

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of the Meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday 15th September, 2011 at 6.30 p.m. at the Civic Offices, Telford.

PRESENT:

Councillors M.J. Smith (Mayor), R.K. Austin, S. Bentley, K.T. Blundell, F.M. Bould, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, E.A. Clare, D.G. Davies, S. Davies, B.H. Duce, N.A. Dugmore, A.J. Eade, C.B.A. Elliott, R.C. Evans, A.R.H. England, I.T.W. Fletcher, V.A. Fletcher, G.M. Green, E.J. Greenaway, T.J. Hope, M.B. Hosken, M.G. Ion, A.S. Jhawar, R.T. Kiernan, J. Loveridge, A.A. Mackenzie, C.N. Mason, A.D. McClements, W.A.M. McClements, A.A. Meredith, J.C. Minor, C.P.R. Mollett, L.A. Murray, R.A. Overton, F.R. Picken, G.C.W. Reynolds, H. Rhodes, S.A.W. Reynolds, K.S. Sahota, J.M. Seymour, R.J. Sloan, C.F. Smith, A.J. Stanton, B.J. Thompson, C.R. Turley, P.R. Watling and D.R.W. White.

43. PRAYERS

The Reverend Andy Smith, Ecumenical Dean of Telford, led Members in prayer.

44. MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 28th July, 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

45. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors N.A.M. England, K.R. Guy, A. Lawrence, R.G. Scammell, K.L. Tomlinson and W.L. Tomlinson.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

47. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayoral Engagements

The Mayor briefly updated Members on his recent engagements. He drew particular attention to his attendance at the recent performance of 'Gel' at The Place, Oakengates. He had also attended the Dawley British Legion Summer parade as well as holding the Mayor's Civic service at Holy Trinity Church, Hadley. The Mayor told Members that he had attended a Service of Thanksgiving for Brigadier Neil Barclay, OBE K-ST.J and DL, at the Park House, Shifnal. Brigadier Barclay would be remembered with affection and very much missed by all that knew him. He had worked tirelessly in support of many local military charities.

48. LEADER'S REPORT & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Leader's Report

Councillor K.S. Sahota, Leader of the Council, thanked staff, the Police, local Ward councillors and partner agencies for their efforts in dealing with recent march in Wellington by the English Defence League. The day had passed off without any damage to property. Businesses in Wellington had seen trading disrupted on the day of the march, it had been good to see people supporting Wellington and the town's traders on the following weekend.

The Borough's primary schools had produced their best ever results at key stage 2, overall results were in line with the national average. Senior schools had also produced the best ever GSCE results and excellent 'A' level results. Pupils and staff were deserving of congratulation for their excellent work throughout the year.

An 11 screen Cineworld cinema was planned for Southwater which would kick start further development in the area, bringing in investment and creating jobs.

Widespread consultation was taking place on the Council's budget. 500 people had been consulted on spending priorities in the last few months. £15 million had been saved during the last year with a further £20m of savings required for this year. It was crucial to make every effort to protect front line services and jobs in the face of unprecedented government spending cuts.

The first meeting of the Co-operative Commission was due to take place on 16 September. As a Co-operative Council, the administration would work with the community to make sure that the needs of local people were met. Co-operative values would shape the way the Council would rebuild the local economy for the long term social benefit of the people of the Borough. The Council would look at different, innovative ways of delivering services would be explored. All elected Members were invited to help with the work of the Co-operative Council to reshape the delivery of public services.

The Leader notified Members that Cabinet responsibilities for Environment were being transferred from Councillor H. Rhodes to Councillor S. Davies. More detailed information and revised Cabinet Member titles would be circulated by the end of the week to Members and staff.

Announcements

a) Old Park Primary School – Outstanding Primary School of the Year Award

The Leader presented Mandie Haywood, Head Teacher at Old Park Primary School, with a certificate of outstanding achievement in recognition of the school being judged outstanding Primary School of the year by The Times newspaper. The school had been created just 4 years earlier and had beaten hundreds of rivals for the award. Mandie Haywood told Members that she was delighted that the hard work and innovation of everyone at the school had been recognised.

b) West Mercia Police and the Fire Authority Quality People Award

The Leader presented Paul Fenn with the Quality People award for his exceptional performance within the Anti Social Behaviour unit. Paul had been nominated for the Team Recognition award and told Members that he was enormously pleased that the efforts of all members of the unit had been recognised.

49. CABINET DECISIONS MADE SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Members received the report (Appendix C) on the Cabinet decisions made since the last meeting of the Council on 28 July, 2011.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery gave Members an update on the 100 day review of Service & Financial Planning Strategy (item 2.1.1 of the Cabinet report). In response to a question, Councillor McClements told Members that the decision to accommodate staff in existing buildings, rather than build a new Civic offices, provided the following advantages for the people of the Borough. £1.1m year on year savings would be produced, existing property would be utilised, the Council retained a prime site in the Town Centre and would generate a capital receipt from the sale of the existing building.

Councillor McClements was asked about previous borrowing levels and told Members that in April this had been £165m.

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the opposition group, disputed projected revenue savings of £1.6m, arguing that the programme planned by the previous administration would have generated these savings. Councillor Eade asked for further information on the £2.94m application for Capitalisation Direction. Councillor McClements told Members that he had not yet seen a response but that Members would be informed when a response was received.

A question was raised on item 2.1.2 of the report, 2011/12 Financial Monitoring. The question asked whether the administration would guarantee high safeguarding standards together with the provision of the service within budget. Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, told the meeting that the administration would do all it could to safeguard children; this was at the centre of the Council's work. Everything would be done to provide the service within budget.

50. MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Council noted the resolved minutes of the Personnel Board of 19th and 26th July and of the Plans Board of 13th July and 3rd August, 2011.

51. QUESTIONS

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

a) Councillor A.J. Eade had submitted the following question to Councillor K.S. Sahota, Leader of the Council:

“Now that the figure is no longer commercially confidential will Councillor Sahota tell members of this Council and the community in Telford and Wrekin the true value of the lowest tender received for providing new Civic offices in Southwater?”

In response, Councillor Sahota said that the lowest valid tender figure received was £16,677,515.

Councillor Eade asked whether the electorate had been treated with contempt prior to the Borough elections regarding claims made over the potential cost of the new Civic offices.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery told Members that this assertion was unacceptable. He was prepared to show Councillor Eade information to substantiate the basis of claims made before the election regarding the cost of new Civic offices.

Councillor Sahota replied that voters had been clear that they did not want a new Civic offices building, his group had promised that it would not be built and they had kept that promise to the voters.

52. LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND

Councillor H. Rhodes, Cabinet Member: Environment, Transport & Community Protection presented the report (Appendix F) of the Head of Environmental Services which sought approval for a variation in the Council's approved budget following the recent announcement from the Department of Transport (DfT) regarding the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). The LSTF was a fund set up by DfT to support sustainable transport projects delivering economic growth and reducing carbon emissions. The DfT had confirmed an offer of grant towards the Council's Key Component Bid over the period 2011/12 to 2014/15.

Following publication of the agenda the DfT grant figure had been slightly revised from £3,525,636 to £3,525,920. An amendment to the recommendation contained within the report was moved, seconded and approved by Members.

A point was raised over the 60%/40% split between revenue and capital funding at paragraph 4.1.2 (p4) of the report. Subsequent information showed that this split reflected the national position and did not relate to the position for Telford & Wrekin. Members noted that the Fund Profile - Revenue and Capital shown at Table 1 (p.4) of the report showed an incorrect figure, the total should have read £3,525,636 and not £3,255,636.

RESOLVED:

That Council approve the acceptance of £3,525,920 of Department for Transport (DfT) Local Sustainable Transport Funding (LSTF) as part of the Council's approved budget, with funding managed in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant set out by the Department of Transport (DfT).

53. NOTICES OF MOTION

No motions were received.

Mayor:

Date:

The meeting ended at 7.35 p.m.