

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of a meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday, 7 October, 2010 at 6.30 p.m. at the Civic Offices, Telford.

PRESENT:

Councillors I.T.W. Fletcher (Speaker & Mayor), D.G. Allen, G. Ashcroft, D.W.D. Ashley, R.K. Austin, R. Aveley, S. Bentley, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, D.R. Chaplin, R.G. Chaplin, E.A. Clare, N.A. Dugmore, J.A. Dixon, A.J. Eade (Leader), V.A. Fletcher, J.A. Francis, G.M. Green, E.J. Greenaway, R.E. Groom, 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, 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, M.J. Smith, A.J. Stanton, E.M. Swift, W.L. Tomlinson, V. Tonks, R.M. Tyler, H.J. Unwin, D.R.W. White and A.G.P. Williams.

34. CORPORAL RICKY FURGUSSON

Councillor I.T.W. Fletcher, Speaker of the Council, told Members of the bravery of Telford soldier Corporal Ricky Furgusson. Corporal Furgusson had been awarded the Military Cross for his heroism, he had gone to the aid of fellow soldiers injured by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) four times during his tour of duty in Afghanistan before he was caught in a blast and badly injured. His injuries included the loss of both legs, his left eye and fingers from both hands. The Speaker told Members that he wished to write to Corporal Furgusson, on behalf of the Council, thanking him for his selfless courage and recognising his outstanding professionalism and dedication to duty. Members were unanimous in their approval of the request.

RESOLVED – that Councillor I.T.W. Fletcher write to Corporal Furgusson on behalf of the Council thanking him for his selfless courage and recognising his outstanding professionalism and dedication to duty.

35. PRAYERS

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

36. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 24 June 2010, be confirmed and signed by the Speaker.

37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors K.T. Blundell, K.L. Tomlinson, H.J. Williams and D.G. Wright.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A.A. Mackenzie declared a personal interest in agenda item 7 at Appendix C, Cabinet Report of 10 August 2010 (Planning of School Places)

Councillor K.S. Sahota declared a personal interest in agenda item 11(b) at Appendix G, Recommendations from Boards and Committees, approval of recommendations made by Section 27 of the Policing and Crime Act (2009).

39. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Mayoral Engagements

The Mayor briefly updated Members on his recent engagements. He particularly drew attention to his visit to officially open the Telford STARS project (formerly Action for Children's Telford Shared Care) at Shawbirch. He told Members that this innovative project, in partnership with Telford & Wrekin, made a real difference to children's lives by providing short breaks to children and young people with special needs.

(b) Presentations/Awards

i) The Mayor presented Andy Farrell, NEETS Co-ordinator, with the Midlands Apprenticeship Awards. The award, organised by the National Apprenticeship Service, had been presented at a ceremony held at the Hippodrome Theatre in Birmingham. He told Members that, as the largest employer in the area, Telford & Wrekin Council was a major employment route for young people and the Council was keen to recruit apprentices to rebalance an ageing workforce and build the skills it needed for the future. The Council had recently approved a work opportunity programme aimed at young people aged 16-18 years who were currently not in Education, Employment or Training with at least one placement in each service area. The programme had funding to create 20 apprenticeships across the organisation.

ii) The Mayor presented Lorna Hicks, Senior Cluster Facilities Manager, with the Good Egg Award. He told Members that the Council's School Catering Team had been awarded the Good Egg Award for banning battery-farmed eggs in its catering service. Telford & Wrekin Council was one of only 25 Councils to have received the award at this time around and was one of only 90 Councils in total across the United Kingdom to use barn, free-range or organic eggs. The Catering Team had delivered this service within its 2009/10 budget. The Mayor congratulated the team on their care and professionalism.

40. REPORT OF LEADER

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, told Members that he had recently met with Adam Cairns (Chief Executive) and Dr. John Davies (Chairman) of the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust. He welcomed the

inclusion of consultants and GPs in any discussions on future services and said that he would support an equitable way forward for any reconfiguration of services between the two hospitals that would maintain the key services. The retention of full Accident & Emergency cover, complemented by other services, was essential in order to protect the interests of communities in the Borough.

The Leader paid tribute to the Chief Executive, his senior management team and all officers on the way they had dealt with the implementation of changes to the structure of the Council. He reminded Members that the Council needed to be both efficient and responsive to the needs of the local community. The restructuring of the organisation had seen senior management posts reduced by 50% whilst essential front line services had been maintained.

The Leader also informed Members that, during the course of the year, he intended to write to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) requesting a Borough Boundary Review. He hoped that such a review could start by 2012 with any changes resulting from the review taking effect from the 2015 local elections. The review would be triggered under the provisions of Section 57 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act (2009). The purpose of the review would be to reduce the number of councillors by 25%. Each councillor would, wherever possible, represent a single member ward. Such a reduction would reduce expenditure on Member's Allowances in line with other cost reductions across the Council as well as providing other associated savings. The Leader emphasised that a reduction in the number of councillors, together with payable allowances, would demonstrate that Members were willing to play their part in reducing costs.

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

Members received the report on the Cabinet decisions made since the last meeting of the Council on 24 June, 2010.

Councillor E.J. Carter, Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Prosperity, updated Members on the Woodside regeneration project. He told Members that the regeneration work was transforming the area. Councillor Carter also briefly reported on the Local Enterprise Partnership for Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin (Marches Enterprise Partnership) and told Members that the Council would, where appropriate, link with other Local Enterprise Partnerships if this was beneficial to the Borough. Total funding for Local Enterprise Partnerships nationally amounted to £1 billion, the level of funding available would depend on how many bids were received in total.

In response to a question on whether capital projects would be re-phased, Councillor S.M. Kelly told Members that significant savings had been made. Investment in the Borough would mean that the area would be best placed to benefit when the recession ended. He told Members that all options would be

considered and evaluated once the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review had been assessed.

42. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2010

Councillor V.A. Fletcher, Scrutiny Assembly Chairman, presented the Scrutiny Annual Report 2010.

RESOLVED – that the Scrutiny Annual Report 2010 be noted.

43. ANNUAL AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT 2009/10

Councillor D. Wright, Chairman of the Audit Committee, presented the Annual Audit Committee Report for 2009/10.

RESOLVED – that the Annual Audit Committee Report 2009/10 be noted

44. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The Chief Executive presented the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel together with the proposed changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme. The report explained that the Council was obliged under the Local Authorities (Members Allowance) (England) Regulations 2003 and subsequent amendments to set up and maintain an advisory Independent Remuneration Panel to review and provide advice on Members Allowances. The Council had discretion on whether to accept the report of the Panel in its entirety, in part or to reject it. The Council could also decide the effective date for implementation of the recommendations. Council had agreed at the 29th April, 2010 meeting that, in the light of changing economic conditions, changes to Scrutiny arrangements and the discontinuance of Cabinet Assistants, the Independent Remuneration Panel be convened. Major reviews were typically scheduled every four or five years. The last full review had been in 2008, this review had been a selective, rather than a comprehensive review.

RESOLVED -

- a) **That the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel be thanked for the production of their report;**
- b) **That the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, as set out in paragraph 3.3 of the report, be approved;**
- c) **That Members agreed that any remuneration scheme that was agreed would become effective from the 21st May, 2010 (with the exception of proposed scrutiny allowances which became effective from 25th June 2010;**

45. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOARDS & COMMITTEES

i) Executive Arrangements

The Speaker presented the report (attached at Appendix G) of the Head of Governance which sought approval for the Leader and Cabinet Model as the preferred option for the Council's Executive Arrangements. The report also recommended that further consultation take place on the preferred option. The recommendations contained within the report had been approved by the Council Constitution Committee on 14 September 2010.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the Leader and Cabinet model be the preferred option for Executive Arrangements;**
- (b) That further consultation, as set out in Appendix 1, took place on the preferred option.**
- ii) Amendments made by Section 27 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009 to Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982**

Councillor R. Aveley, Chairman of Licensing Committee, presented the report (attached at Appendix H) of the Service Delivery Manager, Public Protection, which recommended that Council adopted the amendments made by Section 27 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009 to Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, with effect from 1st January 2011. The report also sought Full Council approval for the delegation of these responsibilities to the Licensing Committee under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972. The recommendations contained within the report had been approved by the Licensing Committee on 8 September 2010.

RESOLVED –

- a) That Full Council adopted the amendments made by Section 27 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009 to Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 to come into effect on 1st January 2011 throughout the whole of the administrative area of the Borough of Telford and Wrekin;**
- b) That Full Council agreed to delegate the responsibilities as indicated in (a) above to the Licensing Committee under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972.**

46. MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Council noted the resolved minutes of the Plans Board for 2 and 23 June, 14 July and 25 August, of the Council Constitution Committee of 14 September 2010, of the Licensing Committee of 16 and 30 June and 2 and 8 September,

of the Audit Committee of 28 June and 27 July and of the Interim Scrutiny Committee of 1 and 16 June 2010.

47. QUESTIONS

No questions had been submitted.

48. NOTICES OF MOTION

- (a) Councillor R.K. Austin, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, and Council Procedure Rule 13.7 moved the following Motion:

“This Council is committed to ensuring that all of our residents who are eligible to vote are registered to vote. The electoral register is the foundation stone of our democracy and we have a duty to ensure that it is both accurate and complete – helping to empower citizens and increase public engagement in the democratic process. This Council believes that the Council should take every effort to ensure that the 2010 electoral register in the Borough of Telford & Wrekin is as complete and accurate as possible so as to provide a proper basis for any revision to electoral boundaries in the Telford & Wrekin area. In addition, this Council notes that the Electoral Commission currently believe that approximately 3.5 million people are missing from the register in England and Wales alone and that this trend is especially stark among many specific social groups.

This Council believes that the Chief Executive and Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) should ensure that:

His staff conduct door-to-door inquiries at all households where no-one responds to a letter requiring registration with at least two calls on non-responding households;

An effective advertising campaign is launched now to encourage people to register, targeted at social groups among whom under-registration is known to be a problem and targeted at residents in those neighbourhoods where the electoral register is believed to have the lowest level of completeness

A joined-up approach is adopted across all parts of the Council to encourage residents to register to vote;

In the absence of any evidence that a particular household is empty or that the electors have moved or died, that the names in all such non-responding households should be carried over.

The Motion was seconded by Councillor C.F. Smith.

After a short debate, a motion that the question be now put was proposed and seconded.

The motion was put to the vote and it was:

RESOLVED – that the Motion be approved.

(b) Councillor A.A. McClements, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, moved the following Motion:

This Council notes:

That the increase in VAT from 17.5% to 20% announced in the Government's June Budget will fall hardest on those least able to afford it;

That the increase in VAT will lead to higher prices for goods and services; will have a disproportionate impact on pensioners and other low income groups; and will have a severe impact on businesses, charities and community groups in the Borough of Telford & Wrekin;

That the effect of the increase in VAT, when taken with other measures in the Budget, will be unfair to pensioners who have not had a compensatory increase in other benefits and allowances;

That the way the VAT increase will affect pensioners and other low income groups runs counter to the Government's Coalition Agreement statement on 20th May, 2010 that it would "ensure that fairness is at the heart of those decisions so that those most in need are protected";

That the Institute of Fiscal Studies has stated the VAT increase was not "unavoidable" as the Chancellor of the Exchequer said in his Budget speech;

And that Council resolves to:

Write directly to the Chancellor of the Exchequer raising concerns about the proposed VAT increase on pensioners, other vulnerable groups, and businesses in the Borough of Telford & Wrekin;

Call on the Members of Parliament representing Telford & Wrekin to stand up for Telford & Wrekin pensioners, businesses and wider community, to voice their opposition to this unfair increase in VAT and to vote against in Parliament.

A recorded vote was requested in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15.4

The voting was as follows:

For: (20)

Councillors D.G. Allen, R.K. Austin, E.A. Clare, Y.C. Hicks, P.A.E. Homer, 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, E.M. Swift, V. Tonks, D.R.W. White and A.G.P. Williams.

Against: (27)

G. Ashcroft, D.W.D. Ashley, R. Aveley, S. Bentley, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, D.R. Chaplin, R.G. Chaplin, N.A. Dugmore, A.J. Eade, J.A. Dixon, I.T.W. Fletcher, V.A. Fletcher, J.A. Francis, 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, R.M. Tyler and H.J. Unwin.

Abstained: (3)

G.M. Green, R.E. Groom and W.L. Tomlinson.

RESOLVED – that the motion not be approved.

The meeting ended at 8.11p.m.

Speaker:

Date: