

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 12 May 2008 at 5.00 p.m. in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices

PUBLISHED ON FRIDAY, 16 MAY 2008

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN WEDNESDAY, 21 MAY 2008)

PRESENT: Councillors A.J. Eade (Chairman), D.G. Allen, S. Bentley, S. Burrell, E.J. Carter and J.M. Seymour

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors R.K. Austin, J.A. Dixon, R.E. Groom, W.L. Tomlinson and V. Tonks.

CB-168 MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 28 April 2008, be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

CB-169 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor A. Lawrence

CB-170 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CB-171 MANAGING BIODIVERSITY SCRUTINY REVIEW

Key Decision identified as **Scrutiny Commission/Scrutiny Management Board reports** in the Forward Plan published on 16 April 2008.

Councillors T.J. Hope and L. Lomax presented the report of the Scrutiny Commission for Environment & Regeneration regarding how biodiversity is managed in the Borough. This issue was examined partly because of the poor condition of the two Sites of Special Scientific Interest which were owned and managed by the Council, from which it became clear that there was a wider issue around how biodiversity was managed. The Review Group had looked at relevant legislation, sites of biodiversity interest in Telford & Wrekin and how these were managed by both the Council and external organisations. They had also spoken to a wide range of organisations and individuals involved in the management of wildlife sites.

Scrutiny Members had concluded that there was a lot of good work being done by the Council and other organisations to protect and enhance biodiversity. However, there was a lack of strategic vision and co-ordination of work, which limited the impact of this work. There was a need to place a higher priority on managing biodiversity, and the report set out a number of

recommendations for the Cabinet to consider. The recommendations covered five key areas:

- strategic working across the Council, including the development of a Biodiversity Strategy for Telford & Wrekin;
- the Telford Environment Partnership, including a recommendation for a Cabinet Member to sit on this body;
- gathering biodiversity data;
- managing sites of biodiversity interest;
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The Cabinet response to the report's recommendations was attached to the Agenda, and Cabinet Members thanked the Commission for their work. The Cabinet welcomed most of the recommendations in the report, subject to appropriate funding being available for some of the investment being called for. For example, additional resources might be required in the short term to support the establishment of the Biodiversity Strategy. In relation to recommendation 2c), Cabinet agreed that a senior elected Member with an interest in this subject should represent the Council on the Telford Environment Partnership, but that it need not necessarily be a Cabinet Member.

Attached at Appendix 2 of the report was the West Midlands Biodiversity Pledge, which all local authorities in the region were being encouraged to adopt. The commitments were in line with the Scrutiny Commission's recommendations, and it was proposed that Officers further investigate the implications for the Authority of signing the pledge, and report back to Cabinet.

RESOLVED -

- (a) that the response to the Scrutiny Commission's recommendations, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.**
- (b) that a further report be brought to Cabinet on the implications of the Council signing the West Midlands Biodiversity Pledge.**

CB-172 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY- A CLIMATE FOR CHANGE

Key Decision identified as **Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan** in the Forward Plan published on 16 April 2008.

Councillor S. Bentley, Cabinet Member for Environment, presented the report of the Corporate Director: Environment & Regeneration that sought approval of the final version of the Climate Change Strategy and associated Action Plan.

Following Cabinet approval of the draft Strategy at the end of January 2008, a six week public consultation had been carried out. More than 350 individuals had contributed to the consultation, and the results showed that Climate

Change was an issue that concerned the majority of residents of the Borough. A full overview of the comments received was appended to the report. Careful consideration had been given to the implications of making any suggested changes to the draft Strategy, and the reasons for the proposed inclusion or exclusion of suggested changes was provided. Issues had emerged from the consultation exercise in relation to the proposed targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions for the Borough wide Community and for the Council's own operations. Following further consideration by the Corporate Climate Change Board, these targets had been amended. The revised Strategy was appended to the report, along with an initial Action Plan with priority actions to deliver the Council's carbon reduction target. Progress against targets would be monitored and reviewed, with a report to Cabinet every 12 months.

Members welcomed the report, although some concern was expressed that the Government was not providing any additional resources to local authorities for this work. It was suggested that the number of people who had responded to the consultation was not enough to be representative of the whole Borough, to which the Cabinet Member advised that Officers had worked very hard to engage local people and that the response rate was relatively good for such consultation exercises.

RESOLVED –

- (a) **that the final version of the Borough's Climate Change Strategy – 'A Climate for Change' – be approved.**
- (b) **that the initial Action Plan, as shown at Appendix 2 of the report, be approved.**
- (c) **that a further progress report be received in December 2008 following a six month review of the Strategy and Action Plan.**

CB-173 MEDIUM TERM CORPORATE PERFORMANCE STRATEGY – PRIORITY PLANS

Key Decision identified as **Corporate Strategy/Council Plan** in the Forward Plan published on 16 April 2008.

The Head of Policy, Performance & Partnership presented his report setting out the Priority Plan documents as the basis of the Council Plan and corporate performance strategy for the period 2008-2010.

The Priority Plans were based on the Council's Community Priorities of

- Maintaining a High Quality, Attractive and Sustainable Environment;
- Creating a Safe, Strong and Cohesive Community;
- Promoting Healthy Communities and Improving the Quality of Life of Vulnerable and Older People;
- Strengthening the Local Economy and Skills of Local People.

There was not a separate plan for the cross-cutting priority of “Transforming Telford & Wrekin”. As this contributed to the delivery of the other community priorities, it had instead been embedded within the most relevant Priority Plan. In parallel, a medium-term plan (to be embedded within the Corporate Business Plan) was being developed in relation to the priority to be an ‘Efficient, Effective Council’. This would be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet in the near future. The Council Plan, which would be submitted for approval to Full Council in June, would include a summary of the strategies, key targets and actions from each of the Priority Plans and Corporate Business Plan alongside performance, financial and other contextual information.

The main aim of the Priority Plans was to ensure that, from 2008/09, the Council had a consistent layer of strategic plans, aligned to resources, which clearly showed how it would deliver its priorities over the next 3 years. Appendix 1 of the report showed how the Priority Plans fitted into the overall revised service planning framework. Appendix 2 provided an overview of the Corporate Strategy for the next 3 years by bringing together a summary of the key focuses and priorities for improvement for each of the Community and corporate priorities. Full versions of the draft Priority Plans had been available on the Council’s Website, at Civic Offices Main Reception and in the Members’ Room.

To ensure that there was an opportunity for non-executive members to input into the process, presentations on key aspects of each Priority Plan were made to all Scrutiny Commissions during the week commencing 14 April. It was also emphasised that, even when the Priority Plans were approved, they would not be “cast in tablets of stone”, with an annual review and update as part of the overall service and financial planning process.

The relevant Cabinet Members then each provided an overview of the Priority Plan for their Portfolio area, as follows:

- Giving Children & Young People the Best Possible Start in their Lives – Cllr S Burrell
- Maintaining a High Quality, Attractive and Sustainable Environment – Cllr S Bentley
- Creating a Safe, Strong and Cohesive Community – Cllr D Allen
- Promoting Healthy Communities and Improving the Quality of Life of Vulnerable and Older People – Cllr J Seymour
- Strengthening the Local Economy and the Skills of Local People – Cllr E Carter

In response to comments from Members, the Chief Executive advised that the Plans had been developed across the Portfolios, so that they were cross-cutting rather than based on departmental structures. The Council’s strategic partners had been involved all the way through the process. In relation to having targets that were linked to the community’s priorities, the Chief Executive added that tough negotiations were currently being held with the

Government Office West Midlands about the specific Local Area Agreement 2 targets.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the Priority Plans be endorsed as the basis for publication.
- (b) that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive or appropriate Corporate Director, following consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member, to make any final amendments and approve publication.

CB-174 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Council matter – not subject to Call-in

Councillor J.A. Dixon, Cabinet Assistant: Resources (on behalf of Cllr A. Lawrence – Cabinet Member for Resources) presented the report of the Corporate Director: Resources that outlined the updated Local Code of Good Governance following its review against recent guidance. An updated Local Code of Good Governance was attached to the report.

The Council's Local Code of Good Governance summarised the underlying culture of the Council and how it would deliver the appropriate quality services to the Community it served. CIPFA/SOLACE reviewed the Good Governance Standards for Public Services for specific application to Local Government, and the CIPFA/SOLACE documents 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (Framework and Guidance)' were published in June 2007. The Council's Code had already been reviewed and updated against the Public Services document, and this update aimed to reflect the local government application and also to make it clearer for Members, officers and the public to understand.

Once adopted, the updated Local Code would be circulated widely to all Members and Officers, accompanied by explanatory information. Awareness training would be provided to all appropriate Members and Officers.

RESOLVED – **TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that the updated Local Code of Good Governance be adopted.

CB-175 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

CB-176 ACQUISITIONS OF DWELLINGS IN SUTTON HILL

Key Decision identified as **Acquisition of Dwellings in Sutton Hill** in the Forward Plan published on 16 April 2008.

Councillor J.M. Seymour, Cabinet Member for Adult & Consumer Care, presented the report of the Head of Prevention & Protection, which sought approval for the acquisition of four dwellings in Sutton Hill.

Following recent public meetings in Sutton Hill, problems caused by long-term empty dwellings were highlighted as impacting on the quality of life of residents. Eight such dwellings had been identified – most of which were in private ownership. At this stage, it was proposed that the Council acquire four of the properties in accordance with Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985. Detailed financial and legal implications were provided in the report, along with the proposed future uses for the dwellings/sites.

In response to concern expressed about the value of the properties to be acquired from private landlords, it was advised that the Head of Asset & Property Management would only negotiate on a price that was considered appropriate for the condition of the property. Members welcomed this initiative as part of the on-going work to improve the quality of life for residents of Sutton Hill.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that dwelling nos. 59, 60, 61 and 108 Summerhill, Sutton Hill be acquired on terms to be agreed by the Head of Asset & Property Management.
- (b) that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to agree and execute all necessary documents in relation to the acquisitions.

CB-177 REPROVISION OF MENTAL HEALTH RESIDENTIAL SERVICES

Key Decision identified as **Provision of Mental Health Services** in the Forward Plan published on 13th March 2008.

Councillor J.M. Seymour, Cabinet Member for Adult & Consumer Care, presented the report of the Corporate Director: Adult & Consumer Care, which sought approval for completion of arrangements and a tendering process leading to the award of a contract for the provision of 7 residential rehabilitation placements for adults with mental health problems at Ellen Court, Wellington.

The current contract expired at the end of March 2009. Commissioning managers had reviewed the service and considered that it was integral to meeting the needs of mental health service users who require residential care in Telford & Wrekin. It was therefore proposed that a five year contract should

be tendered for the period 2009-2014. The report provided further details of the services provided by the contract and the current costs involved.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the re-tendering of the provision of residential mental health care and support services at Ellen Court be approved.
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Corporate Director: Adult & Consumer Care to award a contract for up to a 5 year term for the provision of residential mental health services, following competitive tendering in accordance with the Council's Constitution, and to enter into appropriate contractual documentation subject to the terms and conditions recommended by the Head of Legal Services (including a new funding agreement between the Council and Telford & Wrekin Primary Care Trust under Section 256 NHS Act 2006), with authority for the Council's seal to be affixed, as appropriate.

CB-178 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW EXTRA CARE HOUSING SCHEME AT LIGHTMOOR, TELFORD

Key Decision identified as **Extracare Housing Development at Lightmoor** in the Forward Plan published on 13th March 2008.

Councillor J.M. Seymour, Cabinet Member for Adult & Consumer Care, presented the report of the Corporate Director: Adult & Consumer Care, which sought approval for the use of funding allocated within the Council's capital programme for the proposed extra care housing scheme that was being developed by Bourneville Village Trust as part of a new community at Lightmoor Village in Telford.

The proposed scheme would provide a 59 dwelling specialist housing for older and disabled people as an alternative to residential care. The new development would assist the Council in achieving its Housing Care & Support Strategy aim of developing 500 additional extra care housing dwellings by 2021.

The report set out how the scheme would be funded, including a contribution from the Council of up to £1 million.

RESOLVED – that the use of funding allocated within the Council's capital programme up to a maximum of £1 million to support the development of a new extra care housing scheme at Lightmoor be approved.

The meeting ended at 6.28 p.m.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Ken Clarke
Head of Audit & Democracy
Date: 16th May, 2008

Signed:

Date: