

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday, 7 July, 2009 at 5.00 p.m. at the Civic Offices, Telford

PUBLISHED ON MONDAY, 13th JULY, 2009

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN THURSDAY, 16th JULY, 2009)

PRESENT: Councillors J.M. Seymour (Deputy Leader - Chairman for the meeting), S. Bentley, E.J. Carter, M.B. Hosken and A. Lawrence

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors R.K. Austin and G.M. Green (Opposition Group Leaders); Councillor T.J. Hope (Cabinet Assistant)

CB-29 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 23rd June, 2009 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

CB-30 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors A.J. Eade (Leader) and S.P. Burrell

CB-31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor S. Bentley declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 7 – Personalisation – Transforming Adult Social Care, as a member of his family was in receipt of the service.

CB-32 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF FIRST POINT ADVICE CENTRE

Key decision identified as **Scrutiny Commission/Scrutiny Management Board Reports** in the Forward Plan published on 16 June 2009.

Councillor D.R.W. White, Chairman of the Scrutiny Leadership Board, presented a report which set out the recommendations of the Board following a meeting held in March 2009 at the location of the new First Point Advice Centre at Telford Central Library. At that time, the Centre had only been operating for two weeks, and Scrutiny Members had been keen to see how many enquiries had been received, and what interaction there had been between the different agencies/services providing advice to residents on issues arising from the “credit crunch” and the economic recession.

Members were impressed by the numbers of people accessing First Point, and by the co-operation between the organisations participating in the scheme. It was felt that the general ambience of the Library setting provided a welcoming environment, and that perhaps the Council’s presence in District

Centres around the Borough could be enhanced by providing a similar service at local Libraries. The Board's recommendations to Cabinet were that:

- there should be continual monitoring of the First Point Advice Centre to ensure that the appropriate ranges of services are provided to the public;
- consideration should be given to providing a permanent point of contact for Council services in the town centre vicinity;
- the use of library facilities to offer a first point of contact for Council services throughout the Borough should be considered, especially in areas where the library is used on a part-time basis.

Councillor A. Lawrence, Cabinet Member for Resources, presented a report that outlined the proposed response to the recommendations made by Scrutiny Leadership Board. He thanked the Scrutiny Leadership Board for their comments and recommendations, which the Cabinet were very supportive of. A report would be brought to the next Cabinet meeting with a proposal for a "One Stop Shop" to be developed on the ground floor of Civic Offices. This would create a permanent and much larger facility than First Point, and would bring together many more council and partner services into one facility, in turn offering more joined-up services and improved access to services. In relation to the use of other library facilities in the Borough, this was in line with the Customer Strategy and would be taken into account as part of the current review of Leisure and Culture. Councillor R.K. Austin enquired as to whether mobile libraries could be provided with some kind of link to the Advice Centre, and it was agreed that this was something that could be explored.

RESOLVED – that the response to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Leadership Board, as set out at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

CB-33 THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007

Key Decision identified as **Community Strategy/Local Area Agreement/Priority Plans** in the Forward Plan published on 16 June 2009.

The Strategic Locality Manager presented the report of the Head of Policy, Performance & Partnership which suggested a process to enable local organisations to put forward proposals that required Central Government action to support and improve the sustainability of local communities.

The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 (SCA) aimed to enable local communities, organisations and public bodies to propose, through their local council, changes at a national level to help deliver projects and work locally to support and improve sustainability. The Government had asked that local areas should first try to prioritise and agree the proposals to be submitted via a 'Local Panel'. Following this, the Council would submit the proposals to the Local Government Association, who would be responsible for short-listing a small number of proposals for the Secretary of State's consideration.

Following expressions of interest for a significant number of town and parish councils, it was proposed to convene a SCA Local Panel meeting towards the end of July 2009. It was suggested that the Panel be formed from the Local Parishes Forum with additional representatives invited from the Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), Wrekin Area Committee of Parish & Town Councils, and from local Groups. A letter had been sent to all Town and Parish Councils and the CVS asking for any proposals to be submitted.

Members expressed doubts as to the value of this process, and questioned whether the Council should be involved if there was no legislative requirement for it to make a submission under the SCA.

