

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 10th November, 2011 at 7.00 p.m. at the Civic Offices, Telford

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 16th NOVEMBER, 2011

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN MONDAY, 21st NOVEMBER, 2011)

PRESENT: Councillors K.S. Sahota (Leader and Chair), E.A. Clare, S. Davies, A.R.H. England, W.A.M. McClements, R.A. Overton, H. Rhodes, C.F. Smith and P.R. Watling

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) and Councillor W.L. Tomlinson (Lib Dem/Independent Group Leader)

CB-58 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th October 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

CB-59 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

CB-60 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C.F. Smith – personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 6 – National Government Changes to the Disabled Blue Badge Scheme

Councillor C.F. Smith – personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 10 – Planning of School Places: Secondary School Provision

Councillor E.A. Clare – personal interest (as a Governor of Sutherland School) in agenda item 10 - Planning of School Places: Secondary School Provision

CB-61 100 DAY REVIEW OF 2011/12 SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING STRATEGY

Key Decision identified as **Budget Strategy / Service & Financial Planning Process** in the Forward Plan published on 17th October 2011.

Council decision - not subject to call-in

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member for Resources & Service Delivery, presented the joint report of the Interim Chief Executive and the Head of Finance, which set out final proposals to revise the Council's capital programme and revenue budget for 2011/12 following consultation on the proposals approved by Cabinet on 26 July 2011.

The amendments to the Budget were particularly focussed on reducing the ongoing cost of servicing outstanding debt. This included halting the planned construction of new Civic Offices (with an annual revenue saving of £1.1m) and scaling back of other capital projects – details of which were provided in the report. It was proposed that that some of these savings be used to increase investment in the maintenance of roads and pavements over the next couple of years. The proposals contained in the report for reducing the cost of borrowings, and the other measures set out in the report, would generate an expected revenue saving in 2011/12 of £1.6m.

Extensive consultations had taken place to obtain people's views on the budget proposals, what their priorities were, and what the Council should be doing differently to save more money. Results relating to the 100 day budget proposals were very positive, with strong support for increased investment in roads and pavements and for not going ahead with new Civic Offices. An equality impact assessment on the proposals had also been completed and had not identified any specific issues that needed to be addressed.

Councillor R.J. Sloan, Chair of the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee, presented the Committee's response to the revised budget strategy, which was appended to the report. The Committee supported the increased investment in the maintenance of roads and pavements, and recognised the hard work of officers in delivering the public engagement exercise. There was some concern about the effectiveness of the proposed Small Business Loans Fund, and that there was a need for a coherent policy on concessions. Cabinet Members thanked the Scrutiny Committee for their hard work and comments. In terms of the proposed re-instatement of free swimming for under 16s with a flex card, Councillor A.R.H. England (Cabinet Member for Leisure and Wellbeing) stated that this needed to be looked at in the wider context of encouraging healthy lifestyles and increasing take-up of the Council's leisure facilities. In relation to the Small Business Loans Fund, Councillor S. Davies (Cabinet Member: Environment, Co-operative Council & Partnership) advised that he was optimistic that matched funding would be forthcoming.

RESOLVED – TO RECOMMEND to COUNCIL the following amendments to the 2011/12 Budget Strategy:

- (a) The cancellation of the planned building of new Civic Offices to generate additional ongoing revenue savings of over £1.1m per annum;**
- (b) The development of a Community Hub in the Southwater area of Telford Town Centre which will provide customer access to Council services and a new library. The Community Hub could also provide space for community groups/organisations, and other public sector bodies – making the Community Hub a Cooperative Council centre;**

- (c) **Changes to other capital projects and the generation of additional capital receipts generating ongoing revenue benefits of over £1.75m per annum;**
- (d) **A much stronger emphasis on improved procurement processes in order to deliver savings which reduce the overall impact of grant cuts on front-line services;**
- (e) **Increased investment in the maintenance of roads and pavements of a further £1.3m capital in 2012/13 and £0.25m in 2013/14 over and above the existing approved capital programme;**
- (f) **Investment of £2.3m in a regeneration scheme for Hadley and £1.9m for Oakengates;**
- (g) **Creation of a capital budget of £45k to match fund projects of up to £7.5k in each of the 6 Borough Town areas;**
- (h) **Reinstatement of free swimming for under 16s with a flex card;**
- (i) **Allocation of up to £0.6m one-off funding to provide additional support for employees facing compulsory redundancy;**
- (j) **Contributing £25k one off funding to a small business loans fund;**
- (k) **Creation of a Co-operative Council initiatives budget of £15k;**
- (l) **Carrying forward revenue benefits identified in the report of around £1.6m as a one-off benefit to help support the budget for 2012/13 together with any unspent element of the contingency at year end;**
- (m) **that the responses to the engagement exercise included in section 8 and Appendix 1 of the report, and the comments of the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee shown at Appendix 3, be noted.**

**CB-62 BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE PROGRAMME –
APPROVAL OF FINAL BUSINESS CASE FOR THREE
SCHOOLS**

Key Decision identified as **School Organisation/Capital Financing/Borough Towns Initiative/ Building Schools for the Future/Planning for School Places** in the Forward Plan published on 17th October 2011.

Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families, presented the report of the Head of Property and ICT, which sought approval for the submission of a Final Business Case (FBC) for Phoenix Sports & Learning Community, Mount Gilbert School and Newport Girls' High School Academy Trust to Partnership for Schools.

The changes in the scope of the three projects since the submission of the Outline Business Case were appended to the report. The capacity for the Phoenix School project had been reduced to 900 places for 11-16 year olds, and there had been some changes to reduce the new-build costs. The new leisure and health facilities associated with the development remained unchanged, and would receive funding contributions from Sport England and Telford & Wrekin Primary Care Trust. The refurbishment and replacement of buildings at Mount Gilbert School and at Newport Girls High School were largely as originally planned, with some minor reductions to reflect the reduced funding allocation from Government.

The report also set out details of the procurement process and contract arrangements for the works, and detailed the financial and legal implications of the projects. The Head of School Improvement advised that the proposals were in line with the process that had been followed for earlier BSF projects.

Members welcomed the report and the investment into schools and leisure facilities across all parts of the Borough.

RESOLVED –

- (a) **that the submission of the Final Business Cases for the Phoenix Sports & Learning Community, Mount Gilbert School and Newport Girls High School Academy Trust to Partnership for Schools (PfS) be approved;**
- (b) **that, subject to approval by PfS (thereby releasing BSF funding), authority be delegated to the Head of Property & ICT, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families, to award the Single School design and build contracts to Kier Moss, and to enter into all related contract documents;**
- (c) **that, subsequent to the relocation of the Phoenix School to its new site, authority be delegated to the Head of Property & ICT to arrange the demolition of existing buildings and the disposal of the site;**
- (d) **that authority be delegated to the Head of Governance to agree and execute all necessary documentation, including to affix the common seal of the Council to contractual documentation as, in the opinion of the Head of Governance, is appropriate under article 14.06 of the Constitution.**

CB - 63 NATIONAL GOVERNMENT CHANGES TO THE DISABLED BLUE BADGE SCHEME

Non-Key Decision

Councillor C.F. Smith withdrew from the meeting room.

Councillor H. Rhodes, Cabinet Member for Transport & Community Protection, presented the report of the Head of Leisure, Libraries & Customer Services, which outlined changes to the administration of the Blue Badge Scheme following a review by the Department for Transport.

The changes nationally to the Scheme included a new eligibility criteria, a new administration process for the issuing of Blue Badges starting on 1 January 2012, and a new charging scheme. Much of the application process was being standardised and centralised, including a new badge with embedded security features, similar to a driving licence. The introduction of the new format would result in the Council having to pay £4.60 plus VAT for each badge issued to the Government appointed contractor, for its production. Local authorities could now also charge a fee to cover administration costs (for successful applications only), and it was proposed that a charge of £10 be introduced from January 2012 (to include the cost of purchasing the new format Badge). The charge would cover the full three years of issue.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the changes in the Blue Badge Scheme being made by national Government be noted;**
- (b) That the introduction of a £10 application fee for all successful applications from January 2012, at least half of which will be forwarded to the Government appointed contractor for the issue of the new badge, be approved.**

CB - 64 PARISH & TOWN COUNCIL HOTLINE – REVIEW OF PILOT

Non-Key Decision

Councillor R. A. Overton, Deputy Leader, presented the report of the Head of Leisure, Libraries & Customer Services, which provided information on the pilot scheme for dealing with enquiries/service requests from Parish & Town Councils in the Borough.

797 Parish enquiries were received by the Customer Quality Team between 31 January and 31 August 2011, 88% of which were responded to in 10 days. All enquiries were monitored until final completion of works and Parishes were kept informed of progress at key stages. Of the 95 cases that were not responded to within 10 days, annual leave and competing priorities were the main reasons for the delay in responding. Appended to the report were details of a satisfaction survey with the Parish & Town Councils, which showed that 93% of respondents were satisfied with the way their enquiry was handled – with 100% stating they were satisfied with the outcome. Most Parish & Town Councils with the exception of two small parishes were using the system, albeit to varying degrees.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the success of the pilot period be noted;**

- (b) that the Parish & Town Council hotline be mainstreamed as part of the core offer of the Council's Customer Service team and the wider Council;
- (c) that Service Heads continue to identify areas for improvement following the receipt of enquiries and service requests from Parish & Town Councils, and look to improve response times where improvements are required.

CB - 65 EVENTS AND FESTIVALS IN TELFORD & WREKIN FOR 2012

Non-Key Decision

Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member for Leisure & Wellbeing, presented the report of the Head of Leisure, Libraries & Customer Services which informed Cabinet of the proposed calendar of community events for 2012.

To mark the London 2012 Olympics (including Paralympic Games and Cultural Olympiad), a calendar for February to September 2012 had been produced under the brand "The Games and Me". A full list of events was appended to the report, which included a number of local Community Games events. It had just been announced that the London 2012 Torch Relay would be coming through the Borough, and it was planned to work with local communities and parishes on celebrations to mark this unique event.

The Queen would be celebrating her Diamond Jubilee in 2012, and there was potential for a royal visit in July next year. The main event was likely to be at RAF Cosford, and the Council had agreed in principle to support this event, if confirmed. Also appended to the report were a calendar of events led by the Council and a calendar of other key events organised by the community. Business sponsorship and external funding would be key to the continued programme of public events, and support had been secured from two local companies – Ricoh and Keim Paints.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the Olympic themed events outlined in Appendix 1 of the report and the annual core calendar of community events outlined in Appendix 2 be endorsed;
- (b) that the Arts & Culture team, in conjunction with the Head of Service and Cabinet Member, continue to seek business sponsorship and external support to sustain the annual core programme of community events;
- (c) that the support for the London 2012 Torch Relay and Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations be endorsed, and that the

requirement for additional one-off funding to support these events be noted.

CB-66 URGENCY RESOLUTION – SECTION 100B(4) LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

The Chair made the following statement:

“I am of the opinion that the following item of business should be dealt with as a matter of urgency at this meeting in order to avoid any unnecessary delay.”

CB-67 REVIEW OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Non-Key Decision

The Leader presented the report of the Head of Governance, appended to which was the ‘Review of Senior Management Structure & Operational Arrangements to Progress the Development of the Co-operative Council’, which had been undertaken by the Interim Chief Executive.

The Review had addressed the ruling Administration’s wishes to move away from the traditional “Chief Executive” model and to facilitate the development of a co-operative council model of service delivery. The key recommendations in the report included the creation of a Managing Director post on a salary of £137,000 (£12,000 less than of the previous Chief Executive); a net reduction of one Corporate Director post and a reduction in salary for all Corporate Directors; the re-designation of Heads of Service to Assistant Directors, with a net reduction of 2 posts at this level; the reshaping of responsibilities and a comprehensive programme to achieve the aims of the Co-operative Council; reshaping the Local Strategic Partnership structure; and proposals to improve the support provided to all Borough Councillors.

Cabinet Members welcomed the recommendations contained in the Review, including the designation of a Director for Children’s Services, the proposed Managing Director post (with a more “hands-on” role) and the creation of a Co-operative Council Delivery Unit. The Opposition Group Leaders were broadly supportive of most of the recommendations in the Review, although Councillor A. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) expressed a view that the principle of fixed point salaries should be extended to the proposed Assistant Director posts, and that the proposals would involve a risk in the delivery of critical services. In response to a question regarding the transfer of the Director of Public Health to the Council in April 2013, the Interim Chief Executive advised that the report’s proposals could enable integration of that post. However, there was still much dialogue and planning to undertake before any final decisions could be made. An indication of the likely budget that would be transferred to the Council for the running of the Public Health function was expected in the next few weeks.

The Interim Chief Executive then withdrew from the meeting, during consideration of elements of the proposed senior management pay, and the suggested recruitment process for the Managing Director post. In response to

questions regarding the payment for Returning Officer responsibilities, the Head of Governance suggested that a further paper could be prepared for Members on this issue. In terms of the recruitment process for the Managing Director post, Members spoke of the advantages to the organisation of making an appointment as soon as practically possible, and therefore the prudent approach would be to advertise the post internally in the first instance. If no internal candidates met the identified criteria for the post, then an external recruitment exercise could be considered. .

RESOLVED -

- (a) that the **Review of the Senior Management Structure be broadly supported, ahead of consideration of the matter by Council on 24th November 2011;**
- (b) that the **Managing Director post should be initially advertised internally;**
- (c) that the **proposed salary scale for the new post of Managing Director be £137,000;**
- (d) that the **interim arrangements, including re-affirming that the Interim Chief Executive is expected to implement the proposed re-structure, be continued, subject to any comments that Council might have;**
- (e) that the **proposed savings of £406,000 which would be delivered on an on-going basis be noted.**

CB-68 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED - that the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

CB-69 PLANNING OF SCHOOL PLACES: SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVISION

Key Decision identified as **School Organisation/Capital Financing/Borough Towns Initiative/ Building Schools for the Future/Planning for School Places** in the Forward Plan published on 17th October 2011.

Councillors E.A. Clare and C.F. Smith withdrew from the meeting room.

Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families, presented the report of the Head of School Improvement regarding revised options for secondary school provision based on future projections of pupil numbers within the Borough and the funding available through the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. There had been a small

technical amendment to the recommendation concerning a proposed new Christian Academy, and a revised version of the report was tabled.

A review of the BSF programme had allowed the opportunity to look at secondary school capacity (particularly in the Wellington area) and to focus on building new schools in existing communities as part of the Co-operative Council approach. The intention was to develop three new academies that would drive up standards and ensure high quality provision across all parts of the Borough, especially in the most disadvantaged communities.

The key proposals for consultation were a new Christian Academy (incorporating the Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College) for ages 11-18 on the proposed site in Priorslee; a new 11-16 Co-operative Academy for the communities of Donnington, Oakengates, Trench and Wrockwardine Wood (incorporating the existing Sutherland and Wrockwardine Wood Colleges); to seek to develop a new Co-operative Academy in Stirchley to incorporate the existing Lord Silkin College and Grange Park Primary School; and a new 1200 place school on the vacant Blessed Robert Johnson site in Wellington involving the re-location of Charlton School, which was currently over-subscribed with little scope for expansion on its present site.

The amended plans would now be subject to formal consultation with key partners and stakeholders. However, initial discussions with all relevant partners suggested that there was likely to be widespread support for the proposals. The report also contained detailed information on the financial and value-for-money assessments of the proposals.

Members welcomed the proposals, and thanked the Officers involved in progressing the matter.

RESOLVED –

- (a) **that authority be delegated to the Head of School Improvement to engage in formal consultation with key partners and stakeholders in respect of the following proposals:**
- **To build a new ecumenical 1050 place Christian Academy for ages 11-18 on the proposed site in Priorslee which will incorporate the Blessed Robert Johnson Catholic College and will provide places for the communities of Priorslee and St Georges encompassing the primary attendance areas of Priorslee Academy and Redhill and St George’s CE Primary Schools;**
 - **To build a new 1050 place 11-16 Co-operative Academy for the communities of Donnington, Oakengates, Trench and Wrockwardine Wood which incorporate the combined success and expertise of the Sutherland Business and Enterprise College and Wrockwardine Wood Arts College;**

- To build a community facility that will develop The Lakeside co-operative educational campus on the Stirchley site encompassing primary, secondary and post 16 education;
- To build a new 1200 place school on the vacated Blessed Robert Johnson site to replace the Charlton School.

(b) that a further report be brought to Cabinet on the outcome of the consultation process.

The meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

**Jonathan Eatough
Head of Governance
Date: 16 November 2011**

Signed:

Date: