

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of a meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday, 23 April 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, 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, T.J. Hope, M.B. Hosken, G.P. Hossell, S.M. Kelly, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, L. Lomax, A.A. Mackenzie, C.N. Mason, A.D. McClements, A.A. Meredith, J.C. Minor, C.P.R. Mollett, R.A. Overton, F.R. Picken, H. Rhodes, K.S. Sahota, 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

83. PRAYERS

The Reverend Peter Clarke, Superintendent Minister of the Telford circuit of the Methodist Church, said prayers.

84. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 5 March, 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Speaker.

85. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors P.A.E. Homer, G.J.L. Davies, U.E. Sambrook and R.M. Tyler.

86. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

87. ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Mayoral Engagements

The Mayor, Councillor R.E. Groom, presented the Mayoral Engagements report and Members noted those undertaken between 2nd March 2009 and 19th April 2009.

The Speaker reminded Members that the Mayor was coming to the end of his term of office and offered him the thanks of all Members for his excellent work.

The Mayor paid tribute to the cultural and artistic talents of young people in the Borough. He applauded the work of all Members, Officers and partners involved in the Telford Sports Learning and Enterprise Community project.

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Members noted the engagements undertaken by the Mayor or the Deputy Mayor between 27th January 2009 and 1st March 2009.

b) Awards/Achievements

The Mayor presented the Cleaner Safer Greener Award to Adrian Corney, Environmental Maintenance Officer. The partnership had been set up by the Environmental Maintenance team and local residents to transform Apley Woods had been praised at a national ceremony. The project won a special merit award in the Engaging Communities category of the Cleaner Safer Greener (CSG) Network Awards.

88. ANNUAL AUDIT & INSPECTION LETTER

Cllr A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, presented the Annual Audit & Inspection Letter. There had been clear progress in delivering the Council's ambitious plans for the regeneration of the borough, and improvement in most priority services; although the Council's overall CPA rating this year has reduced from 4 stars to 3 stars. This was as a result of the reduction in the score for Children and Young People's services from a 3 (Good) to a 2 (Adequate); the rules of CPA determine that an excellent rating cannot be given where any of the key service blocks are judged as less than good. He pointed out that the Council was ranked as being good or excellent in most areas. He noted that the inspection had cost around £680k and questioned whether this was an effective way for government to use scarce financial resources. Councillor R.K. Austin felt that the process was important as it provided transparency and accountability. Councillor W.L. Tomlinson pointed out that external inspections helped the public to learn about the corporate performance of Councils.

Councillor S.P. Burrell, Cabinet Member: Children & Young People, pointed out that improvements had already been made on a number of national and local indicators for Children and Young People's services. He noted that the inspection regime was now more demanding and reminded Members that the Council had previously been rated as 'good' in the Annual Performance Assessment using the same set of data. In response to a number of points raised by Members, the Leader confirmed that Scrutiny Monitoring groups were currently being strengthened and that six new social workers and four new social work assistants had recently been recruited.

89. CABINET CHANGES

The Leader, Councillor A.J. Eade, presented the report of the Head of Audit & Democracy. The report informed Members of changes in the allocation of responsibilities of two Cabinet Members and a Cabinet Assistant following the recent reorganisation of Portfolios. Councillor S. Bentley had been appointed as Cabinet Member for Environment. Councillor M.B. Hosken had been appointed as Cabinet Member for Leisure, Arts & Culture, Libraries and Sport

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within the Adult & Consumer Care Portfolio. Councillor T.J. Hope had been appointed as Cabinet Assistant for Environment with special responsibility for Rights of Way and the Rural Agenda. All appointments were effective from 1ST April 2009.

Councillor W.L. Tomlinson, noted that, including Cabinet Assistants, the number of Members on Cabinet duty was now fourteen. He was concerned that, in the light of corporate staff reductions, the number of Cabinet Members had remained at the same level. Councillor R.K. Austin reminded Members that the previous administration had operated with a ten member Cabinet. The Leader reminded the meeting that workloads were increasing and that the current system worked well.

RESOLVED -

- a) **That Councillor Miles Hosken's allocation as the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Arts & Culture, Libraries and Sport with effect from 1st April, 2009 be noted;**
- b) **That Councillor Stephen Bentley's allocation as the Cabinet Member for Environment with effect from 1st April, 2009 be noted;**
- c) **That Councillor Tracy Hope's appointment as the Cabinet Assistant for Environment with specific responsibility for Rights of Way and the Rural Agenda with effect from 1st April 2009 be noted.**

90. REPORTS OF LEADER AND CABINET

- (a) Report of Leader

Councillor A.J. Eade informed Members of the recent £250 million collaboration agreement between the Council and the Southwater Event Group. The Southwater Event Group's conference and exhibition facilities brought £28 million each year in to the local economy. The redevelopment of the Southwater area would create jobs and homes as well as offices, a hotel, a learning & media centre, ice rink, swimming pool, restaurants and a war memorial. Planning applications would be made by both parties in spring 2010 and work would commence in summer 2010. The Leader also highlighted the £5 million funding boost, from the beginning of next year for roads and footpaths. A further £2 million was being invested in the Civic development at Wellington as well as £500k in Oakengates following consultation with the Town Council.

(b) Report of Cabinet

The report of the Cabinet, setting out the matters determined on the 9th March, 2009 and 23rd March, 2009 was received. Individual Cabinet Members reported on some of the key areas of work being undertaken by their Portfolios.

Councillor S.P. Burrell, Cabinet Member: Children & Young People, highlighted the recent Cabinet approval for additional Post 16 provision, implementing the establishment of Post-16 provision at four schools in the Borough. He also highlighted the approval of the BSF procurement process.

Councillor R.K. Austin, referring to the Central Telford Action Plan, asked if the Leader agreed that all relevant parties involved in the development of the Town Centre should enter discussions for the good of the town. In response, Councillor A.J. Eade said that the Council were happy to talk to anyone with investment who wanted to work with them.

RESOLVED – that the Cabinet report be noted.

91. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET

Councillor A. Lawrence, Cabinet Member: Resources presented the following recommendations from Cabinet.

a) Telford & Wrekin Primary Care Trust Funding:

RESOLVED:

(i) That capital approval be granted in respect of the £300,000 funding for the TSLEC Project;

(ii) That capital approval be granted in respect of the £100,000 funding for the Active Travel for Life Project

b) Central Telford Area Action Plan – Publication and Submission to Secretary of State

RESOLVED:

That the Central Telford Area Action Plan and supporting documents, attached as appendices 1-3 of the report be approved, in order that the documents could be published, subject to consultation and, along with representations received, then be submitted to the Secretary of State

92. MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

The Council received for noting the minutes of the Plans Board of 25th February & 18th March, 2009, the Licensing Committee of 24th February, 3rd March & 24th March 2009, the Scrutiny Leadership Board of 9th March, 2009 and the Personnel Board of 16th March 2009.

93. QUESTIONS

No questions were received.

94. MOTIONS

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11 Councillor C.F. Smith moved the following Motion, seconded by Councillor R.K. Austin:

‘This Council believes that the decision to withdraw from the City Region was flawed as the decision means that Telford & Wrekin Council no longer has a permanent place at the City Region Board, which diminishes the ability of this Council to access Regional funds’.

Councillor R.K. Austin, proposing the motion, felt that the withdrawal from the City Region had let down the people of Telford & Wrekin as the Council would not now be able to influence the outcomes of vital funding decisions that could benefit the Borough. He felt that the real reasons for withdrawal had not been given.

Councillor E.J. Carter, Cabinet Member: Regeneration, felt that no progress was being made and that other authorities would also leave the City Region. He pointed out that the Council could work together with others without being in the City Region. Councillor S.M. Kelly noted that withdrawal was the right decision for local taxpayers as he felt that the City Region was not accountable or transparent and that he had been unable to measure the benefits of membership for the Council.

Councillor C.F. Smith, seconding the motion pointed to the influence of the West Midlands region on the Borough. He felt that the skills base of the Borough was industry based and that the West Midlands provided a natural market for Telford. Membership of the City Region had provided the Borough with a permanent voice in the West Midlands and the decision to withdraw was flawed. Councillor R.K. Austin, in conclusion, pointed out that Telford was the largest town between Birmingham and the Welsh border and was the ‘engine room’ of Shropshire. He was saddened by the decision as the Borough would have benefited from continued membership; he condemned the decision to withdraw from the City Region.

As requested a recorded vote was taken as follows:

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For: (17)

Councillors G. Ashcroft, R.K. Austin, E.A. Clare, Y.C. Hicks, L. Lomax, A.A. Mackenzie, C.N. Mason, A.D. McClements, J.C. Minor, R.A. Overton, F.R. Picken, H. Rhodes, K.S. Sahota, C.F. Smith, M.J. Smith, M. Swift, D.R.W. White.

Against: (32)

Councillors I.T.W. Fletcher, D.G. Allen, D.W.D. Ashley, R. Aveley, S. Bentley, K.T. Blundell, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, R.G. Chaplin, N.A. Dugmore, A.J. Eade, J.A. Dixon, V.A. Fletcher, J.A. Francis, G.M. Green, E.J. Greenaway, T.J. Hope, M.B. Hosken, G.P. Hossell, S.M. Kelly, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, A.A. Meredith, C.R.P. Mollett, J.M. Seymour, A. Stanton, K.L. Tomlinson, W.L. Tomlinson, V. Tonks, A.G.P. Williams, H.J. Williams and D.G. Wright.

Abstentions: (1)

Councillor R.E. Groom.

RESOLVED – that the Motion not be approved.

The meeting ended at 7.43 p.m.

Speaker:

Date:.....