RESOLVED – not to endorse the process set out in paragraphs 3.7 and 3.8 of the report.

CB-34 TELFORD & WREKIN RURAL PLAN

Key decision identified as **Telford & Wrekin Rural Plan** in the Forward Plan published on 16 June 2009.

Councillor S. Bentley, Cabinet Member for Environment, and Councillor T.J. Hope (Cabinet Assistant: Rights of Way/Rural Agenda) presented the report of the Corporate Director: Environment & Regeneration, which sought approval for the content of the Rural Plan for Telford & Wrekin.

Over the last nine months, the Council had been developing a Rural Plan for the Borough in consultation with parishes, partners and officers. The purpose of the Plan was to acknowledge and respond to the issues affecting people living within the rural areas, and to maximise the opportunities available to them. A copy of the draft Plan was appended to the report. The draft Plan defined the rural areas of the Borough, provided a profile of these areas and set out the key issues under three broad headings – a sustainable rural economy, sustainable rural communities and a sustainable rural environment.

Following the first meetings of the Telford & Wrekin Rural Forum, and research done with local organisations and communities, an action plan had been developed to move forward the Plan and its underlying objectives. The action plan could be funded from within existing budgets.

Members welcomed the Plan, and the opportunities it provided to address issues such as affordable housing. Through consultation on the Plan and the setting-up of the Rural Forum, barriers had been broken down between the Council and people/organisations living and working in the rural areas. The involvement of the National Farmers Union and the local clergy was welcomed, and it was suggested that Womens' Institutes could play a role in making sure women's issues were reflected in the Plan.

RESOLVED – that the Telford & Wrekin Rural Plan be approved.

CB-35 PERSONALISATION – TRANSFORMING ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Councillor Bentley withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

Key Decision identified as **Putting People First – Proposed Model** in the Forward Plan published on 16 April 2009.

The Head of Prevention & Protection presented the report of the Corporate Director: Adult & Consumer Care, which informed Members of the Government's aim to develop a model for personalisation of adult social care by 'Putting People First'. The report also set out proposals as to how the Council could approach the organisation and arrangement for services by 2011 in order to meet the transformation requirements.

Putting People First was published as a government protocol towards the end of 2007. It was presented as the basis for joining up services around individuals and was the first time that such a wide-ranging protocol had been produced. The government had stated that Putting People First would set the direction for adult social care over the next 10 years and more.

A programme for Putting People First in Telford & Wrekin was established from July 2008, following earlier work to consider how the Council should rethink community care. The programme had involved work across six main areas to develop proposals for achieving personalisation of adult social care services. They were based on helping people who used social care services, families and their carers by;

- Improving ways to gain access to information and services;
- Providing brokerage to support and assist in choosing services;
- Enabling the promotion of independence and avoiding unnecessary dependency;
- Allowing more influence and control for the individual through personal budgets;
- Working with providers to develop flexible and responsive care service;
- Developing the workforce and skills for the future.

Options for each area were developed from local and national sources so that best practice and effectiveness could be identified. This work resulted in a set of proposals that were now being brought together as a 'target operating model'. The model set out the process and arrangements that the Council would aim to have in organising adult care and the support needed to achieve personalisation of services.

Subject to agreement in principle, the next phase of work would focus on pilot projects and systems development to test the key parts of the future model. In

view of the scale and complexity of these changes, a two year programme was proposed so that the full personalisation approach was in place for all social care services by mid 2011. There would be further consultation with service users, staff and others on the final proposals and subsequently for implementation of the programme.

Reference was made to the recent Members' seminar on this topic, and that it would be useful to have a further seminar later in the year for an update on progress.

RESOLVED -

- (a) that the principles of personalisation for adult social care services, and the implications for fundamental changes in the way care and support is organised and arranged in Telford & Wrekin, be noted;**
- (b) that a further report be brought to Cabinet following pilot work, so that the new model of personalised services can be considered for full implementation during 2011.**

Councillor Bentley returned to the meeting.

CB-36 SMALL SITES AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME

Key Decision identified as **Small Sites – Affordable Housing Programme** in the Forward Plan published on 16 June 2009.

Councillor E.J. Carter, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, presented the joint report of the Head of the Integrated Housing Project and Head of Asset & Property Management, which updated Members on the establishment of a Small Sites Affordable Housing Programme in partnership with the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA).

In response to the recession, the HCA and the Council, through the Housing & Regeneration Partnership, was trying to stimulate the provision of affordable housing in the Borough by developing a programme of small sites for affordable housing. It was anticipated that the programme would run over 2-3 years, and involve approximately 10 sites of varying sizes which would deliver in the region of 200 affordable units in total. Five sites had already been identified by the HCA, and these would come forward as a first phase of development. A number of Council owned sites were currently being assessed for inclusion in the programme. A development partner – likely to be a Registered Social Landlord – would be procured in order to deliver the programme. It was intended that the Council would work with the chosen development partner to secure planning permission for the chosen sites, and that the sites would be disposed at nil value to the partner. The Council would incur costs in bringing forward these sites, and it was recommended that New Growth Point funding be made available to fund the programme over the next two years.

During the ensuing discussion, it was suggested that as part of the process for identifying appropriate sites for inclusion in the programme, relevant Ward Members should be consulted. In response, the Cabinet Member stated that he was in agreement to the suggestion, and proposed an amendment to recommendation 2.5 in order to reflect this.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the establishment of a Small Sites Affordable Housing Programme in partnership with the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA), be endorsed;
- (b) that delegated authority be granted to the Head of the Integrated Housing Project to enter into a collaboration agreement with the HCA, which will formalise the partnership and set out the objectives and expectations of the Programme;
- (c) that delegated authority be granted to the Head of the Integrated Housing Project to negotiate and finalise the arrangements for the joint procurement with the HCA in the appointment of a development partner;
- (d) that delegated authority be granted to the Head of the Integrated Housing Project, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to authorise any necessary work to bring forward the Council's sites;
- (e) that delegated authority be granted to the Head of Asset & Property Management, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and relevant Ward Members, to identify appropriate Council owned sites for inclusion in the Small Sites Affordable Housing Programme, and thereafter to dispose of those sites to the procured development partner at nil value;
- (f) that the use of New Growth Point funding, as detailed in paragraph 7 of the report, be approved.

CB-37 THE FUTURE OF THE CORONERS' SERVICE WITHIN SHROPSHIRE

Non-Key Decision

Councillor A. Lawrence, Cabinet Member for Resources, presented the report of the Interim Corporate Director: Resources regarding the future of the Coroners Service in the light of the potential impact of the Coroners and Justice Bill and the fact that the current Coroner for Telford & Wrekin had indicated that he intended to resign from his position in September 2009.

Although Coroners were appointed and funded by Local Authorities, the Coroner was not a Local Government Officer but held office under the Crown. The Government wanted to strengthen and improve the service that Coroners currently provide, and had published proposals in a Coroners and Justice Bill currently before Parliament. The Bill proposed a new governance structure, with a senior Coroner for each Coroner area, to be supported by area Coroners and assistant Coroners. This would have the effect of halving the numbers of existing full and part-time Coroners. It was also proposed to give Coroners powers to improve the effectiveness of investigations.

The current Coroner for Telford & Wrekin, Michael Gwynne, had indicated that he wished to retire in September 2009. It was clear from the Bill that a like-for-like replacement would not be a sustainable solution, and discussions had been held with all the Coroners within Shropshire as to how to manage the service in the future. The favoured option was for a county-wide service under a single Coroner. This process could start by amalgamating the Telford & Wrekin and North and Mid Shropshire areas following Mr Gwynne's retirement.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to approach with Shropshire Council with a view to developing a shared coronial service within Shropshire;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Head of Legal Services to work to secure agreement from the Ministry of Justice to proposals for a shared approach that are agreeable to both Councils;**
- (c) that the thanks of the Council be passed on to the current Coroner for his commitment and exemplary way that he has carried out his duties during his tenure.**

The meeting ended at 5.47 p.m.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

**Jonathan Eatough
Head of Legal Services
Date: 13 July 2009**

Signed:

Date: