

## **BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday, 27 January, 2011 at 6.30 p.m. at Wrockwardine Wood Arts College, Telford.**

#### **PRESENT:**

Councillors I.T.W. Fletcher (Speaker & Mayor), D.G. Allen, G. Ashcroft, D.W.D. Ashley, R.K. Austin, R. Avey, 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, A. Lawrence, 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, K.L. Tomlinson, 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.

#### **63. PRAYERS**

The Reverend Peter Lawley, Vicar for St. Peter's Church, Priorslee, led Members in prayer.

#### **64. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 25 November, 2010, be confirmed and signed by the Speaker.

#### **65. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors P.A.E. Homer, R.T. Kiernan and L. Lomax.

#### **66. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**Councillor A.G.P. Williams declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 13 a) the motion on funding for Schools Sports Partnerships.**

#### **67. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

##### **(a) Mayoral Engagements**

The Mayor briefly updated Members on his recent engagements. He drew Members attention to official opening of the refurbished Victoria Park in Newport, the Fairtrade event at Civic offices and also to the 'Hit the Mark – Young Peoples Expectations' launch event.

#### **68. REPORT OF LEADER**

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, pledged his support for the reestablishment of a direct rail link to London. He told Members that the recently withdrawn rail link, provided by Wrexham and Shropshire Railways, had provided

an excellent standard of service. A direct rail link to London was an essential service for the Borough.

Referring to new hospital reconfiguration proposals, he told Members that full Accident & Emergency facilities and a provision for emergency surgery were the minimum requirements for Telford & Wrekin. The proposals were good, offering an equitable spread of services. A letter had been sent to the Royal College of Surgeons recommending the Shrewsbury & Telford Hospitals Trust (SATH) proposals as being both safe and sustainable. He urged all Members to support the proposals and to make sure that they contributed to the consultation process.

**69. 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 25 November, 2010.

Councillor E.J. Carter, Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Prosperity, referred Members to a number of matters recently determined by Cabinet. These included Oakengates Regeneration and use of the Shropshire Chamber Portal.

**70. SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2011/12**

Councillor S.M. Kelly presented the report of the Head of Finance which was attached as Appendix D. The report requested Council to determine the Council Tax Base for General and Special Fund purposes for the financial year 2011/12.

In order to determine the appropriate Council Tax levels for the borough it was necessary for the Council to determine the tax base for its area or part of its area. The budget requirements of the various precepting authorities were divided by this figure to arrive at the Band D equivalent level of Council Tax.

The determining of the tax base had to be set between 1<sup>st</sup> December and 31<sup>st</sup> January in relation to 2011/12 as prescribed by the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 as amended. The figures used for the tax base allowed for the continuation of the resolutions in respect of reducing the discounts for empty properties and second homes agreed previously.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the calculation of the tax base for 2011/12, as shown at paragraph 5.6 and Appendix 1 of the report, be approved;**
- (b) That, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount calculated for Telford & Wrekin Council Tax Base for 2011/12 for its special fund area shall be as per the appropriate parish amounts detailed in Appendix 1 for the parishes listed in paragraph 5.7 of the report.**

## **71. BOROUGH ELECTORAL REVIEW – SINGLE MEMBER WARDS**

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, presented the report (Appendix E) of the Head of Governance. The report sought Council's support for the submission of an application, under Section 57 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act (2009), to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) requesting an Electoral Review to consider the creation of single member Borough wards.

Councillor Eade told Members that the last review had taken place in 2002.

Councillor C.F. Smith proposed an amendment to recommendation 2.1 of the report regarding single member wards. The amendment specified that the creation of any single member wards should not split or affect community cohesion. The amendment was seconded by Councillor R.K. Austin. A vote was taken and the amendment was defeated. Following a robust debate it was:

### **RESOLVED:**

- a) **That an application be submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) requesting that an Electoral Review be undertaken to consider, wherever possible, the creation of single member Borough wards;**
- b) **That a politically balanced Boundary Review Committee be established at the Annual Meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2011 in order to develop and agree proposals for consideration by Council.**

## **72. FAIRTRADE STATUS: PROGRESS REPORT**

Councillor V.A. Fletcher presented the report (attached at Appendix F) which provided an update on the activities of the Fairtrade Group and summarised plans for the year ahead. Councillor Fletcher asked Members to note some minor amendments to the information contained within the report and it was:

**RESOLVED – that Council noted the progress achieved.**

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

Council noted the resolved minutes of the Plans Board for 17 November and 8 December, of the Licensing Committee of 1 and 16 December and of the Council Constitution Committee of 11 January 2011.

## **74. QUESTIONS**

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

- a) Councillor A.J. Stanton had submitted the following question:

“Could the Leader update Council on the BSI LSC programme and explain any advantages of using the National framework as opposed to a PFI?”

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, gave an update on the BSI LSC programme. Referring to the advantages of the National framework he replied that there was no requirement to set up a local education partnership. This allowed the focus to be on meant that, allowing the focus to be on speedy delivery

In response, Councillor Stanton asked:

“Will the Council maintain control of and encourage use of Sports & Learning facilities 364 days a year in Newport?”

Councillor Eade confirmed that the Council would do this for all Sports & Learning facilities in the Borough.

b) Councillor J.A. Francis had submitted the following question:

“Can the Leader confirm that all existing BTI Projects will continue in the Borough bearing in mind the financial pressures that the Borough Council finds itself in due to the economic mess left by the previous Labour Government?”

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, confirmed that the BTI projects were a key policy of the vision for the Borough. The projects were an investment in the future of the Borough.

In response, Councillor J.A. Francis asked:

“Will the Leader guarantee regeneration in Oakengates, Hadley and Malinslee will go ahead?”

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, confirmed that budget commitments had been made and that regeneration work would go ahead.

c) Councillor H.J. Unwin had submitted the following question:

“Will the Leader confirm that once legislation has been passed that the Local Development Framework imposed by the previous Labour Government will be scrapped by Telford & Wrekin Council including the new build target of 26,400?”

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, confirmed that the Local Development Framework would be scrapped once legislation had been passed. Planning decisions would be placed in the hands of local people and their elected representatives.

In response, Councillor Unwin asked:

“Will proper and full consultation take place on any new arrangements?”

Councillor Eade confirmed that consultation would take place across the Borough.

d) Councillor R.C. Chaplin had submitted the following question:

“Will the Leader explain why the new Civic Offices will be built in Southwater?”

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, replied that the new Civic Offices Project help to kick start the regeneration of the Southwater area. The regeneration work would attract up to £200m in investment and help to create hundreds of jobs. The project would be at no cost to the taxpayer.

In response, Councillor Chaplin asked:

“Is it correct that the staff currently at Civic Offices could easily fit in to office space at Darby House?”

Councillor Eade replied that Civic Offices staff would not fit in to vacant space at Darby House.

e) Councillor N.A. Dugmore had submitted the following question:

“Can the Leader give assurances that, in light of reduced spending, the Council will continue to prioritise investment in Adult Care and Support and, thereby, ensure that the most vulnerable adults within our community continue to receive the care services they need?”

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, replied that £1.6m efficiency savings had been reinvested, spending priorities were being agreed.

In response, Councillor Dugmore asked:

“Would the Leader agree that there will need to be changes to the way care services are delivered?”

Councillor Eade responded that the requirements of the Personal Care Bill meant that there would need to be changes in the way services were delivered.

f) Councillor D.R. Chaplin had submitted the following question:

“Can the Leader confirm that Telford and Wrekin Council's level of borrowing under the Conservative-led Administration is within the national average?”

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, stated that net borrowing per head was well below net average for 2009/10, the latest statistics available and that the figures would continue to remain below the national average.

g) Councillor A.D. McClements had submitted the following question:

“As both the Leader of the Council, Cllr Eade and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Cllr Carter have disappointingly failed to respond to any correspondence sent by both the Labour Group Leader, Keith Austin and David Wright MP in respect of the motion that was passed at November's full council meeting, could the Cllr Eade please inform us whether he has called on the government to keep the vital defence work at MoD Donnington in the public sector and within the Borough of Telford and Wrekin?”

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Council, nominated Councillor E.J. Carter, Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration and Prosperity to respond to this question. Councillor Carter confirmed that he would be leading on this and that a response had already been provided via the Chief Executive.

In response, Councillor McClements asked:

“Has the Leader called on the government to keep the work in Telford?”

Councillor Eade nominated Councillor Carter to provide a response. Councillor Carter reaffirmed that he would be leading on this and that he would be taking things forward.

(Prior to discussion of the next item, Councillor A.G.P. Williams left the room.)

## **75. NOTICE OF MOTION**

(a) Councillor D.G. Allen, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, moved the following Motion:

“This Council, being aware that the United Kingdom is to host the 2012 Olympic Games and of the Prime Minister, David Cameron’s, efforts to have us awarded the hosting of the 2018 World Cup Finals, calls on Michael Gove to reverse his decision to axe all funding to School Sports Partnerships.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor A.G.P Williams.

Following a debate a vote was taken and the motion was defeated.

## **RESOLVED – that the Motion not be approved**

(Councillor A.G.P. Williams returned to the room)

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

“This Council condemns the Tory-led Coalition Government’s drastically reduced funding for Telford and Wrekin. At a time when unemployment, personal debt and housing benefit claims are at their highest level for two decades, the most vulnerable in our community need public services more than ever.

We believe this Council must ensure that key frontline services and Council jobs are protected and call on the administration to urgently lobby the Government against the devastating front loaded cuts. We therefore call upon this Council to immediately:

- Prepare a detailed case for Telford to present to Eric Pickles, the Local Government Minister requesting additional resources
- Undertake a detailed community equality impact assessment of all the proposals to reduce services so that there is an understanding of the consequences to the most vulnerable in the Borough

- Undertake a detailed equality impact assessment of all the redundancy proposals to reduce jobs and services according to the statutory duties under race, gender and disability legislation
- Re-assess all of the Council’s resources and contingencies in order to identify how they could be used to protect front line services and council jobs at a time when they are needed in this next financial year.”

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

Following a debate a recorded vote was requested in accordance with section 15.4 of the Council’s Procedure Rules. The voting was as follows:

**For: 22**

Councillors: D.G. Allen, G. Ashcroft, R.K. Austin, K.T. Blundell, E.A. Clare, G.M. Green, R.E. Groom, Y.C. Hicks, 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, K.L. Tomlinson, W.L. Tomlinson, D.R.W. White and A.G.P. Williams.

**Against: 26**

Councillors: 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, A. Lawrence, A.A. Meredith, C.R.P. Mollett, J.M. Seymour, A. Stanton, R.M. Tyler H.J. Unwin and D.G. Wright.

**Abstentions: 2**

Councillors: V. Tonks and H.J. Williams.

**RESOLVED – that the Motion not be approved.**

The meeting ended at 9.54 p.m.

**Speaker:** .....

**Date:** .....