

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of the Meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday 21 January 2016 at 6.30pm at The Place, Oakengates.

PRESENT:

Councillors J.C. Ashford, S.L. Barnes, S. Bentley, K.T. Blundell, M. Boylan, A.J. Burford, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, L.D. Carter, E.A. Clare, G.H. Cook, S. Davies, N.A. Dugmore, A.J. Eade, A.R.H. England, N.A.M. England, R.C. Evans, I.T.W. Fletcher, V.A. Fletcher, J.A. Francis, C.A. Furnival, E.J. Greenaway, K.R. Guy, M.B. Hosken, J. Jones, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, J. Loveridge, N.C. Lowery, C.N. Mason, A.D. McClements, A.A. Meredith, C.P.R. Mollett, L.A. Murray (Mayor), T.J. Nelson R.A. Overton, J. Pinter, G.C.W. Reynolds, S.A.W. Reynolds, S.J. Reynolds, H. Rhodes, K.S. Sahota (Leader), P.J. Scott, R.J. Sloan, C.F. Smith (Speaker), M.J. Smith, B.D. Tillotson, K.L. Tomlinson, W.L. Tomlinson, C.R. Turley, P.R. Watling and D.G. Wright

59. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 26 November 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors J.C. Minor and J.M. Seymour

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

62. LEADER'S REPORT & ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) Fields in Trust 'UK's Best Park Award

The Leader of the Council told Members that, on top of the recent Green Flag award Telford Town Park had recently received the prestigious 'UK's Best Park' award from Fields in Trust. The award had been based on a public vote. The Leader presented the award to Chris Pettman who received the award on behalf of the Friends of the Town Park and the Borough's staff team.

(ii) Leader's Report

The Leader reported on various matters including the ongoing Budget consultation which was due to close on 7 February. He pointed out that the Council was in consultation with the public, partners and Parish councils. This budget was more difficult than ever with the Council trying to preserve services against a backdrop of shrinking budgets. The Solar Farm was on course to make a £180k profit in its first financial year and the recent production of the pantomime Snow White at The Place

had been a great success, attracting audiences totalling 21,000. Superfast broadband had been rolled out in Doseley Road, Dawley, with more households and businesses getting access in the next few months. Twenty Pride in Your Community schemes were moving forward, benefitting local communities and Borough towns. The Leader also urged customers to contact the Council on line wherever possible in order to reduce costs, saving money and allowing vital services to be maintained. Finally, he highlighted that the Borough was leading the way on economic growth for the whole of the Marches region.

63. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported on a number of engagements that he had attended since the last meeting of the Council. He thanked his fellow councillors for their support. From mid-November to mid-January the Mayor had undertaken 33 official engagements. He thanked the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jane Pinter, for her hard work and support.

64. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions were received.

65. CABINET DECISIONS MADE SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Members received the report on the Cabinet decisions made since the last meeting of the Council.

66. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET

- i) Financial Management 2015/16
- ii) Service & Financial Planning 2016/17-2017/18

Councillor L D Carter, Cabinet Member: Council Finance & Service Delivery presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance, which provided an update on progress relating to the Capital Programme. There were some new capital allocations, virements and slippage which required formal approval by Full Council as well as approval of delegated authority to approve the use of Invest to save funds to support transitional arrangements for the delivery of some services through alternative service delivery models.

£80m in budget cuts had already been made and the Council was now faced with a further £30m reduction. The Council was consulting with and working together with the public, Town and Parish councils and communities to keep services available in the long term. 32 consultation events were planned across the Borough. Nothing that Borough councillors could do regarding the government's budget settlement but proposals needed to be sustainable over time and not just for the short term. In response to a question, he replied that he looked forward to an invitation to meet

with Newport Town Council. Following a question on income, Councillor Carter pointed out that the Council was generating record income receipts and that this success was vital in order to combat reducing government grant funding.

RESOLVED –

- a) that the changes to the Capital Programme, as shown in section 1 and appendix of the report be approved.
- b) that in accordance with the Service & Financial Planning Strategy presented to Cabinet on 7 January 2016, authority to approve funding from the Invest to Save fund to support the delivery of ongoing savings from alternative service delivery models and transitional arrangements with other organisations is delegated to the Managing Director after consultation with the Cabinet Member: Council, Finance & Service Delivery
- c) In order to support the delivery of further ongoing savings, the transfer of £3m from the projected 2015/16 underspend, which largely arises from debt rescheduling, to the Invest to Save Capacity Fund and the transfer of £3m to the Severance Fund

iii) Council Tax Support Scheme

Councillor L D Carter, Cabinet Member: Council Finance & Service Delivery presented the report of the Assistant Director: Neighbourhood & Customer which recommended approval of the revised Council Tax Support Scheme for 2016/17 and the continuation of the Council Tax Hardship Policy and Fund. During a positive debate a number of members spoke strongly in support of the scheme recommendations. Consultation responses had been strongly in favour of the proposals which had also supported unanimously by Scrutiny. Following a unanimous vote it was

RESOLVED –

- a) that the Council Tax Support Scheme Policy for 2016/17 as shown at Appendix A of the report be approved
- b) that the Council Tax Hardship Policy and fund of £30,000 continues in 2016/17

iv) Telford & Wrekin Local Plan

Councillor R A Overton, Cabinet Member: Housing, Public Health & Protection presented the report of the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist which sought approval for publication of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan and submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination in accordance with legislative requirements. A number of changes had been made to strengthen and improve the plan and to take account of local consultation. These including changes to proposals for housing development The Nedge and at the site of the former Beeches Hospital.

Regarding a point raised about development in Newport Councillor Overton noted that the Council would not extend development east of the A41 into open countryside.

RESOLVED –

- a) that the publication version of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan and the Policies Map (in Appendices 1 & 2 of the report) be approved and published and submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- b) that the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist, or any other officer authorised by him, be authorised to exercise all the Council's powers relating to the processing of the Local Plan through to adoption including all the powers under the 2012 regulations and the 2004 Act relating to preparation and submission of documents and information to the Secretary of State, the independent examination and further publication and adoption
- c) that the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist, or any other officer authorised by him, during the period between publication/submission and the end of the independent examination, to recommend to the inspector conducting the independent examination any changes to the Publication version of the Local Plan or the Policies map which the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist, or any other officer authorised by him considers appropriate in response to representations which may be received or changes in circumstances which may occur during this period.

67. SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE 2016/17

Councillor L D Carter, Cabinet Member: Council Finance & Service Delivery presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance & Human Resources (Chief Finance Officer) which determined the Council Tax base for General and Special Fund purposes for 2016/17.

RESOLVED –

- a) that the calculation of the tax base for 2016/17 as shown at paragraph 5.6 of the report and at Appendix 1 be approved.
- b) that, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012:2914) , the amount calculated for Telford & Wrekin Council Tax base for 2016/17 for its Special Fund Area shall be as per the appropriate Parish amounts detailed in Appendix 1 for the parishes listed in paragraph 5.7 of the report.

68. MINUTES OF BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Council noted the resolved and draft minutes of the following Boards and Committees:

Boundary Review Committee 30th November 2015

Health & Wellbeing Board 9th September 2015

Licensing Committee 14th October, 18th November and 16th December 2015

69. QUESTIONS

The following Questions were asked in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7:

1 Councillor P Scott asked the following question of Councillor S Davies

"Newport Library is a very well used amenity in the town. But it is not just a library. It is a First Point centre for Telford & Wrekin facilities and services, a meeting place for many local groups, an area for public consultations, a study centre for young readers, an internet area and much more. To lose this library would be a disaster for the town. Can the Leader confirm that all necessary steps will be taken to ensure that Newport retains this much need facility?"

Councillor Davies confirmed that the Council would work with all partners to save local libraries and meet with any group at any time to help bring this about.

2 Councillor E J Carter asked the following question of Councillor S Davies:

"Does the Cabinet Member for Business, Neighbourhood and Customer Services agree with me that the Newport Regeneration Partnership is the organisation which is best placed to take forward the planned "Newport Proposition" proposals in conjunction with the Borough Council?"

Councillor Davies replied that the Council would work with all partners from all sectors in an atmosphere of partnership and co-operation to take forward the proposals.

3 Councillor C Furnival asked the following question of Councillor K Sahota

"With the ever growing concerns and awareness of mental health across the country and our borough, and following a recent request from a Telford constituent, will the Leader of the Council be appointing a Member Champion to the Mental Health Challenge organisation?"

Councillor Sahota confirmed that Councillor Arnold England, Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care had been appointed to this role. He emphasised the importance of this issue and noted that this would be a key element of the Council's Health and Well Being strategy.

4 Councillor Stephen Reynolds asked the following question of Councillor R Overton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Housing, Public Health & Protection

"I note with concern the news that ShropDoc will close and the proposals are for a regional tender to replace this very vital service for our residents. Please inform us of the administration's views on the impact of these proposals on the residents of Telford & Wrekin and whether the CCG have spoken to the Council about the proposed process?"

Councillor Overton replied that this was part of a wider re-commissioning process involving NHS111 and the GP out of hours service. Telford & Wrekin CCG had informed the Council about the proposed process. The Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee had considered a report on this matter on 15 December and would consider this further at their February meeting, they had asked for regular reports from Telford and Shropshire CCG's. The CCG had widely circulated a letter on this matter to councillors and the relevant officers. There was no immediate risk to the Shropdoc service. Tendering processes were extremely complex and it was likely existing arrangements would have to be extended beyond October 2016. The Council would need to keep a close eye on this process.

70. NOTICES OF MOTION

i) Councillor R T Kiernan moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8, the following Motion

"This Council notes the help given by the Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service during the recent flooding and congratulates them on their quick response and assistance selflessly given to distressed communities in the north of England."

Councillor E J Carter seconded the motion.

Following a positive debate the motion was supported unanimously.

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved

(ii) Councillor A J Eade moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8, the following Motion:

"This Council welcomes the future abolition of the uniform national business rate and the ability for Telford & Wrekin Council to retain all locally collected business Rates to the benefit of local business and the local community"

Councillor S Bentley seconded the motion.

Councillor K S Sahota moved an amendment to the motion

Councillor L D Carter seconded the amendment.

Following a debate and vote the amendment was carried and the amended motion for debate was worded as follows:

“Whilst this Council welcomes the future abolition of the uniform national business rate and the ability for Telford & Wrekin Council to retain all locally collected business Rates to the benefit of local business and the local community, this Council expresses its disappointment that this may not be introduced until 2020.”

Following a lengthy debate the motion was approved

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved

71. COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR 5 MAY 2016

Members agreed to cancel the scheduled 5 May meeting as this clashed with the Police and Crime Commissioner Elections taking place on that day.

RESOLVED - that the scheduled 5 May council meeting be removed from the schedule of meetings

The meeting ended at 7.59 pm.

Mayor:

Date: