

## **BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday, 25 November, 2010 at 6.30 p.m. at the Civic Offices, Telford.**

#### **PRESENT:**

Councillors I.T.W. Fletcher (Speaker & Mayor), D.G. Allen, 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, 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, H.J. Williams, A.G.P. Williams and D.G. Wright.

#### **49. STAFF SERGEANT KIM HUGHES**

Councillor I.T.W. Fletcher, Speaker of the Council, told Members that he would be writing to Staff Sergeant Kim Hughes (Royal Logistics Corps) on behalf of the Council to express thanks for the work that he had done. Staff Sergeant Hughes, a Telford based soldier, had been awarded the George Cross by the Queen in June for outstanding ordnance disposal work in Afghanistan. Members were unanimous in their approval of the request.

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

#### **50. PRAYERS**

The Reverend Paula Smith, Vicar for St. Matthews Church, Donnington, led Members in prayer.

#### **51. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 7 October, 2010, be confirmed and signed by the Speaker.

#### **52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors G. Ashcroft, P.A.E. Homer and K.L. Tomlinson.

#### **53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors H.J. Williams and K.T. Blundell declared a personal interest in agenda item 13, Notice of Motion on MOD Donnington.

**Councillor A.A. Mackenzie declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 8, Appendix D, 2010/11 Financial Monitoring.**

**54. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**(a) Mayoral Engagements**

The Mayor briefly updated Members on his recent engagements. He thanked Councillor J.A. Francis, Deputy Mayor, who had attended a number of engagements whilst he had been on leave. He particularly drew attention to his recent visits to the Connexions for Youth Duke of Edinburgh awards at Shortwood school and to the Children and Young People in Care 'Hotshots' awards at The Place, Oakengates.

**(b) Presentations/Awards**

The Mayor presented the 'Best Corporate Parent' award to Peter Fletcher (Corporate Parenting Service Delivery Manager) on behalf of the Corporate Parenting Team which had won the prestigious Best Corporate Parent Award. Their successful application was centred on the 'Step Up with Shakespeare' project which the team had been running in collaboration with the Creative Arts Team and the Royal Shakespeare Company over the past twelve months. Peter Fletcher paid tribute to the contributions of Lisa Spink (Project Director), Julie Jones (former Culture Zone manager) and Jenny Cockcroft (Kids in Care co-ordinator).

**55. REPORT OF LEADER**

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, told Members that he had recently met again with Adam Cairns (Chief Executive) and Dr. John Davies (Chairman) of the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust. The meeting had centred around the consultation on the future configuration of services for Shropshire. He told Members that he would oppose any potential downgrading of Accident & Emergency at the Princess Royal Hospital and that any proposals should ensure an equitable spread of services between the two existing hospital sites. Consultation would continue until March 2011. The Leader planned to convene further meetings of the Health Monitoring Committee in order to take an overview of the consultation process.

The Southwater development was now underway, complementing the ongoing work to regenerate the Borough Towns. In addition, a report detailing a proposed multi-million pound investment in the regeneration of Oakengates was due to be considered by the Cabinet.

**56. 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 7 October, 2010.

A question was raised on item 2.2.2 of the Cabinet Matters report, which dealt with subsidised bus routes. Councillor A. Lawrence, Cabinet Member: Environment & Rural Area, told Members that the consultation timetable had been at the discretion of Arriva Buses. Work had been done to get as much consultation as possible but it would have been preferable if the consultation timetable had been longer.

A question was raised regarding capital projects and their affordability in the light of the current economic conditions. Councillor S.M. Kelly, Cabinet Member: Efficient, Community Focussed Council, told Members that there was some short borrowing but that this would reduce significantly in the mid to longer term.

Councillor A.A. Mackenzie left the room prior to discussion of the following item.

## **57. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET**

### 2010/11 Financial Monitoring

Councillor S.M. Kelly presented the report of the Head of Finance which was attached as Appendix D. He told Members that the report, received by Cabinet in November, showed overall revenue spending projected to be within approved budgets. The report also provided an update on capital programme spending.

**RESOLVED – that the changes to the capital programme, as shown in section 1 of the report, be approved.**

(Councillor A.A. Mackenzie returned to the room.)

## **58. REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY – LICENSING ACT 2003**

Councillor R. Aveley, Chairman of Licensing Committee, presented the report (Appendix E) of the Service Delivery Manager – Public Protection. The report sought approval of the revised Statement of Licensing Policy for the Borough of Telford & Wrekin under the Licensing Act 2003.

**RESOLVED – that the Revised Statement of Licensing Policy for the Borough of Telford & Wrekin, under the Licensing Act 2003 be approved.**

## **59. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOARDS & COMMITTEES**

### **i) Executive Arrangements**

The Speaker presented the report (attached at Appendix F) of the Head of Governance which sought approval for the adoption of the Leader and Cabinet Model for the Council's Executive Arrangements following the May 2011 Borough elections. The recommendations contained within the report

had been approved by the Council Constitution Committee on 9 November 2010.

**RESOLVED – that the Leader and Cabinet model be formally adopted for the Council’s Executive Arrangements with effect from 8 May 2011, following the May 2011 Borough elections.**

#### **60. MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

Council noted the resolved minutes of the Plans Board for 15 September, 6 and 27 October, of the Licensing Committee of 29 September and 13 October, of the Standards Board of 16 September, of the Active Lifestyles, Leisure & Culture Scrutiny Committee of 8 and 27 September, of the Adult Care & Support Scrutiny Committee of 9 September, of the Community Focussed & Efficient Council Scrutiny Committee of 9 September, of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee of 13 September, of the Environment & Rural Area Scrutiny Committee of 15 September, of the Housing, Regeneration & Prosperity Scrutiny Committee of 22 September and 4 October and of the Community Protection & Cohesion Scrutiny Committee of 12 October 2010.

#### **61. QUESTIONS**

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

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

“Earlier this financial year the Cabinet Member for Roads answered a question on the temporary repair to Wombridge Road. Over £5k had been spent since April 2009. Does the cabinet member believe that a proper repair and renewal job for Wombridge Road would have been a better way to spend this money as well as providing better value for money for this Council?”

Councillor A. Lawrence, Cabinet Member: Environment & Rural Area, replied that “The Council had spent around £5k from the revenue maintenance budget on repairs to Wombridge Road to keep it in a safe condition, and we will continue to make any necessary repairs to ensure the road is safe until a full resurfacing scheme can be undertaken. The road’s condition is such that a major patching and resurfacing scheme is required to significantly improve the overall condition. The road has been surveyed and we are considering it for next financial year’s draft programme subject to funding being available, the estimated cost of a repair scheme is around £122k. “

In response, Councillor Smith observed that lines had been painted around existing potholes on that stretch of road. He asked when the road would be repaired.

Councillor Lawrence said that, subject to budget constraints, this would be a priority as part of next year’s work plan.

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

“What has been the cost of replacing all the street signs throughout the Borough?”

Councillor A. Lawrence, Cabinet Member: Environment & Rural Area, replied that “In 2010/11 we are anticipating that we will have spent around £330k on replacing signs in the borough of which around £107k will have been on replacing 778 street nameplates. Many of the street name plates replaced are those that have been reported to us by local residents as being missing or in poor condition. The remaining £223k is being spent on improving and replacing directional signage in the borough, which has been identified as needing improvement across the borough; this has recently been supported by local residents responding to a National Highway and Transport survey which identified the condition and cleanliness of road signs as an issue.”

In response, Councillor Smith asked what happened to old signs when they were replaced as he was concerned that the Council got full value for the scrap metal value of these signs.

Councillor Lawrence stated that he assumed these signs were disposed of by the contractor but that he would check and provide a response for Councillor Smith.

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

“What was the cost of the Pothole Repair Campaign of the past year?”

Councillor A. Lawrence, Cabinet Member: Environment & Rural Area, replied “That following the worst winter conditions for 30 years the hugely successful Pothole Buster campaign cost a total of £120k for materials, plant and labour, which covered the repair of in the region of 11,500 potholes. The drive for the campaign was for all Members, Parishes and the community to report potholes any time, any place, anywhere and was extremely well received. The cost of the campaign through the press, radio, posters and vehicle signage amounted to £4,600 and some radio adverts ran for a four week period. The potential cost of insurance claims avoided because of this swift council action and comprehensive pot hole busting would have more than covered the cost of the campaign.”

In response, Councillor Smith asked whether a programme was in place for the repair of potholes, particularly in the event that we had another hard winter.

Councillor Lawrence replied that the Council’s pothole repair programme would be adapted to cater for a hard winter.

d) Councillor K.S. Sahota had submitted the following question:

“Does the Leader think that this Council can justify spending £13,000 on three 4 page advertisements since July 2010 in the Telford Journal and a further £4,500 in September when it has decided not to spend £1,800 on a Tree to celebrate Christmas with the residents of our Borough?”

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, stated that the previous administration had spent around £130,000 in 2006/7 on advertising and on an A-Z of services brochure. The same objective had been achieved by spending a fraction of the cost under the current administration. Total expenditure in this area was £80,000 less under the current administration.

e) Councillor K.S. Sahota had submitted the following question:

“At the last Council meeting the Leader announced that, in order to reduce expenditure on Members’ Allowances, he intended to write to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England requesting a review of ward boundaries in Telford & Wrekin and a reduction in the number of councillors by 25%.

Assuming the Leader is aware of:

(a) the criteria for such a review

and,

(b) how much weight any savings in Members’ Allowances would play in such a review

Could he explain why he did not simply propose a reduction in the Members’ Allowances with immediate effect at the time the Scheme was approved?”

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, stated that the review would not just be to reduce allowances. He believed that such a review, with the creation of larger, single member Borough wards, would also provide the following benefits:

- Clearer accountability
- Be in the interests of convenient and effective local government
- Be more efficient and reduce administration
- Provide better and clearer representation for electors throughout the Borough
- Strengthen the role of the elected Member

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

“Can the Leader confirm that there will be no moves by the Administration of T&WC to join up with Shropshire Council, following recent Press speculation about joining them both up as one?”

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, stated that there were no plans to join with Shropshire Council. He pointed to the low level of Council tax in the Borough; there was no intention to do anything that would raise Council tax levels for the people of the Borough.

## **62. NOTICE OF MOTION**

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

“This Council recognises, with pride, the tremendous work of our 2,000 plus civilian workforce at Donnington MOD base and the vital contribution that they make to the security of our nation, the support of our troops and the economic welfare of our local community.

This Council therefore notes with concern the contents of the Government Strategic Defence Review which puts the jobs of our Donnington MOD workforce under threat.

We are strongly opposed to any move to take work away from MOD Donnington and will support the campaign to secure the jobs of our local workforce. We therefore call on the government to keep this vital defence work in the public sector.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor A.D. McClements.

Councillor R.K. Austin, proposing the motion, told Members that the Strategic Defence Review meant that it was likely that there would be redundancies at MOD Donnington. 2,000 people were employed there and it was important to protect these jobs which were an important stimulus to the local economy. He told Members that it was important to ensure that this service remained in good hands in order to ensure those serving in Afghanistan received the best level of support.

Councillor A.D. McClements, seconding the motion, urged Members to support the workforce at MOD Donnington. She told Members that the Strategic Defence Review had damaged morale. Services faced externalisation and workers faced an uncertain future. The review took no account of the impact on local communities or the potential damage to the local economy.

A number of Members spoke in support of the motion, citing the professionalism and efficiency of the workforce.

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, proposed an amendment to the last sentence of the proposed motion, deleting the words ‘public sector’ and replacing them with the word ‘Borough’. The amendment was seconded by Councillor J.M. Seymour.

He paid tribute to the work done at MOD Donnington, fully supported the retention of sustainable jobs and would work with anyone to keep facilities at MOD Donnington.

Councillor R.K. Austin, in closing the debate, warned against the privatisation of the service. The safety and security of the nation and its troops was of primary importance. Following a brief exchange Councillor R.K. Austin told the Speaker that he was concerned about personal attacks being made against him. He requested that this point be recorded in the minutes.

A recorded vote was requested on the amendment to the motion and the votes were as follows:

**For: 24**

Councillors: D.G. Allen, R. Aveley, 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, R.M. Tyler and D.G. Wright.

**Against: 19**

Councillors: R.K. Austin, K.T. Blundell, E.A. Clare, G.M. Green, R.E. Groom, 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, W.L. Tomlinson and D.R.W. White.

**Abstentions: 7**

Councillors: D.W.D. Ashley, S. Bentley, A. Stanton, V. Tonks, H.J. Unwin, A.G.P. Williams, H.J. Williams.

The amended motion thus read:

“This Council recognises, with pride, the tremendous work of our 2,000 plus civilian workforce at Donnington MOD base and the vital contribution that they make to the security of our nation, the support of our troops and the economic welfare of our local community.

This Council therefore notes with concern the contents of the Government Strategic Defence Review which puts the jobs of our Donnington MOD workforce under threat.

We are strongly opposed to any move to take work away from MOD Donnington and will support the campaign to secure the jobs of our local workforce. We therefore call on the government to keep this vital defence work in the Borough”

Councillor R.E. Groom further proposed that the Motion be amended by adding the words ‘the public sector’ and ‘within the Borough of Telford & Wrekin’ to the last sentence ..

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

The amended motion thus read:

“This Council recognises, with pride, the tremendous work of our 2,000 plus civilian workforce at Donnington MOD base and the vital contribution that they make to the security of our nation, the support of our troops and the economic welfare of our local community.

This Council therefore notes with concern the contents of the Government Strategic Defence Review which puts the jobs of our Donnington MOD workforce under threat.

We are strongly opposed to any move to take work away from MOD Donnington and will support the campaign to secure the jobs of our local workforce. We therefore call on the government to keep this vital defence work in the public sector and within the Borough of Telford & Wrekin.”

A recorded vote was called for and the amendment was put to the vote:

**For: 25**

Councillors:

D.G.Allen,D.W.D.Ashley,R.K.Austin,K.T.Blundell,E.A.Clare,G.M.Green,R.E.Groom,Y.C.Hicks, G.P.Hossell,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,W.L.Tomlinson,V.Tonks, D.R.W. White,,A.G.P Williams and H.J.Williams.

**Against: 23**

Councillors:

R. Aveley, S. Bentley, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, D.R. Chaplin, R.G. Chaplin, N.A. Dugmore, A.J. Eade, M.B. Hosken, S.M. Kelly, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, A.A. Meredith, C.R.P. Mollett, J.M. Seymour, R.M. Tyler and D.G. Wright.

**Abstentions: 2**

Councillors: A. Stanton and H.J. Unwin,

Following a brief debate on the substantive motion a recorded vote was requested. The vote was as follows:

**For: 26**

Councillors:

D.G.Allen,D.W.D.Ashley,R.K.Austin,K.T.Blundell,E.A.Clare,G.M.Green,R.E.Groom,Y.E.Hicks, G.P.Hossell,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,A.Stanton,C.F.Smith,M.J.Smith,W.L.Tomlinson,V.Tonks, D.R.W. White, A.G.P Williams and H.J. Williams.

**Against: 22**

Councillors:

R. Aveley, 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, S.M. Kelly, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, A.A. Meredith, C.R.P. Mollett, J.M. Seymour, R.M. Tyler and D.G. Wright.

**Abstentions: 2**

Councillors: S. Bentley and H.J. Unwin,

**RESOLVED – that the Motion be approved**

The meeting ended at 8.55 p.m.

**Speaker:** .....

**Date:** .....