

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 12th January, 2009 at 5.00 p.m. at the Civic Offices, Telford

PUBLISHED ON FRIDAY, 16th JANUARY, 2009

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN WEDNESDAY, 21st JANUARY, 2009)

PRESENT: Councillors A.J. Eade (Chairman), S. Bentley, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, M.B. Hosken, A. Lawrence and J.M. Seymour

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors R.K. Austin, G.M. Green, and V. Tonks (Opposition Group Leaders)
Councillor K Tomlinson (Chairman of the Scrutiny Review Group on Footpath Gating)

CB-113 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8th December, 2008 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

CB-114 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor W.L. Tomlinson

CB-115 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

CB-116 RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY COMMISSION REPORT – FOOTPATH GATING

Key Decision identified as **Scrutiny Commission / Scrutiny Management Reports** in the Forward Plan published on 11th December 2008

Councillor K. Tomlinson presented the report of the Scrutiny Commission for Environment and Regeneration on the recent Review of Footpath Gating.

Councillor M.B. Hosken, Cabinet Member for Environment, presented the report that informed Members of the response to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Commission for Environment & Regeneration following a review of footpath gating.

The report summarised the response to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Commission for Environment & Regeneration and the responses were detailed in an appendix to the report.

The Commission's review had been thorough in its coverage and assisted by the involvement of a number of internal Officers and Elected Members.

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In December 2007 the Cabinet approved a Footpath Gating Strategy that outlined how the Council would process requests for the closure or gating of alleyways and footpaths due to anti-social behaviour. The Scrutiny review had focussed both on the operation of the new strategy and the assessed the management of existing gated footpaths and alleys.

To process requests for gating or closure of footpaths or alleyways, the new provisions contained within the Highways Act (1980), as amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act (2005), would apply. The Gating strategy outlined the process to be followed under the legislation to determine if it was appropriate to close or gate a footpath. Officers had evaluated 20 locations that had been requested for closure using the new process and it had been assessed that none of the sites were suitable for closure. Based on the crime and anti-social behaviour data analysed it was felt there were more appropriate interventions to address the issues rather than full closure of the footpaths. It was felt that the approved Footpath Gating Strategy and the Council's application of the legislation was appropriate for dealing with new requests for footpath closures or gates.

The Scrutiny Review had highlighted a number of instances where footpaths had previously been closed or gated. It was believed there may be up to 50 locations across the Borough, where gates/barriers were installed more than ten years ago. However, it was not clear precisely how many of those closures there were, whether correct legislation was used for closure/ gating or which area of the Council was responsible for ongoing maintenance and management of the gates/barriers. The recommendations of the Scrutiny Review, appended to the report, sought to address that issue.

Particular reference was made by the Cabinet Member, and the Scrutiny Lead Member, to the positive contributions of Councillor Ute Sambrook, who had experienced particular issues regarding footway gating in her Ward, to the review.

RESOLVED – that the response to the Scrutiny Commission's recommendations, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved

CB-117 VISION 2026 REFRESH

Key Decision identified as **Telford & Wrekin Partnership / Partnership Bid Applications and Projects** in the Forward Plan published on 11th December 2008.

Members considered a report of the Head of Policy, Performance & Partnership that sought approval of the 'refreshed' Vision 2026 document (Annex 1 to the report) as a basis for securing final endorsement by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). .

The report stated that Vision 2026 set out the LSP's longer term ambitions for the Borough. The initial document was published in 2006 and had now been

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'refreshed to take on board changes suggested through an extensive consultation process.

The key themes and ambitions of the refreshed Vision were:

- *A Modern City* - a vibrant Town Centre, with substantial new housing, and improved accessibility.
- *An Enterprising & Innovative Community* - a strong, diverse and low carbon local economy, based on strong business networks.
- *A Strong & Inclusive Community* - regenerated Borough Towns and former New Town estates, a thriving rural area and strong voluntary and community sector.
- *A Learning Community* – integrated learning provision providing vocational and academic skills.
- *A Sustainable Green Community* – a zero waste community, more sustainable forms of energy supply and green businesses.
- *A Safe, Caring & Healthy Community* – a place where people feel safe and secure, and health inequalities are reduced.

These were underpinned by two cross cutting themes; namely *Transforming the Borough* – creating an area with a strong and well-defined positive image and sense of place; and *Narrowing the Gap* – raising expectations and life chances within the Borough's more deprived communities.

During a debate on the proposals contained within the report, Members supported the measures outlined.

RESOLVED – that the 'refreshed' Vision 2026 document (as shown in Annex 1 of the report) be endorsed.

CB-118 COMMUNITY STRATEGY: REVIEWING OUR COMMUNITY PRIORITIES & PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURES

Key Decision identified as **Community Strategy / Local Area Agreement** in the Forward Plan published on 11th December 2008.

Members considered the report of the Head of Policy, Performance & Partnership that sought endorsement for proposed changes to the Council's Community Priorities as part of the 'refresh' of our Community Strategy and Priority Plans, and consequent changes to the Thematic Partnership structures.

The Council was in the process of 'refreshing' both the Community Strategy and Priority Plans. That presented an opportunity to revisit the Community Priorities and Thematic Partnership structures in the light of discussions with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Executive (Agenda Group), 'refresh' of Vision 2026 and the State of the Borough Conference.

In particular, that provided an opportunity to clarify how the 'housing', 'regeneration' and 'environment' agendas in terms of our Community Priorities and Partnership sub-structures were managed.

The suggested way forward was to treat 'Transforming Telford & Wrekin' as an overarching/crosscutting theme for the refreshed Community Strategy, and to create a new 'Housing' Community Priority with its own Priority Plan. That would reflect the additional priority policy objective identified in the draft Service & Financial Planning Strategy. Thematic Partnership structures would then be aligned with that new set of Community Priorities:

- Children & Young People
- Safe, Strong & Cohesive Community
- Healthier Communities & Vulnerable/Older People
- A Sustainable & Quality Environment
- Local Economy & Skills
- *Sustainable Housing Development*

Members welcomed the report.

RESOLVED – that the suggested way forward, as set out in Sections 5.3 and 6.3 of the report, be endorsed and LSP approval sought.

CB-119 PLANNING OF SCHOOL PLACES: STIRCHLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THREE OAKS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Key Decision identified as **Planning of School Places: Co-location of Three Oaks Primary and Stirchley Primary Schools to form a new Primary School at Stirchley District Centre** in the Forward Plan published on 11th December 2008.

Councillor S.Burrell, Cabinet Member: Children & Young People, presented the report of the Corporate Director: Children & Young People that sought approval for the seek approval from the Cabinet for formal consultation to take place in relation to proposals for the merger and co-location of Stirchley Primary School and Three Oaks Primary School to create a new primary school, as part of the Campus Telford & Wrekin vision linked to the Building Schools for the Future building programme.

The Council's policy on school reorganisations determined that reviews should take place, where appropriate, whenever particular circumstances emerge. Those included a pending head teacher retirement or resignation, a significant building issue or where there were an excessive number of surplus places.

It was therefore appropriate to apply the policy in respect of Stirchley and Three Oaks Primary Schools for the following reasons:

- The projected significant increase in the level of surplus places at Stirchley Primary school, over the next five years, together with the

proposals for the Lord Silkin campus as part of the Building Schools for the Future Programme had provided the opportunity for the creation of an all-through 2-19 Learning Community for the Stirchley area.

- The potential for replacement of ageing accommodation at both schools with a purpose built primary school fit for the 21st century. The existing buildings were in the main unsuitable in both size and shape of teaching areas. A new build would not only address those problems, but would also provide the opportunity for creating facilities for enhanced inter-agency support together with the associated education and community benefits.

Meetings had been held with all Telford & Wrekin Headteachers and governors during the past 3 years to share the vision for Campus Telford & Wrekin. Those discussions included the proposals for creating a Lord Silkin Learning Community which incorporated a new primary school to serve the Stirchley area. Further meetings had been held with the respective Headteachers and Chairs of Governors of both primary schools. The conclusion drawn from those meetings was that both schools were supportive of the proposals and wished to work closely with the Council to see the plans implemented.

Members supported the new initiative as being in line with current Council policy to provide enhanced provision for children and young people of the Borough.

RESOLVED –

- (a) **That the Corporate Director: Children and Young People be authorised to engage in formal consultation with key partners and stakeholders in respect of a proposal to merge and co-locate Stirchley Primary and Three Oaks Primary Schools into a new primary school.**

(The first phase would see the newly created primary school established on the Three Oaks Primary school site from September 2010, whilst the Building Schools for the Future work takes place on the Lord Silkin campus site. The second phase would see the creation of a new 360 place primary school as part of the Lord Silkin Learning Community with effect from 2013.)

- (b) **That a further report on the outcomes of consultation be brought to a Cabinet meeting in spring 2009.**

CB-120 BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Non Key Decision

Councillor J.M Seymour, Cabinet Member: Adult & Consumer Care, presented the report of the Corporate Director: Adult & Consumer Care, which sought to approve the Business Continuity Management Strategy.

The report stated that the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 required Local Authorities as Category 1 responders to maintain plans to ensure that they could respond effectively in an emergency and continue to deliver their critical services far as reasonably practical. It was also a requirement of the CPA (and CAA after April 2009) for the Council to have a business continuity plan in place for the delivery of all services following any kind of interruption event. As such it was imperative that the Council maintained a prepared and resilient organisation that was able to continue to deliver our identified priority services in the event of a business interruption. Whereas Emergency Planning prepares us for our outward response to the community in the event of an emergency, Business Continuity Planning was our inward response to ensure we could continue to provide our most critical services. The Business Continuity Management Strategy formed the framework for our Business Continuity Plans; those would consist of a Corporate Business Continuity Plan and Service Area Continuity Plans for each Service Area within the Council.

A business interruption could be the result of many things, and the report detailed the key potential risks identified for Telford and Wrekin.

Clearly there were measures in place to manage the risks, but having appropriate business continuity arrangements in place would make the Council more resilient and would ensure compliance with the appropriate legislation.

The report was welcomed by Members, who commented upon the reassurance of continued Council services at times of potential business interruptions.

RESOLVED – that the Business Continuity Management Strategy, as outlined in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

CB - 121 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2008-09

Non Key Decision

Councillor A.J Eade, Leader & Cabinet Member: Chief Executive's Unit, presented the report of the Head of Audit & Democracy which requested Cabinet to appoint replacement representatives to the following Outside Bodies:

- Telford & Shropshire Marketing Partnership
- Racial Equality & Diversity Partnership

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- CVS Projects Ltd.
- CVS Executive Committee
- Telford & The Wrekin Citizens' Advice Bureau
- Community Safety Partnership
- Shropshire Playing Fields Association
- County Sports Partnership
- STW2012 Group
- Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership

Councillor Denis Allen was appointed as the Council's representative on those Outside Bodies by Cabinet on 16th June, 2008. Following his resignation from these bodies, replacements were sought.

The scope of those Outside Bodies fell within the Community Services Portfolio. Councillor Allen was appointed in his own right and not as the Cabinet Member for Community Services, which was the position he held at that date.

To facilitate any future appointments to those Outside Bodies, Members were of the opinion that it was appropriate that the positions be assigned to the relevant Cabinet Member. Should there be any future changes to the holder of those positions; the responsibility for those representations would automatically change without the need to seek a replacement(s) through Cabinet.

RESOLVED – That the Cabinet Member for Regeneration be appointed to the Telford & Shropshire Marketing Partnership, and that the Cabinet Member for Community Services be appointed as a representative on to each of the other Outside Bodies detailed in paragraph 1 of the report for the remainder of the municipal year 2008-09.

CB-122 UPDATE ON THE REGENERATION OF THE SUTTON HILL ESTATE

Non Key Decision.

Councillor E.J.Carter, Cabinet Member: Regeneration and Councillor J M Seymour, Cabinet Member for Adult & Consumer Care, presented the joint report of the Corporate Director: Environment & Regeneration and the Head of Prevention & Protection that provided Members with a general update in connection with the regeneration of the Sutton Hill estate and sought Cabinet approval to specific proposals to enable further progress to be made.

Members were aware of interventions in Sutton Hill aimed at tackling housing and environmental issues to sustain the area in the short-term whilst simultaneously planning for longer-term improvements.

In order to engage local people in longer-term planning for the estate it was proposed to undertake a master-planning exercise. Once completed, it would present options for technical consideration and stakeholder consultation.

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A stock options appraisal (SOA) involved carrying out detailed technical surveys of dwellings. This was to include a representative sample (30%) of all dwellings for which a comprehensive internal, external and thermal efficiency survey was to be carried out. All other dwellings on the Sutton Hill estate would have an external survey only.

Completion of detailed surveys of a representative sample across all dwelling types would help to ensure that potential options for housing improvements were actually deliverable. The external surveys would help verify projections made from the full surveys and would also identify any problem premises.

It was important to get this part of the preparatory work right because the more detailed the SOA the more certain the Council would be about proposed solutions and their costs.

Late in 2007 a company ('the company') secured a contract through competitive tender to undertake a comprehensive cross-tenure stock condition survey across the borough. That work was completed to a high standard and consequently 'the company' were commissioned through an extension of contract to review and update the Council's housing renewal strategy and the Housing Assistance Policy (anticipated Cabinet report in February 2009).

A contract for an SOA in Sutton Hill would ordinarily be tendered in accordance with the Council's contract standing orders as set out in the constitution.

Detailed assessment of a provisional quotation already provided by 'the company' suggested that they were competitive on price, their track record indicated higher quality than their main competitors, they were familiar with the non-traditional construction techniques used in the former new town estates, and they were willing to start the work at relatively short-notice if it was awarded to them.

Alternatively, if contract standing orders were observed the work was unlikely to start earlier than April or May 2009 with projected completion in July to August. This would delay commissioning of the master-planning work and might undermine public confidence in the Council's commitment to regenerating Sutton Hill.

During an extensive debate, Members welcomed the consultation that had been undertaken with the residents of Sutton Hill, that clearly indicated that the Council was working with local people to improve local facilities and the local environment.

RESOLVED –

- a) **That progress to date in connection with the regeneration of the Sutton Hill estate be noted,**

- b) That the reasons for seeking to progress a stock options appraisal in Sutton Hill be noted,
- c) That the waiving of contract standing orders as set out at Part 4, Section 7, paragraph C.1 (a) of the Constitution so that a negotiated arrangement can be made with the company that carried out a borough-wide stock condition survey during 2008 ('the company') be approved,
- d) That proposals to seek tenders in line with contract standing orders at the earliest opportunity for all future work relating to stock condition surveys, stock options appraisals, and neighbourhood renewal assessments be noted,
- e) That the commissioning of a feasibility study into a new road link between Sutton Hill and Madeley be endorsed,
- f) That Delegated Authority be given to the Corporate Director: Environment & Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration to commission studies associated with the local centre,
- g) That Delegated Authority be given to the Corporate Director: Environment & Regeneration, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to agree protocols for the determination of a small programme of immediate improvements on the estate, in consultation with local residents,
- h) That the acquisition and subsequent demolition of two further dwellings in Sutton Hill be approved,
- i) That expenditure as set out at paragraph 7.2.1. of the report be approved

CB-123 SECTION 100 (4) LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

The Chairman made the following statement:

"I am of the opinion that the following item of business should be dealt with as a matter of urgency at this meeting in order to avoid any unnecessary delay that would seriously prejudice the Council's interests."

CB-124 'CREDIT CRUNCH' ADVICE CENTRE – TELFORD TOWN CENTRE

Key Decision not in the Forward Plan where the decision needs to be taken as a matter of urgency. Decision not subject to call-in - with the agreement of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Leadership Board, in accordance with paragraph 18 (a) and (b) of Section 5 of Part 4 (Rules of Procedure) of the Constitution.

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Councillor A.J Eade, Leader & Cabinet Member: Chief Executive's Unit, presented the report of the Head of Customer Services & Business Transformation which requested Cabinet approval for the Council to lease, where appropriate, premises in Telford Town Centre for the delivery of an Advice Centre, that would, in conjunction with partner organisations help residents and businesses of the Borough access services that would assist them in the current economic climate

Asset & Property Management had commenced negotiations for a two year lease for 31 Sherwood Street, Telford Town Centre, with the option to terminate the lease after 12 months by giving three months notice. Negotiations had not yet been concluded as there were other premises available in the Town Centre that the Council may consider.

Telford & Wrekin Council approved the Customer Services Strategy in 2007. The strategy had an objective to deal with as many customer enquiries at the first port of call, at a time and place convenient to customers. One of the actions within the Strategy to support that objective was to introduce series of One Stop Shops branded as First Point at (Name of town), that would help residents and businesses access Council and partner organisation services. The creation of an Advice Centre in Telford Town Centre was therefore in line with that objective.

The need for an Advice Centre in the Borough, that brought together a number of key Council and partner organisation services, had been heightened by the current economic recession and the "Credit Crunch", that were having a significant impact on residents and businesses within the Borough.

The aim of the Advice Centre was to provide residents and businesses with a single point of contact for multiple Council and partner organisation services, that could help them deal with the impact of the current economic recession.

Given the immediate need for the service, and the consequential short timescales for opening the Centre, it was proposed to initially deliver those key services that it was anticipated there would be greatest demand for, or would have the greatest impact on customers experiencing the outcome of the recession.

Those services included: CAB advisors and the full range of services that CAB provide through their existing locations e.g. debt management; Housing & Council Tax Benefits; Free School Meals; Council Tax and Business Rates, dealing with arrears and entitlement to discounts, exemptions and relief's; Welfare Benefits (Attendance Allowance, Carers Allowance, Tax Credits, identifying potential entitlement for customers and helping them claim those benefits; Housing Advice offering advice on housing options, tenants rights; Affordable Warmth offering advice on grants available, ways to reduce fuel bills; Community Learning who were able to provide careers advice, job search and training on basic Maths, English & IT, Writing CV's/Job

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Applications, Dealing With The Credit Crunch, Starting A Business.

The premises hopefully would also include a training room, allowing workshops and short training courses to be provided within the advice centre itself.

In addition, the Centre would have close links with the Department of Work and Pensions DWP, to provide information on accessing their services and the current jobs that are available in the region. The Council were also linking in with Transforming Telford to provide information on the services that were available to businesses in the area, and, in both cases, assisting customers to access those services.

Members were fully in favour of the proposals suggested.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That a lease be entered into for premises in or adjacent to Telford Shopping Centre with the lease being for a maximum of two years.**
- (b) That the Head of Asset & Property Management be authorised to negotiate, agree and enter into the lease on behalf of the Council.**
- (c) That the Head of Legal Services be authorised to agree and execute all necessary documents in relation to the lease.**

The meeting ended at 6.14 p.m.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

**Ken Clarke
Head of Audit & Democracy
Date: 16th January 2009**

Signed:

Date: