

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of a meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday, 5 March 2009 at 6.30 pm, at the Civic Offices, Telford.

PRESENT:

Councillors I.T.W. Fletcher (Speaker), D.G. Allen, G. Ashcroft, D.W.D. Ashley (Deputy Speaker), R.K. Austin, R. Aveley, S. Bentley, K.T. Blundell, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, R.G. Chaplin, E.A. Clare, G.J.L. Davies, J.A. Dixon, N.A. Dugmore, A.J. Eade (Leader), V.A. Fletcher, J.A. Francis, G.M. Green, E.J. Greenaway, R.E. Groom (Mayor), Y.C. Hicks, P.A.E. Homer, T.J. Hope, M.B. Hosken, G.P. Hossell, S.M. Kelly, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, L. Lomax, A.A. Mackenzie, A.D. McClements, J.C. Minor, C.P.R. Mollett, R.A. Overton, F.R. Picken, H. Rhodes, K.S. Sahota, U.E. Sambrook, J.M. Seymour, C.F. Smith, A.J. Stanton, E.M. Swift, M.J. Smith, K.L. Tomlinson, W.L. Tomlinson, V. Tonks, D.R.W. White, A.G.P. Williams, H.J. Williams and D.G. Wright

72. PRAYERS

Councillor V.A. Fletcher said prayers.

73. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 29 January, 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Speaker.

74. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors C.N. Mason, A.A. Meredith and R.M. Tyler.

75. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

76. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayoral Engagements

The Mayor, Councillor R.E. Groom, presented the Mayoral Engagements report and Members noted those undertaken between 27th January 2009 and 1st March 2009. He particularly highlighted his visit in February to Enterprise HQ Business Centre at Coalport, paying tribute to the excellent facilities. Members noted the engagements undertaken by the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor between 27th January 2009 and 1st March 2009.

77. REPORTS OF LEADER AND CABINET

(a) Report of Leader

Councillor A.J. Eade informed Members of the Council's recent decision to relinquish membership of the Birmingham, Coventry and Black Country City Region. He told Members that he welcomed sub-regional working and supported any partnership work that helped the Borough. The Council would look to work together with existing partners and neighbours without retaining formal membership of the City Region.

(b) Report of Cabinet

The report of the Cabinet, setting out the matters determined on the 26th January, 2009, 9th February, 2009 and the 23rd February, 2009 was received.

Councillor S.P. Burrell, Cabinet Member: Children & Young People highlighted the achievements of the Joint Youth Offending Service following Cabinet's recent endorsement of the Annual Youth Justice Plan. The Youth Justice Board had given a top rating to the plan during its assessment.

RESOLVED – that the Cabinet report be noted.

78. POLITICAL BALANCE

The Leader, Councillor A.J. Eade, presented the report of the Head of Audit & Democracy. The report informed Members of changes in the Council's political balance and the resulting changes to the allocation of seats on the Scrutiny Leadership Board and the Audit Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the change to the Council's political balance be noted;**
- (b) That the change in the allocation of seats on the Scrutiny Leadership Board and the Audit Committee be agreed.**

79. COUNCIL BUDGET 2009/10

(A) Service & Financial Planning 2009/10 – 2011/12

Councillor A. Lawrence, Cabinet Member: Resources presented the joint report (Appendix E1) of the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director: Resources which sought approval of a Service & Financial Planning strategy for the period 2009/10-2011/12 including specific budget proposals for 2009/10, as recommended by Cabinet at its meeting on 23rd February, 2009. The report, together with those covering the Capital Programme, the Treasury Management Strategy, and the Prudential Indicators formed the overall Medium Term Service & Financial Planning framework for the Council and Council 050309Minutes

proposed the service priorities and budget for 2009/10. It also outlined the wide range of challenges facing the area, particularly from the deepening recession, where the Council and its partners must look to take the lead on behalf of the people and businesses of the area.

The report informed Members that, given the unprecedented financial and economic situation still unfolding, the Council had been reviewing its budget assumptions in the last few weeks to ensure that the budget and medium term strategy up to March 2012 were based on the most up to date information. The Council's investment income and borrowing projections had been updated to take account of changing interest rates and restructuring opportunities. The changes to regulations around capital accounting arrangements had provided an opportunity to review this area. Adjustments had been made to both base budget and the savings package to take account of the pressure on revenue income. At the same time additional prudential borrowing together with the new capital accounting arrangements and borrowing restructures, had given flexibility to accommodate delays on capital receipts and allow key schemes such as the Borough Towns Initiative to continue, giving a boost to the local economy. The base budget had been compiled in the autumn when inflation trends were peaking; assumptions had now been revisited to take account of falling inflation. A range of initiatives to help local people had been developed. These included a one stop advice centre and the piloting of changes to the availability of concessionary fares. The Leegomery Centre redevelopment scheme had been approved by Cabinet, it had not been in the original proposals in December. After all these changes, the net 3 year financial projection was only marginally different to that in the 8th December strategy papers. However, the need to drive down council tax increases even further had now led the Administration to propose an additional £1m saving (£0.8m part year) in senior management costs to support a Council Tax increase of only 2.5%.

Members had considered the responses to their consultation process as well as using updated budget assumptions and looking at what initiatives the Council could lead to help local people and businesses.

In summary, the final proposals for the 2009-10 budget and a strategy for the three year period up to March 2012 were as follows:

- Confirmation of the second year of the 3 year Investment Programme which invests a further £16m in infrastructure projects and £1.7m in services including Adult and Children's social services and Credit Crunch initiatives.
- A general savings package of £3.8m for 2009/10 plus a further £0.35m in Education services ,and target of at least £6.4m for the 2010/11 to 2011/12 period
- Use of £0.95m balances to support the ongoing net budget in 2009/10
- An additional £1m contingency for 2009/10 funded by virement from the surplus generated by Treasury Management operations in the 2008/09 budget

- A council tax increase of 2.5% for 2009/10 and subsequent years in this planning period, subject to the impact of the new 3 year grant settlement due for 2011/12.

The summary below shows the 2009/10 proposals, 3 year savings targets and investment programme.

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
	£m	£m	£m
Shortfall b/f	1.23	6.08	10.33
Annual funding requirement including 3 year investment package -2008/09 to 2010/11	4.85	4.25	4.90
Cumulative funding requirement prior to tax rise and savings decisions	6.08	10.33	15.23
Funded by:			
Savings	(3.80)	(7.00)	(10.20)
Council tax increase of 2.5%pa	(1.33)	(2.69)	(4.08)
Use of Balances	(0.95)	(0.64)	(0.95)
Funding Package	(6.08)	(10.33)	(15.23)

The Cabinet Member: Resources presented the joint report of the Corporate Director: Resources, the Head of Finance, the Head of Asset & Property Management, and the Head of Policy, Performance & Partnership, the 2009-10- 2010-11 Capital Strategy and Capital Programme, including the proposed Asset Management Plan and related Building Maintenance Programme, for approval (Appendix E2).

The Cabinet Member: Resources presented the joint report of the Corporate Director: Resources and the Head of Finance which provided an update on the 2008-09 Treasury Management activities and sought approval for the Treasury Management and Annual Investment Strategies for 2009-10 (Appendix E3).

The Cabinet Member: Resources also presented the report of the Corporate Director: Resources and the Head of Finance which requested approval of the Prudential Indicators for 2009-10 to 2011-2012, as required under the Prudential Code of Capital Finance in Local Authorities (Appendix E4)

In moving the recommendations, Councillor A. Lawrence thanked officers and Cabinet Assistants for their hard work in preparing the budget proposals. Council Tax was being kept down to help local residents and businesses. This administration believed in keeping Council Tax levels low. Telford & Wrekin had the lowest Council Tax in Shropshire and one of the lowest in the West Midlands. The protection and improvement of front line services was a key priority. He told Members that this budget would make a difference. He pointed out that this budget had been consultative and reflected the needs

and views of local people. He particularly highlighted the £3.8m in savings, the Concessionary Travel pilot scheme, the advice centre in Telford Library, the prudent use of balances and the Council's initiative to make quicker payments to suppliers in order to help cash flow for small businesses. He pointed to the significant Capital investments planned for the coming years. The Borough Towns Initiative, the regeneration of the South Telford estates and the Building Schools for the Future project were amongst the projects recommended to Members. Councillor J.A. Dixon seconded the recommendations.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14.6(b) Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, moved, seconded by Councillor R.K. Austin, Labour Group Leader, the following amendment to report E2. Details of the amendment were tabled in the form of an amended Capital Programme report (Appendix E2 and Annex II (a)).

"That the recommendation of Appendix E2 – Capital programme be approved subject to the revised figures shown in the tabled copy of the report and Annex II (a) whereby £3,000,000 is transferred from Environment & Regeneration (Growth Areas and Growth Points) to Housing (Social Housing) over the two year period of 2009-10/2010-11."

In moving the amendment, the Leader referred to the administration's policy of consulting with both residents and Members. He stressed the importance of offering help to local people, the housing market and the hard pressed construction industry by stimulating house building in the area. He pointed out that the community expected the Council to work together to face difficulties. This was why, when Councillor Austin had raised this initiative with him, he had been happy to move the amendment to the budget's capital programme.

Councillor R.K. Austin, seconding the amendment, told Members that he felt that the original budget proposals should have reflected the acute lack of social housing in the area. Investment in social housing would stimulate the local economy. He told Members that his group would support the proposed budget with the amendment to the capital programme. He reserved the right to bring an emergency budget during the coming financial year.

A number of Members supported the amendment. A number of Members supported the idea of partnership working to provide social and low cost housing.

The proposed amendment was put to the vote and carried unanimously. The amendment having been carried, Members then debated the recommendations of reports E1, E2, E3 and E4. Following a robust debate, the recommendations were voted upon and it was:

RESOLVED –

Service & Financial Planning 2009/10 – 2011/12 – Overview & Revenue Budget

- (a) That the Base Budget, summarised in Appendix 1 of report E1, be approved;
- (b) That the Investment Programme, outlined in Appendix 3 of report E1, be approved
- (c) That the 2009/10 Savings Package of £3.8m in Appendix 4 plus £0.35m in Education services with an outline target of at least £6.4m additional savings over the 2010/11 and 2011/12 period be approved;
- (d) That the Education budget strategy in paragraph 5.7 be approved;
- (e) That £0.95m balances be used to support the ongoing revenue budget plus the associated policy for Reserves and Balances in appendix 5;
- (f) The creation of an additional £1m one off contingency funded from a £1m virement of Treasury Management savings within the 2008/09 budget as proposed in paragraph 5.5.2 be approved;
- (g) The Statement of the Chief Finance Officer in paragraph 5.8 (supported by appendix 5 outlining the Robustness of Budget Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves) be approved;
- (h) The policy framework for Reserves outlined in appendix 5C be approved;
- (i) A Council Tax increase of 2.5%-a rise of just under 40p per week on the average bill for this Council's services be approved. Future increases will also be held at this level for the 3 year planning period, subject to the impact of the next 3 year grant settlement starting in 2011/12.

Service & Financial Planning 2009/10 – 2011/12 – Capital Programme

- (j) That the report (Appendix E2) and associated capital estimates which incorporates the Capital Strategy, the Capital Programme (Annex II), the Planned Building Maintenance Programme (Annex III), Capital Virements and Approvals (Annex IV) and Asset Management Plan (Annex V) be approved subject to the revised figures shown in the tabled copy of the report and Annex II (a) whereby £3,000,000 is transferred from Environment & Regeneration (Growth Areas and Growth Points) to Housing (Social Housing) over the two year period of 2009-10/2010-11.

Treasury Management Strategy and Update

- (k) That the Treasury Management, Minimum Revenue Provision and Investment Strategies for 2009/10 as outlined in report E3 be approved;
- (l) That approval be granted for West Mercia Supplies to be able to use a US dollar account;

Prudential Indicators

- (m) That the Prudential Indicators outlined in report E4 and recommended by Cabinet on 23rd February 2009, be approved as part of the setting of the budget for 2009/10.

(B) Council Tax – Formal Resolution for 2009/10

The Council Tax base had been determined at the Council Meeting held on 29th January 2009 and, following approval of the Council’s General and Special Fund budgets for 2009/10 the Cabinet Member: Resources moved approval of the appropriate resolutions (Appendix E5) to formally set Council Tax levels throughout the area for the spending requirements of Telford & Wrekin Council, the West Mercia Police Authority, Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, and the Parish and Town Councils.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That it be noted that at its meeting on 29th January 2009 the Council calculated the following amounts for the year 2009/10 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (The Act):-

- (i) 50,245 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (The Regulations), as its Council Tax base for the year (The Council Tax Base).

(ii) **Part of the Council’s AreaTax Base**

The Parish of:-

Chetwynd	241.50
Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote	162.60
Church Aston	488.80
Dawley Hamlets	2,014.20
Edgmond	530.30

Ercall Magna	612.80
The Gorge	1,102.40
Great Dawley	3,163.50
Hadley & Leegomery	4,048.10
Hollinswood & Randlay	1,568.70
Ketley	1,109.90
Kynnersley	76.70
Lawley & Overdale	1,932.50
Lilleshall & Donnington	4,321.70
Little Wenlock	236.90
Madeley	4,858.10
Newport	3,680.40
Oakengates	2,487.50
Preston	91.70
Rodington	342.30
St. Georges & Priorslee	3,826.40
Stirchley & Brookside	2,734.50
Tibberton & Cherrington	272.10
Waters Upton	392.80
Wellington	6,853.60
Wrockwardine	1,458.50
Wrockwardine Wood & Trench	1,599.80
	50,208.3

being the amounts calculated by the Council in accordance with Regulation 6 of The Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- b) That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2009/10 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of The Act:-
- (a) £403,874,153 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) (a) to (e) of the Act.
 - (b) £279,297,880 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3) (a) to (c) of the Act.
 - (c) £124,576,273 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3.2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3.2(b) above,

calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.

- (d) £67,515,485 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates and revenue support grant, increased by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its collection fund to its general fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Council Tax Surplus) and increased by the amount of any sum which the Council estimates will be transferred from its collection fund to its general fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charges) directions made under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 made on 7 February 1994 (Community Charge Surplus), the Collection Fund (Adjustment for Previous Years) (England) Directions 2000 and the Local Authorities (Alteration of Requisite Calculations) (England) Regulations 2009.
- (e) £1,135.65 being the amount at 3.2(c) above less the amount at 3.2(d) above, all divided by the Council Tax base, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- (f) £3,704,193 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- (g) £1,061.92 being the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates (calculated by deducting from the amount at 3.2(e) above, the quotient of the amount at 3.2(f) above divided by the Council Tax Base). The only area that this relates to is the Parish of Eyton.

(h) <u>Part of the Council's Area</u>	£
The Parish of:	
Chetwynd	1,070.20
Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote	1,072.99
Church Aston	1,090.56
Dawley Hamlets	1,094.20
Edgmond	1,085.22
Ercall Magna	1,109.02
The Gorge	1,135.47
Great Dawley	1,168.74

Hadley & Leegomery	1,122.69
Hollinswood & Randlay	1,184.72
Ketley	1,133.99
Kynnersley	1,074.89
Lawley & Overdale	1,133.76
Lilleshall & Donnington	1,105.19
Little Wenlock	1,107.12
Madeley	1,160.67
Newport	1,173.31
Oakengates	1,151.23
Preston	1,063.01
Rodington	1,089.06
St. Georges & Priorslee	1,100.49
Stirchley & Brookside	1,192.22
Tibberton & Cherrington	1,072.02
Waters Upton	1,093.99
Wellington	1,136.60
Wrockwardine	1,091.40
Wrockwardine Wood & Trench	1,130.16

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3.2(g) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 3.1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- (i) The amounts in Appendix 1 being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3.2(g) and 3.2(h) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- c) The West Mercia Police Authority's precept for 2009/10 was set at its meeting on 17th February 2009. The following amounts were

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stated in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

<u>Valuation</u> <u>Band</u>	<u>Amount</u> <u>£</u>
A	115.75
B	135.04
C	154.33
D	173.62
E	212.20
F	250.78
G	289.37
H	347.24

- d) The Shropshire & Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority's precept for 2009/10 was set at its meeting on 11th February 2009. The following amounts were stated in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

<u>Valuation</u> <u>Band</u>	<u>Amount</u> <u>£</u>
A	54.30
B	63.35
C	72.40
D	81.45
E	99.55
F	117.65
G	135.75
H	162.90

- e) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3.2(i) and 4 and 5 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, hereby sets the amounts in Appendix 2 as the amounts of council tax for the year 2009/10 for each of the categories of dwellings shown.

80. MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

The Council received for noting the minutes of the Plans Board of 14th January, 22nd January and 4th February 2009, the Audit Committee of the 27th January, the Licensing Committee of 16th December 2008 and 22nd January 2009, the Standards Committee of 18th December 2008 and 11th February 2009, and the Scrutiny Leadership Board of 5th January 2009 and 20th of January 2009.

81. QUESTIONS

The following Questions were asked in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10:

(a) Councillor H.J. Williams had submitted the following question:

“Following the recent spate of bad weather, which took the whole country by surprise in its ferocity, what lessons have been learnt by the Highways Department of this Council regarding gritting and the subsequent damage to the roads, and what contingency plans are in place should this happen again?”

Councillor M.B. Hosken, Cabinet Member: Environment, responded:

“Thank you for your question, I will provide a written response”.

The written response was as follows:

“I think that it is important to set the context in order to respond to this question. This winter, to date, has been the worst this country has experienced in 18 years. The problem has been a national problem not just a local problem. Every highway authority in the country has severely suffered as a result of the national salt shortage. A quote in the Surveyor magazine stated that “nationally, more gritting was done in one week than in the whole of last year.” Locally, we have had 70 RED forecasts this year already, meaning sub zero temperatures, compared with 20 for the whole of last year. We have already made 110 salting turnouts this year compared with the average of 70 for the last five years and used over 5300 Tonnes of salt compared with an average of 2860 Tonnes over the past 4 years.

In Telford & Wrekin we have a salt barn with a capacity for storing 1400 Tonnes of salt. The summer restock was carried out in July well before the start of the winter season and the barn was full. Salt deliveries were normal to December and although Salt Union, the company that mines and delivers salt for the majority of the country, experienced a plant failure in December our barn was full at Christmas. In fact the barn was fully stocked on the 28th January,

however since then deliveries have been minimal and on the 5th February the government set up a central coordination unit to prioritise deliveries for Salt Union to highway authorities, this process is still in operation today. In order to supplement the minimal deliveries through Salt Union our officers have secured the delivery of an additional 500 Tonnes of marine salt from an alternative supplier. This has been tested by ourselves and other authorities and acts as a good substitute for traditional rock salt.

I would also like to comment that the decisions to restrict salting to the main A and B roads was taken following extensive consultation with our partners in the emergency services and monitored on a daily basis through the period of prolonged inclement weather. On the 13th February a business continuity exercise took place with partners from the emergency services, commercial sector and public sector to assist in developing contingency plans for the situation if conditions continued to deteriorate. Statistics provided by the services following the event have indicated that there had been no increase in reported traffic accidents or admissions to hospital resulting from weather related incidents compared with the corresponding period last year.

In situations like this it is always good practice to review and reflect on the events that have taken place. Looking at what worked well and where improvements can be made. We will undertake this review prior to the next winter maintenance season and look at issues like the adequacy of our current capacity, grit bin provision (and how we can work with Parishes), gritting routes etc.

The second part of the question refers to the subsequent damage to roads following a hard winter. Again we are not alone in this, all highway authorities experience an increase in the number of potholes and deterioration of roads and pavements following a prolonged winter period. However, I can inform you that in Telford & Wrekin we have doubled the number of our response maintenance teams to four, which includes the 'Pothole Buster' machine in order to help address the problem. It is envisaged that we will continue to operate with these teams for the next four weeks in order to overcome the increase in numbers and backlog. I would also wish to point out that the Council has continued to invest significantly by committing an additional £2.2m in highways maintenance improvements for the next two years."

(b) Councillor U.E. Sambrook had submitted the following question:

"Would the Cabinet Member for Environment please tell me how much in financial terms has bulk collection raised up to date and what is the cost to administer this service?"

Councillor M.B. Hosken, Cabinet Member: Environment, responded:

“The policy of charging for Bulk Collections was introduced on the 2nd June 2008. Since that date there has been a total of 2,432 Bulk Collections, of which 1,513 were chargeable under the policy. To date, these collections have resulted in a total income to the Council of £22,695. The free collection service is provided for disabled or anyone registered on the Council's ‘Pull Out’ service for domestic waste & kerbside collection. These make up roughly 33% of all Bulk Collections.

For the same period, the cost to deliver the Bulk Collection Service through Telford & Wrekin Services Ltd (TWS) was £36,869. There are no additional costs for administration of the service which is delivered by the Environmental Maintenance Customer Service Team. In fact less time is now spent administering bulks than when it was a free service, due to the significant drop in demand.

For information, Members will recall the budget efficiency target for 2009/10 was £95,000. The end of Financial Year forecast identifies that this efficiency target will be achieved by accounting for the predicted drop in demand.”

(c) Councillor U.E. Sambrook had submitted the following question:

“Would the Cabinet for Environment please tell me what has been the cost of fly tipping clearance over the past year?”

Councillor M.B. Hosken, Cabinet Member: Environment, responded:

“In relation to fly tipping - this a performance specification element of the Environmental Maintenance Services Contract delivered by TWS and as a result, it is not possible to identify the actual cost of fly tipping removal alone. It is however estimated that the council spends approximately £155,000 per annum. This compares favourably to the figure of £214,000 if we were to use the calculation suggested by DeFRA for like for like fly tip types and numbers.

Members are also reminded that 99.83% of fly tips are removed within 2 working days of them being reported and this is one of the high performing “Council Promises” to the community.”

(d) Councillor R.K. Austin had submitted the following question:

“Can the Leader of the Council tell us what will happen to the Cabinet Post and that of the Cabinet Assistants for Community Services when the portfolio ceases to exist post the imminent restructure taking place?”

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, responded:

“I will let you and other Members know when the consultation process is completed.”

(e) Councillor C.F. Smith had submitted the following question:

“Can the Cabinet Member for Regeneration give details of the funding streams for the regeneration of Wellington?”

Councillor E.J. Carter, Cabinet Member: Regeneration, responded:

“The funding streams for Wellington are based upon property rationalisation of Council accommodation in Wellington and prudential borrowing to deliver the overall scheme. The regeneration will provide long term efficiencies in the running costs for Council buildings by reducing the number of buildings. The project will also remove the existing maintenance liabilities of the Council buildings involved and improve accessibility for our customers to our services at the existing Wellington Library and Registry office by providing new accommodation.”

He also referred Councillor Smith to Appendix 3 of the Service and Financial Planning 2009/10 – 2011/12 Overview & Revenue Budget Report.

Councillor C.F. Smith, in accordance with Rule 10.3 (e) of the Council Procedure Rules responded:

“Can you assure me that monies properly due to Housing are not being used to regenerate the Civic Quarter of Wellington?”

Councillor E.J. Carter, Cabinet Member: Regeneration, responded:

“Please look at Appendix 3 of the report, you will find the information is there.”

(f) Councillor C.F. Smith had submitted the following question:

“Can the Cabinet Member for Regeneration tell me whether there is matched funding from the private sector for the regeneration of Wellington?”

Councillor E.J. Carter, Cabinet Member: Regeneration, responded:

“The project is based upon the sale of Council buildings through property rationalisation and prudential borrowing as per my previous response. There is not a dependency on the private sector to deliver the project from commencement in 2009/10. The need for the private sector to intervene is planned within the budget strategy as you see before Council, in order to be prudent from a budget planning perspective the release of some of the Council buildings to the market will not commence until 2012/13. Continuous assessment of the market will be carried out to see if it makes financial sense to bring the assets to market earlier than 2012/13.”

(g) Councillor R.A. Overton had submitted the following question:

“We are all supportive of the new advice centre in Telford Central Library which will offer residents help and support through these times of economic uncertainty, but could the Leader please tell me what this Council is doing in terms of specific practical efforts to support Council Tax payers and businesses?”

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, responded:

“I will provide a written answer but would suggest that you look at page 19 of the Budget report.”

Councillor R.A. Overton, in accordance with Rule 10.3 (e) of the Council Procedure Rules responded:

Councillor Overton made reference to the number of Liability Orders obtained by the Council against people in arrears with their Council Tax. It was subsequently moved and seconded, under Rule 20.3 of Council Procedure Rules that Councillor Overton not be heard further. Following a vote, the motion was carried.

(h) Councillor A.G.P Williams had submitted the following question:

“Would the Cabinet Member tell me how much it is costing the Council to use TNT for its postal services?”

Councillor E.J. Carter, Cabinet Member: Regeneration, responded:

“The Council uses Royal Mail for first class postal services and TNT for second class postal services. The Council spends in the region of £200k per annum on postal services with the majority being paid for the TNT service. As part of this Council’s approach to improving

efficiencies there is limited use of first class postal services with second class being the predominant use. To deliver further efficiencies, letters are produced in a machine readable format allowing which delivers increased cost savings. Clearly, the level of post has been reducing and will perhaps continue to do so with the use of e mail as a favoured alternative.”

Councillor A.G.P Williams, in accordance with Rule 10.3 (e) of the Council Procedure Rules responded:

“Why is TNT mail delivered by Royal Mail?”

Councillor E.J. Carter, Cabinet Member: Regeneration, responded:

“I will provide a written response.”

82. MOTIONS

No motions were received.

The meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.