation. He also created and set up the staffing structure of the new Council, and recruited to various posts, as well as setting up the governance and procedural requirements. Prior to that role he was Parks and Street Services Manager Salisbury District Council.

It is recommended that the Shadow Town Council:

- Note the update from the Project Technical Advisor and provide any comments.

8. Town Clerk Recruitment

(Pages 43 - 44)

Reg Williams, Technical Advisor to the Project from the Society of Local Council Clerks will provide an overview of the recruitment activity associated with the employment of a Town Clerk for the new Council.

It is recommended that the Shadow Town Council:

1. Note the update from the Project Technical Advisor and

provide any comments.

2. Approve the nominations of Two Shadow Town Councillors (Cllrs Brian Larcombe and Dawn Johnson) to sit on the Interview Panel.

9. Implementation Plan Update

Officers will present a verbal update on this item at the meeting with slides.

It is recommended that the Shadow Town Council:

- Note the update on the Implementation Plan progress and provide any comments.

10. Judicial Review Update

Legal Workstream Lead and Deputy County Solicitor Tom Woodhams to give an update on the Judicial Review Action.

11. Taunton Shadow Town Council Forward Plan

To review the Forward Plan.

(Pages 45 - 46)



ANDREW PRITCHARD
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

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Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussions. There is time set aside at the beginning of most meetings to allow the public to ask questions. Speaking under "Public Question Time" is limited to 3 minutes per person in an overall period of 15 minutes and you can only speak to the Committee once. If there are a group of people attending to speak about a particular item then a representative should be chosen to speak on behalf of the 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.

If you would like to ask a question or speak at a meeting, you will need to submit your request to a member of the Governance Team in advance of the meeting. You can request to speak at a Council meeting by emailing your full name, the agenda item and your question to the Governance Team using governance@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk

Any requests need to be received by 4pm on the day that provides 1 clear working day before the meeting (excluding the day of the meeting itself). For example, if the meeting is due to take place on a Tuesday, requests need to be received by 4pm on the Friday prior to the meeting.

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The meeting rooms, including the Council Chamber at The Deane House, are on the first floor and are fully accessible. Lift access to The John Meikle Room (Council Chamber), is available from the main ground floor entrance at The Deane House. The Council Chamber at West Somerset House is on the ground floor and is fully accessible via a public entrance door. Toilet facilities, with wheelchair access, are available across both locations. An induction loop operates at both The Deane House and West Somerset House to enhance sound for anyone wearing a hearing aid or using a transmitter.

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Taunton Shadow Town Council - 3 November 2022

Present:

Councillors Simon Coles, Dixie Darch, Tom Deakin, Caroline Ellis, Habib Farbahi, Marcia Hill, Robert Isaacs, John Hunt, Dawn Johnson, Sue Lees, Brian Larcombe, Libby Lisgo, Derek Perry, Hazel Prior-Sankey, Francesca Smith, Federica Smith-Roberts, Ian Talbot, Danny Wedderkopp, Brenda Weston and Keith Woodmason

Officers: Alison North, Meg Stokes, Dan Webb, Tony Bryant, Paul Fitzgerald, Paul McClean, Kevin Williams, Reg Williams, Tom Woodhams and Scott Wooldridge, Jo Comer and Marcus Prouse

Also Present: Councillors Mike Rigby, Sarah Wakefield and Loretta Whetlor

(The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm)

1. **Appointment of Chair**

Prior to the commencement of the meeting a minutes silence was held in memory of the late Councillor Anthony Trollope-Bellew.

RESOLVED that Councillor Tom Deakin be appointed as Chair of the Taunton Shadow Town Council.

2. **Appointment of Vice-Chair**

RESOLVED that Councillor Brian Larcombe be appointed as Vice Chair of the Taunton Shadow Town Council.

3. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Baker, Booth, Cavill, Fothergill, R Lees and Peters.

4. **Terms of Reference**

All Shadow Councillors had been advised of an urgent item to be considered at the meeting – Terms of Reference. This was suggested to be a revised Item 3, taken after the Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair. Physical copies were available at the meeting and was attached to the Agenda online as an addendum.

The Governance Specialist introduced the item and took members through the document.

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

- Further detail was sought on the Programme Board and its relationship with the Shadow Town Council, including how SWT is involved.
- Officers advised that the later Agenda item would provide more detail on the Board workings but that the exercise was a collaborative one as set out in a letter from the County Solicitor to SWT.
- *The Senior Responsible Officers affirmed that the Board would work very closely with the Shadow Council over the next few months.*
- Clarity was sought over the contents of the letter from the County Council including a reference to an officer/member group.
- *Officers provided reassurance on the journey so far which had been significantly collaborative to this point. The letter was setting out how officers from the programme board would be attending the Shadow Town Council meetings to capture that feedback and provide advice and guidance throughout. The Programme Board itself was an Officer construct to take forward the milestones in the Project Plan.*
- A query was raised as to the duration of the body and the Chair confirmed that this would be in place until the Town Councillors were elected, and from 1st April the Shadow would become a vested body to which all Shadow Councillors would be temporarily appointed.

RESOLVED to Adopt the Terms of Reference for the Shadow Taunton Town Council.

5. **Declarations of Interest**

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

Name	Minute No.	Description of Interest	Reason	Action Taken
Cllr S Coles	All Items	SCC & SWT & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Darch	All Items	SCC & SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr T Deakin	All Items	SCC & SWT & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr C Ellis	All Items	SCC & SWT & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Farbahi	All Items	SCC & SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr Marcia Hill	All Items	SWT & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr J Hunt	All Items	SCC & SWT & Bishop's Hull	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr R Isaacs	All Items	Cheddon Fitzpaine	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Johnson	All Items	SCC & SWT	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr B Larcombe	All Items	Comeytrowe & Lyme Regis	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Lees	All Items	SWT & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Lisgo	All Items	SWT & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr D Perry	All Items	SCC & SWT & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr H Prior-Sankey	All Items	SCC & SWT & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr M Rigby	All Items	SCC & SWT Bishops Lydeard	Personal	Spoke
Cllr F Smith	All Items	SWT & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr F Smith-Roberts	All Items	SCC & SWT & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr I Talbot	All Items	Staplegrove	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr S Wakefield	All Items	SCC & SWT	Personal	Spoke and
Cllr D Wedderkopp	All Items	SWT & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted

Cllr B Weston	All Items	SWT & Taunton Charter Trustee	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr K Woodmason	All Items	Comeytrove	Personal	Spoke and Voted
Cllr L Whetlor	All Items	Watchet & SALC	Personal	Spoke

- A query was raised over whether all Councillors on the Shadow Council needed to alter their declaration of interest forms to take account of being a member of this body and Officers agreed to seek advice on this point and advise members accordingly.
- Officers were also advised to look ahead to the 1st April and how the Interest arrangements were to be managed in the period between then and the election as Parish Councillors did not always operate in the same way as District Councillors are used to.

6. Public Participation

No members of the public had requested to participate in proceedings.

7. Adoption of Procedure Rules

The Governance Specialist introduced the item and set out that that following advice from technical advisors the Society of Local Council Clerks and looking at other Council examples, e.g. Weymouth, the Shadow could simply follow the meeting procedure rules of a parent body. The use of these procedure rules would guide Councillors and allow business to be expedited in an established and efficient manner.

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

- Councillor Whetlor, attending as a Director of the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC), raised concerns that the District Council procedure rules did not explicitly apply to the Parish Sector.
- *The Chair confirmed that these rules were purely an interim measure for the Shadow Council period and part of the creation of the Town Council will be in looking at those procedures for Vesting Day.*

RESOLVED that;

1. That although the Shadow Town Council is not a formal decision making body, it will as far as possible follow the meeting procedure rules applying to Somerset West and Taunton Council.

8. Introduction to the Implementation Plan / Project Governance (Verbal Update)

The Governance Specialist introduced the item and took Members through a number of Slides, alongside the Programme Manager Dan Webb.

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

- Clarity was sought over the term capabilities and the project terminology such as MoSCoW.
- *This meant Must haves, Should haves, Could haves, Won't have now and new capabilities were meant as a better way of doing things, end of the project where something is adopted that works.*
- Councillors requested a glossary of terms and suggested the LGR joint scrutiny glossary may be a good place to start. Consideration for the needs for accessibility to residents also needed to be considered.
- Concern was raised about the existing parish clerks in that they needed to be assisted and helped through this.
- *A meeting had been set up with the Parish Clerks and they would be assisted through this process.*
- A query was raised in relation to naming in that this was Taunton Parish Council, but could it be re-named by us as a shadow/vested body in April or by the town council in May?
- *It was confirmed that the naming of the Parish could be amended at the first meeting after the elections e.g. the AGM.*
- A query was raised as to how would this process and body influence the aspirational elements of what the new council was likely to be? It was stated that some of this work could not wait until the elections but had to be something that was passed across to the new council. There was going to be increasing public expectation as this started to gather traction.
- *The aspirations for the new town council would be reflected in the stakeholder engagement work that Officers wanted to develop a strategy as part of. Members needed to be cognisant of balancing with the timescale that was in place, and there was a lot to be done to ensure the Town Council would be safe, legal and functioning by the 1st April. It will be for the elected councillors to put forward their visions, aspirations for the town council.*
- A discussion was held on the asset transfers and what that included, in terms of the Re-Organisation Order and any further conversations building on from that.
- A view was posited that the Shadow body would be building on the framework, however, fellow Councillors needed to understand that the list of assets had been defined and agreed, and future conversations would be primary roles for the elected town council once in place.
- A query was raised as to what happened to the everyday local business between now and April the 1st? Were the parish councils still dealing with this?
- *Those parishes primarily affected by the Re-Organisation Order should still be functioning and fulfilling their roles until the 1st April.*
- It was commented that stakeholders had a big part to play in creating the vision, but the Shadow Body needed to restrict itself somewhat to the framework issues.

- Comment was made on the Vision Statement and whilst it was understood and agreeable that the Council going forward was safe and legal it was considered important to add 'and creating a viable future for this organisation'.
- Rather than a comment on financial stability the phrasing had been interpreted as ensuring any body was 'fit' for the future.
- Some concern was raised that the statement as originally presented was not sufficiently visionary or aspirational.
- Comment was made that 'safe and legal' couldn't just mean that the Shadow handed over to elected members, it was important to caveat that it must be functioning e.g., if public conveniences are transferred on the 1st April, they can't be locked and unclean etc.
- It was requested that the Vision Statement was to be added to the forward plan for the next meeting.
- In thinking more broadly about Assets within the town such as Firepool, what involvement would there be for this body if any?
- *All land assets, property, services etc will automatically transfer to Somerset Council on the 1st April however there were some specified within the Reorganisation Order made such as allotments, parks, public convenience etc which would become the responsibility of Taunton Parish.*
- Clarity was sought over the Town Clerk role and whether that was a different qualification to a parish clerk role, were the Council able to support any parish clerks in getting this qualification and what would be the time frame for this?
- *It was a specific qualification covering both roles, but the second part of the question would need to be worked through individually. Councillors could appreciate the sensitivities within the public meeting. Officers were looking to start the recruitment process as soon as possible. Job descriptions are in draft and are ready to go but there was a need to work through individual circumstances and those affected first.*
- Councillors suggested it would be helpful to have an information pack including a list of assets, the budget and FAQs circulated as soon as possible.
- It was suggested that that the website, as a hub of information for our residents would be better set up sooner rather than later.
- Councillors queried whether there was a need for working groups to sub-divide the work, but this was not felt necessary.
- A query was raised as to whether the Shadow body would be charged with helping develop the mechanics of the committee structure templates the new body would use?
- *It was confirmed that this would be a role and will be part of the new council as of 1st April.*

RESOLVED that the Taunton Shadow Town Council;

1. Noted the update on the Implementation Plan progress and project governance and provided comments.

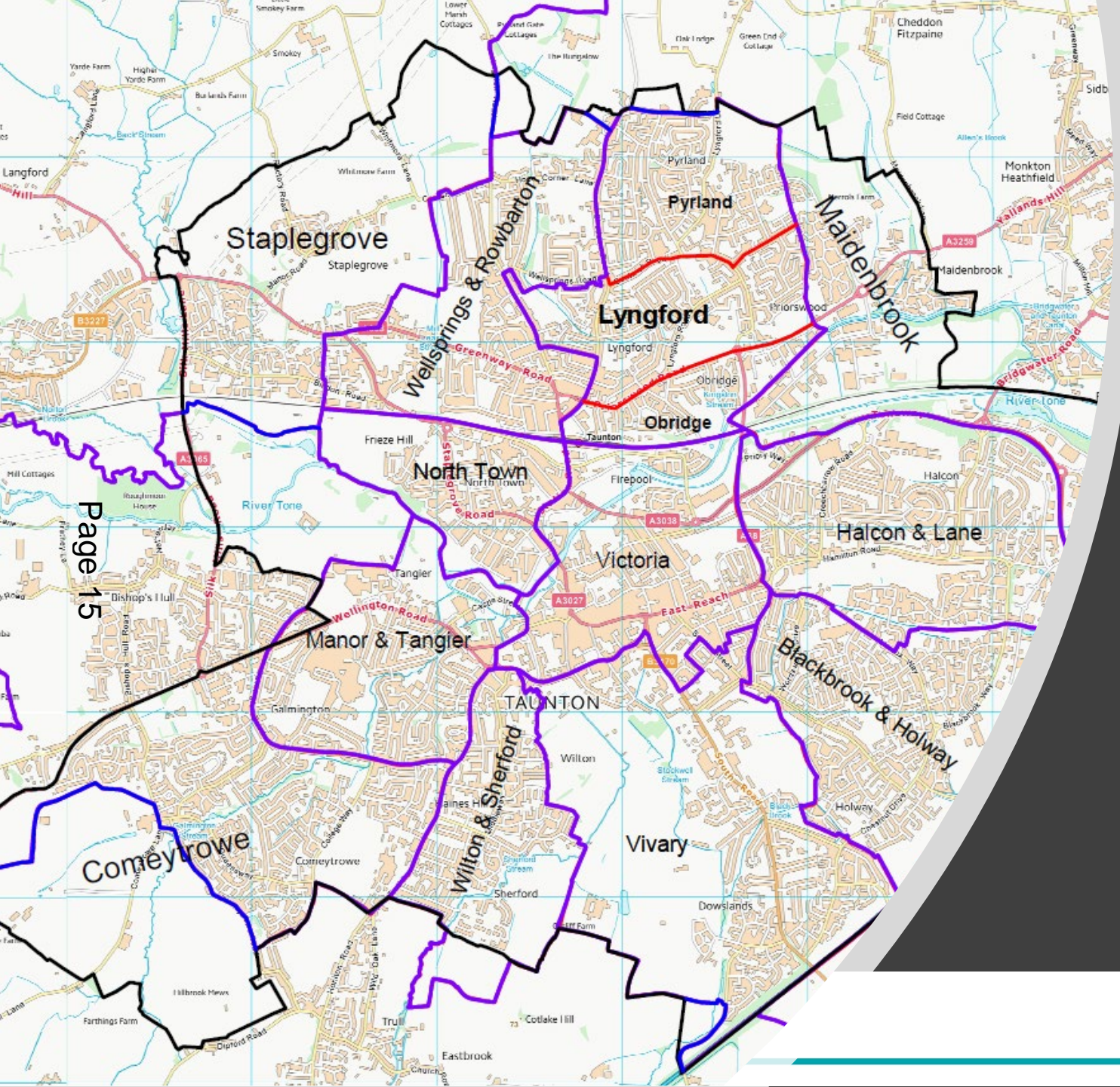
9. **Taunton Shadow Town Council Forward Plan**

The Governance Specialist had made a note of the Programme Vision Statement request to come back to the next meeting. An overview of the areas to be covered at the next meeting was given such as Risks and Issues.

The Forward Plan was noted.

(The Meeting ended at 7.30 pm)

DRAFT



Taunton Shadow Town Council

Agenda

- Appointment of Chair
- Appointment of Vice Chair
- Approval of Terms of Reference (addendum)*
- Apologies
- Declarations of Interest
- Public Participation
- Adoption of Procedure Rules
- Introduction to the Implementation Plan/Project Governance
- Forward Plan

Approval of Terms of Reference

- To resolve:
- Adopt the Terms of Reference for the Taunton Shadow Town Council

Adoption of Procedure Rules

- To resolve;
- *“That although the Shadow Town Council is not a formal decision making body, it will as far as possible follow the meeting procedure rules applying to Somerset West and Taunton Council.”*

Background overview

- Community Governance Review process initiated 12/11/21 by SWT
- Established a Member Working Group to oversee the CGR and make recommendations to Full Council.
- Two periods of consultation took place.
- It was the responsibility of Somerset West and Taunton Council to agree the final recommendations of the community governance review and the responsibility of Somerset County Council to make any Reorganisation Order to give effect to those recommendations, which was done on 05/10/22.

Shadow Town Council Role (Res 2.6)

- To advise and oversee the work programme to create the new council.
- Working with the officers, technical advisors, and town clerk (when appointed) to develop the various draft policies, procedures, infrastructure etc that will need to be in place prior to or as soon as possible after the new council is established.

Shadow Town Council - Powers

- Prior to 1 April 2023 the Shadow Town Council would not have delegated powers to make decisions or commit expenditure
- Act as an advisory body to the SWT/SCC officers and others working on the implementation programme with any formal decisions required then being made under existing SWT/SCC officer or member delegations

Implementation Plan – Programme Arrangements

Operational decision making

- SWT SMT and SCC SLT/Exec (existing internal processes to continue)
- Shadow Town Council (advisory body – cannot make decisions or commit expenditure)
- Operational Programme Board Decisions - Senior Resp. Officer/ Business Programme Owner
- Projects and Workstreams
- Project Officers remit is to deliver the requirements/deliverables of their project on decisions accordingly and update the Programme Board if there were issues that needed to be addressed/changes required.

Governance

- Decision Making powers are subject to the Council delegation given by SCC Full Council 05.10.22
- Officers to work in accordance with effective programme management arrangements and principles and to support the delivery of the project in the time available.
- However – there may be a couple of decisions which need to be made formally by SCC Executive e.g. Transfer of Assets and Services prior to 1st April 2023

Governance

- There are a couple of important operational decisions the Prog. Board will make in consultation with the Shadow Town Council e.g. Clerk Appointment and Office/Meeting space arrangements, adoption of key policies and procedures etc.
- The Programme will regularly report to the Shadow Town Council and SMT about progress of the programme and any key risks and issues for their consideration.
- Letter of understanding between SCC and SWT setting out collaborative working and governance arrangements.

Budget

- SWT is the Budget Holder for the Implementation costs
- SWT approved a supplementary budget for 22/23 of up to £80,000 to support this project under delegated powers, for costs incurred prior to 1 April 2023. (General Reserves)
- This will primarily be incurred on matters such as recruitment of staff, website, specialist support, IT Systems etc.
- Members will not be required to approve formal decisions relating to this spend.

Programme Vision - DRAFT

- *To create a safe, legal and functioning Town Council for the residents of Taunton that provides a representative body for the community that:*
 - *Enables the effective promotion of the well-being of residents,*
 - *Contributes to the provision of services in the area in an economic and efficient manner*
 - *Promotes community engagement and effective and convenient local government.*

Roles & responsibilities: Programme Management Team

- **'Business Programme Owner / Senior Responsible Owner'** - Senior Programme 'Champion' and accountability (Alison North – Deputy CEO SWT / Scott Wooldridge – SCC)
- **'Business Change Owner'** - responsible for embedding the new capabilities into the new TTC (Marcus Prouse - *likely to be the Town Clerk when appointed*)
- **Programme Manager** (Dan Webb) (+ Meg Stokes - Programme Support Officer)
- **Key corporate functions:**
 - **Finance** (Paul McClean - Finance Specialist / Paul Fitzgerald -s151)
 - **Legal** (Kevin Williams – SWT Deputy MO & Tom Woodhams (Deputy County Solicitor))
 - **Stakeholder Engagement & Comms** – Marcus Prouse & Becky Howat
- **Technical Advisor** (Reg Williams Society of Local Council Clerks)

Roles & responsibilities:

Workstream / Project Leads

- **Governance** - Marcus Prouse (Governance Specialist) & Mike Bryant (Governance Manager SCC)
- **Operations** – Marcus Prouse (Governance Specialist) & Mike Bryant (Governance Manager SCC)
- **Finance** – Paul McClean (Finance Specialist)
- **HR** – Chelle Amorsen & Tony Bryant (HR Specialists)
- **Assets** – Sally Stark (Assets Specialist)
- **Services** – Chris Hall (Director) & Stuart Noyce (Assistant Director)
- **Elections** – Elisa Day (Elections Specialist)

Key Programme Milestones before 1st April

- Ensure we have in post a suitably qualified Town Clerk (staffing establishment)
- Elections – Prepare and promote Elections (Notice of Election published)
- Ensure the Town Council is a legal and financial entity (associated due diligence below that)
- Ensure the Town Council has an Office/meeting location (with full systems in place to allow people to engage with it e.g. telephony, website, computers, payroll, finance)
- Ensure key policies in place for Day 1 – Standing Orders and Financial Proc rules minimum
- Ensure Assets and Services proposed to transfer or commissioned are completed (associated actions)

Tranche Planning



Tranche 1
 Immediate 'MUST HAVE' products to enable implementation programme to proceed

Tranche 2
 MUST Have products to be in place by 1st April



Tranche 3
 Establishment of TTC and Elections of TTC members

Tranche 4
 Continue to establish and develop Town Council (led by Town Clerk)

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Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
2022/23						2023/24											



 1st April – Establishment of Taunton Town Council
 4th May – Elections of Taunton Town Council Members

Tranche 1 (Oct – Dec 2022)

Workstream	Key deliverable / milestones
Programme Mgt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision statement • Business Architecture Model / 'Blueprint' • Programme Plan / 'Roadmap' / Tranche Plans ('MoSCoW' prioritisation) • Governance Strategy • Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (& Tranche 1 Comms plan) • Programme control docs (Risks, Issues, Actions, Dashboard / Budget monitoring)
HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing employees of the Parish Councils - consult & engage, TUPE? • Clerk recruitment - advertise post
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Taunton Shadow Town Council • Draft Standing Orders and Financial Procedures for the Town Council to use
Operations / Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Office/Meeting options and seek advice from Shadow TC • Draft Website specification and domain name
Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further work to establish the Assets that will transfer on 1st April
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further work to establish the scope of Services to be managed by TC

Tranche 2 (by 1st April 2023)

Workstream	Key deliverable / milestones
HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Town Clerk (Designate) - Interview, Appoint, start in post• Develop operational structure / commence recruitment• Payroll system
Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open a Bank Account• Register for VAT• Appoint Finance Officer (interim, or contract support from SC?)
Operations / Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue work to ensure Office is operation for Day 1 (procure furniture, telephony, payroll etc)• Procure Website Design and ensure population of such• Accounting software
Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final arrangements in place on asset transfer• Instruct SHAPE Legal to draft Asset Transfer Documents
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Final arrangements in place on services (either those to be provided by contractual appointment with SC/or transfer)
Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prepare and promote the Elections

Tranche 3 (April – May 2023) - TTC Vests legally 01/04/23

All Shadow Town Councillors are appointed as Temporary Taunton Parish Councillors from 01.04.23 until the Councillors elected on 4th May 2023 take office.

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Workstream	Key deliverable / milestones
HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop / implement HR policies
Operations / Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Start operating from new TTC office
Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completion of Asset Transfers and Registration with Land Registry
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioning (and potential delivery) of agreed services commences
Elections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct the Elections safely and legally on first Thursday in May

Forward Plan

- 1st December 2022
- **Implementation Plan Update** – to include:
 - Risks and Issues Review
 - Town Council Office/Meeting Space Update
 - Staffing Structure Update

Any Questions?

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Taunton Shadow Town Council

1st December 2022

Taunton Town Council Office Accommodation

This matter is the responsibility of SWT Executive Councillor Mike Rigby (Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Planning and Transportation incl. Asset Management)

Report Author: Chris Hall - Deputy CEO and Director of Place and Climate Change

1 Executive Summary / Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 This report sets out an option for accommodating the office and meeting space needs of the to be created Taunton Town Council, it provides stability for that Council in the short term without tying them into a lengthy commercial lease. The space proposed is a separate room on the Ground Floor of Deane House with external access and use of shared kitchen and toilet facilities.
- 1.2 The decision on accommodation is needed as a matter of urgency so that ICT and telephony arrangements can be put in place, these are expected to have long lead in times with suppliers.
- 1.3 The report seeks to cover the roles of Somerset West and Taunton Council with a view to the impacts on Somerset Council, as well as giving consideration to the needs of the Taunton Town Council.
- 1.4 Somerset West and Taunton Council are able to make this offer without impacting on current working arrangements in Deane House. There is no negative impact on the Somerset Council as office rationalisation decisions have yet to be approved and the initial lease offered is limited to 12 months.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 Taunton Shadow Town Council are requested to make comment on the report and recommendations:
- 2.2 SWT Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Planning and Transportation/ Deputy CEO & Director of Place and Climate Change approve that:
- 2.3 The accommodation requirements for the 'to be' Taunton Town Council are agreed and a lease is entered into for 12 months starting on 1st April 2023.
- 2.4 It is further recommended that consent is given to allow works to that space to

commence under licence in the lead up to the lease start date.

3 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 Taunton Town Council (TTC) require office accommodation for employees and councillors, failure to establish this in a timely manner will delay the ICT and telephony infrastructure being in place for day 1 of that new authority.
- 3.2 Somerset West and Taunton council are not currently using this space and so a lease can be offer and agreed quickly without impact on other users of the building.
- 3.3 This recommendation has been shared with the joint chair of the Asset Optimisation Workstream. There were some initial concerns as to how further occupation of Deane House might impact on the office space rationalisation work underway. It was explained that this is spare capacity in Deane House and given its location is unlikely to have any impact on SWT/Somerset Council or others use of the building. The risk to the office rationalisation work is minimal and the length of the lease reduces any impact even further.
- 3.4 TTC, once vested might decide it does not want to retain space in Deane House, or the space offered might be deemed not to be suitable in future once in situ. The co-location of the Town Council and Somerset Council services should be considered as a positive step and a convenience for the public. At this stage we don't not know how much space would be required by the Town Council, however this space offered within the lease would be sufficient for the foreseeable employee numbers in the first 12 months.
- 3.5 The lease offered prevents TTC being bound, beyond 12 months, to a space that as yet cannot be defined. Officers are reluctant to make such a financial commitment for a future body without TTC being involved in scoping their requirements. Their requirements are likely to be reflected by their role in the direct delivery of services, at present there is only one employee planned to be in place for 1st April 2023, but it is likely that this will grow as they bed in. The space on offer allows for this without being unduly large or costly.
- 3.6 **Consideration of other options**
- 3.7 TTC would be required to evidence best value to the public for their costs. Whilst no exercise has been undertaken to explore external options for the Town Council the costs identified for the use of Deane House are in line with the other commercial users of the building, which include both private and public tenants.
- 3.8 Officers had held investigatory meetings and site visits when looking at the possibility of the usage of other publicly owned buildings within Taunton and none are currently available and require further appraisal. This appraisal exercise can be undertaken in the first year by the Town Council.

4 Background and Full details of the Report

- 4.1 TTC will require a base from which to operate from 1st April 2023.
- 4.2 There is no available specification of their needs as that has yet to be established. In

order to ensure they have an accessible and flexible space in time for their first day of operation capacity in Deane House is proposed on a 12-month lease.

- 4.3 The proposed area for the lease is 61m² and is flexible enough to be used for workstations and small private meetings. It is a separate room on the ground floor of Deane House with external access and use of shared kitchen and toilet facilities.
- 4.4 The financial terms offered are the same as those for other tenants in the building. In addition TTC will be able to hire committee room space for its meetings. TTC will need to work around and requirements of Somerset Council who will always take priority. However, the expectation is that there will be fewer clashes due to the likelihood of TTC meetings taking place in the evenings. The expectation is that the Town Council will be able to make use of the webcasting/AV equipment already in situ in the room or its successor.
- 4.5 The recommendations of this report ensure the Town Council have a space sufficient for their initial needs whilst also providing an income to Somerset Council.
- 4.6 If the co-location or the space offered is not sufficient the 12 month lease gives TTC time to establish their needs and review the market for accommodation elsewhere.
- 4.7 At present there is a parking allocation of two spaces included within the lease costs. Town Council meetings would be expected to take place after 6pm when the charging regime for the Deane House public car park finishes, so this should not have an adverse effect on elected Town Councillors.

5 Links to Corporate Strategy

- 5.1 The Community Governance Review for Taunton was a key project within the Internal Operations Directorate Plan and links to the Corporate Strategy.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

- 6.1 The rent offered is at £12.50 per sq ft plus £6.80 per sq ft for the service charge, this reflects the indexed position of all other lettings at Deane House.

Table 1: Summary revenue costs to TTC:

Item	Cost
Rent pa	£8,207.55
Service charge pa	£4,465.00
Insurance pa (estimated)	£70.00
Rates pa (estimated)	£2,700
Committee room hire (estimated 10 times pa x 4 hours @ £45 per hour (£175 for a 4 hour booking), plus Security guard costs of £15 per hour- total = £235	£2,350
Total (including estimates)	£17,792.55

- 6.2 There would be additional costs to TTC of £60 per hour for the hire of the committee room

- 6.3 The accommodation budget for TTC is £34,000 pa annum and therefore this represents a saving to them in the first year of circa £16,000

Unitary Council Financial Implications and S24 Direction Implications

- 6.4 The Section 24 Direction stipulates that consent of the County Council's executive is required for expenditure that exceeds certain criteria or for the disposal of an asset. Neither criteria are triggered by this lease if approved.
- 6.5 As per the Letter from the County Solicitor of 1st November 2022 SWT and SCC will work collaboratively to implement the recommendations on the CGR and to stand up Taunton Town Council in advance of 1st April 2023;
- 6.6 "The parties agree that the recommendations in the CGR should be implemented as effectively and efficiently as possible. In our discussions it has been clear that this objective would best be achieved by working closely with the District Council whose officers supported and advised their Council on the conduct and recommendations in the CGR."

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 SWT Council has no legal duty to provide accommodation space to TTC.
- 7.2 Any arrangements will be recorded in the form of a lease and if necessary a licence for work required prior to the commencement of the lease.

8 Climate, Ecology and Sustainability Implications

- 8.1 There are no identified climate, ecological, or sustainability implications.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

- 9.1 There are no identified safeguarding or community safety implications.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 10.1 There are no identified equality or diversity implications with Deane House being a fully accessible building.

11 Social Value Implications

- 11.1 There are no identified social value implications.

12 Partnership Implications

- 12.1 There are no identified partnership implications.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 13.1 There are no identified health and wellbeing implications.

14 Asset Management Implications

14.1 See the main body of the report.

15 Data Protection Implications

15.1 There are no identified data protection implications.

16 Consultation Implications

16.1 There are no identified consultation implications. The Shadow Town Council will be consulted on the proposal as per their designated role to act as an advisory body on the work being undertaken to set up a Town Council for 1st April 2023.

Contact Officers

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Recruitment of Town Clerk & RFO – the new Taunton Town Council

**Salary Scale: LC3 Above Substantive / LC4 Below Substantive – SCP 42 – 49 (currently £48,587 - £57,199)
(depending on experience and qualifications)**

Plus – Local Government Pension Scheme, Relocation Package and Free Parking.

The soon to be created new Taunton Town Council is seeking to appoint an innovative, forward thinking, and proactive Town Clerk & RFO to not just lead the Council in achieving its targets and aspirations but to be a key part of the setting up of the Council initially.

Based in the County Town of Taunton itself, with a population of around 50,000, and an initial precept of £2.1m for 2023/24, it will be the largest Town Council within Somerset. A number of services and facilities will be transferring to the new Town Council upon vesting day on 1st April 2023, but the potential for more to transfer in the future is both likely and exciting.

The Town Clerk & RFO will initially be employed by the current Principal Authority and will work with a number of their key Officers in setting up this new Town Council and will then move to the new body when it becomes a legal entity on 1st April 2023. The new Town Clerk will then be expected to lead the new Council – working with the new Councillors to agree a Corporate Plan, as well as be responsible for ensuring the Council is up to date with policies and complies with all legal requirements associated with a Council within the sector.

Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they have relevant experience – a track record of service achievement and innovation, commitment to public service, be motivated, community focused, and possess sound managerial, communication and organisational skills. Candidates should have a sound knowledge of local government law and procedures. A Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification is desirable, or a willingness to attain it within a reasonable timeframe.

Attendance at evening meetings and weekend events will be required, for which time off in lieu will be granted. Taunton Town Council will be committed to Equality of Opportunity and will actively welcome applications from all sections of the community.

A relocation package will be negotiated for the right candidate.

This process is being managed by a third party acting for the new Town Council. For an informal discussion and to access the Recruitment Pack and an application form then please call Mr Reg Williams on 07494 760535.

- **The closing date for the receipt of applications is 12 Noon on Monday 5th December 2022.**
- **Formal interviews will take place in Taunton at a location tba on Friday 16th December 2022.**
- **It is hoped the new Town Clerk & RFO will commence their role around Monday 30th January 2023.**

Taunton Town Council - Shadow Council

Meeting	Agenda Publication	Draft Agenda Items	Lead Officer
03-Nov-22	26-Oct-22	Appointment of Chair	Marcus Prouse
		Appointment of Vice-Chair	Chair
		Terms of Reference	Marcus Prouse
		Adoption of Procedure Rules	Marcus Prouse
		Introduction to the Implementation Plan/Project Governance	Various
		Forward Plan	Marcus Prouse/ Dan Webb
01-Dec-22	23-Nov-22	Vision Statement	Dan Webb/Marcus Prouse
		Implementation Plan Update	Dan Webb/Marcus Prouse
		Technical Advisor Project Overview	Reg Williams - SLCC
		Building/Office Options Paper	Marcus Prouse/Chris Hall
		Town Clerk Recruitment Update	Reg Williams/Tony Bryant
		Judicial Review Update	Tom Woodhams
		NO MORE ITEMS	
03-Jan-23	16-Dec-22	Taunton Garden Town Briefing	J Clifford
		Civic Activity/Cover from Vesting to the AGM	M Prouse
31-Jan-23	23-Jan-23	Implementation Plan Update	Various
		Budget Update	P. Fitzgerald & P. McClean
		Transfer of Assets & Services Update	C. Hall/S. Noyce/S.Stark
28-Feb-23	20-Feb-23	Implementation Plan Update	Various
		Standing Orders and Financial Procedure Rules	Marcus Prouse
		Elections Update	Elisa Day
30-Mar-23	22-Mar-23	Implementation Plan Update	Various
TO BE CONFIRMED		Somerset Association of Local Councils Briefing	
