

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of a Meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday 24 November, 2011 at 6.30 pm at 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, S. Davies, N.A. Dugmore, A.J. Eade, C.B.A. Elliott, R.C. Evans, A.R.H. England, N.A.M. England, G.M. Green, E.J. Greenaway, K.R. Guy, T.J. Hope, M.B. Hosken, M.G. Ion, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, A.A. Mackenzie, A.D. McClements, W.A.M. McClements, A.A. Meredith, C.P.R. Mollett, L.A. Murray, R.A. Overton, F.R. Picken, S.A.W. Reynolds, H. Rhodes K.S. Sahota, R.G. Scammell, J.M. Seymour, R.J. Sloan, C.F. Smith, A.J. Stanton, B.J. Thompson, W.L. Tomlinson, C.R. Turley, P.R. Watling and D.R.W. White.

57. PRAYERS

The Reverend Keith Osmund-Smith, minister at Madeley Baptist Church, led Members in prayer.

58. MINUTES

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 15th September and the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Council on 3rd November, be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

59. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors D.G. Davies, B.H. Duce, I.T.W. Fletcher, V.A. Fletcher, A.S. Jhavar, J. Loveridge, C.N. Mason, J.C. Minor, G.C.W. Reynolds and K.L. Tomlinson.

60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor F.R. Picken declared a personal interest in agenda item 14c), the motion on capital funding for social housing.

Councillors S.A.W. Reynolds, B.J. Thompson and C.R. Turley declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 14a), the motion on a Newport referendum.

Councillors E.A. Clare and C.F. Smith declared personal interests in agenda item 7, the report on matters determined by Cabinet. The declarations were in relation to item 2.3.7 of the report, Planning of School Places: Secondary Provision.

61. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Mayoral Engagements

The Mayor briefly updated Members on his recent engagements.

b) Awards

The Mayor presented the Institute of Revenues Rating & Valuation (IRRV) annual performance silver award to Angie Astley, Head of Leisure, Libraries and Customer Services. Angie was receiving the award on behalf of Benefits Manager Lee Higgins and the Council's Benefits Team.

The benefits team had been short listed in the "Benefits Team of the Year" category after a year of transformation and performance for the service. Over the last two years, the number of customers receiving either Housing Benefit or Council Tax benefit in Telford had increased by 18 per cent. During the same time, the Benefit Service had introduced a variety of new ways for customers to apply for their benefits that had reduced costs significantly, while producing some of the best processing times in the West Midlands.

62. LEADER'S REPORT & ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Leader's Report

Councillor K.S. Sahota, Leader of the Council, updated Members on a number of current issues. He reported that the senior management restructure had been agreed by Cabinet on 10 November. He hoped that all Members would offer their support in implementing the restructure which would help to achieve the aspirations of the Co-operative Council.

The Council was in positive discussion with Hark Apollo and developments in the Town Centre were moving forward.

More schools were being rebuilt under the administration's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) plans which would provide both high quality and sustainable schools and provide value for money.

The Leader told Members that he would be meeting shortly with both MP's for the area and union officials to discuss what could be done to help secure all jobs at the MOD Donnington site, the main employment base in the town.

His administration supported and acknowledged the right of public sector employees to take industrial action on 30 November.

Discussing the 2012/13 budget the Leader stated that the government's requirements for a freeze on Council Tax would have implications for services in the future.

In closing, he welcomed the news that the Olympic torch would be coming to the Borough as part of the build up to the 2012 Olympic Games.

b) Announcements

The Leader presented Graham Clark, principal of New College, Wellington with a certificate of achievement. Graham was retiring after 17 years in post. The Leader invited Councillor M.G. Ion, Borough member for College ward, to say a few words.

Councillor Ion paid tribute to Graham's significant contribution to the community and his commitment to improving the life chances of young people. He had made New College a truly open, inclusive and community focused institution. His support for the area had been unstinting; he would be a hard act to follow.

Graham thanked Members and spoke positively about Telford as a town that was moving forward. He told Members that he was proud that education had progressed and he was proud of the opportunities available to the people of Telford. Councillor E.J. Carter also paid tribute to Graham and wished him well for the future.

63. 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 15 September.

Councillor S.P. Burrell asked the Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families for clarification on two points relating to plans for secondary schools. He asked if residents of local communities would be able to access facilities at these schools and for confirmation of how many school places had been reduced by the loss of a secondary school.

Councillor P.R. Watling replied that work would be undertaken with the schools allocation team to address the issue of pupil numbers, the current plans were more substantial than those offered previously. Councillor Watling agreed to provide a written response to Councillor Burrell's questions.

Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Leisure & Well-Being, updated Members on the Investment in Telford Ice Rink report, shown at section 2.2.3 of the Cabinet report. Councillor England told Members that officers had been challenged to find a package that would enable the Council to maintain an 'in house' operation of the Ice Rink. The facility would be enhanced, the vicinity of Southwater Square and the Southwater development would also benefit.

Councillor S. Bentley believed that the Council should ensure that all private investment opportunities had been exhausted before going ahead with the proposed investment. Councillor A.J. Eade, leader of the Conservative group, felt that rather than allow a private operator run the Ice Rink, which would help to protect jobs and services, the Council Tax payer would have to cover any ongoing losses from the proposed service. Councillor A.J. Stanton asked about the business model for the proposal and for clarification of when the £3.2m investment would be repaid. Councillor England responded that there had been longer term disinvestment in this facility, there would be a loss in the first few years but this was projected to move to a surplus after 2 years. Local people would benefit from an enhanced service and the Council would be supporting investment in the Southwater development. Councillor Dugmore asked about any unsuccessful bids for the operation of the Ice Rink. He understood that some bid information was commercially confidential but he was interested in seeing the cost figures. Councillor England agreed to provide a written response to the questions from Councillor Dugmore and from Councillor Stanton.

64. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET

20 October 2011 Cabinet

a) 2011/12 Financial Monitoring Report

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report (Appendix D) of the Head of Finance which showed overall revenue spending as being within projected budgets and provided an update on progress on capital programme spending. The report also highlighted some changes to capital allocations and virements in section 1 of the report which required formal approval by Council.

RESOLVED – That the changes to the Capital programme shown in section 1 of the report be approved.

b) Investment in to Telford Ice Rink (Business Case)

Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Leisure & Well-Being, presented the joint report of the Head of Leisure, Libraries & Customer Services and the Head of Property & ICT. The report (Appendix E) sought Council approval for inclusion within 2012/13 budget strategy of capital and revenue implications of the financial business case for an in house' development option as well as 2011/12 spend as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

RESOLVED – That Council endorse the inclusion within the budget strategy for 2012/13 the capital and revenue implications of the investment in to Telford Ice Rink as well as the spend in 2011/12 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

c) Dawley Sports & Co-operative Learning Community – Sport England Bid

Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Leisure & Well-Being, presented the report (Appendix F) of the Head of Property & ICT which required Council to approve a stage 2 bid of £1.5m to Sport England for enhancement of the sports & leisure provision at the Dawley Sports & Co-operative Learning Community.

The bid included the provision of a national BMX track, full size 3G pitch for Rugby League and an 8 court facility for Netball, Table Tennis and Rugby. The bid had increased from the original submission of £1.21m by £290k, largely due to reductions in funding from three of the National Governing Bodies (NGB's).

RESOLVED: That a Stage 2 bid for £1.5m to Sport England as per the agreed timescales and advice, be approved, taking into account the major opportunities of the iconic sporting facilities to be developed in Dawley, and the identified risks.

20 October 2011 Cabinet

a) 100 Day Review of 2011/12 Service & Financial Planning Strategy

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report (Appendix G) of the Interim Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer which set out final proposals to revise the Council's capital programme and the revenue budget for 2011/12.

Councillor A. Lawrence welcomed increased investment in the maintenance of roads and pavements but expressed concern that not enough money was being made available to stop the deterioration of the Borough's roads. He sought an assurance that the budget available to keep the condition of the Borough's roads at standard was sufficient. Councillor McClements replied that current budget provision was needed to plug holes left by previous budget funding. Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Environment, Co-operative Council & Partnerships, noted that over £5.6m would be invested in the Borough's roads in 2012/13. Councillor W.L. Tomlinson, Leader of the Liberal Democrat/Independent group, was broadly supportive of the report's recommendations. Councillor McClements welcomed his comments. Councillor E.J. Carter welcomed the regeneration schemes for Hadley and Oakengates but expressed some disappointment that the schemes had been reduced. Councillor McClements replied that the revised scheme for Hadley had significant revenue benefits as compared to the previous scheme and that the Oakengates revised scheme reduced borrowing requirements significantly.

RESOLVED: That Council approve -

- a) The cancellation of the planned building of new Civic Offices to generate additional ongoing revenue savings of over £1.1m pa;**
- 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 pa;**
- 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) Note the responses to the engagement exercise included in section 8 and Appendix 1 and the comments of the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee included as Appendix 3 of this report.**

Prior to discussion of the following item the Interim Chief Executive, left the room.

b) Review of Senior Management Restructure

Councillor K.S. Sahota, Leader of the Council, presented the report (Appendix H) of the Head of Governance which sought comments from Council on the proposed re-structure arrangements. The detailed review purpose and terms of reference were attached to the report. Councillor Sahota hoped that all members would support the proposals which were part of the Council's continuing efforts to protect front line services in the face of severe public spending cuts.

The review of the Senior Management Structure that had been undertaken by the Interim Chief Executive recommended the deletion of the Chief Executive post and the creation of a new Managing Director post. This approach had been endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting on 10th November, where it was agreed that the post should be advertised internally in the first instance. If no suitable candidates were selected then the post would be advertised externally. The proposed ongoing savings resulting from the re-structure were £406k.

Richard Partington had been appointed Interim Chief Executive with effect from 1 August 2011. In addition to his strategic responsibilities as Interim Chief Executive he had been given the specific remit of undertaking a review of the senior management structure and making recommendations for moving away from the traditional "Chief Executive" model and facilitating the development of a co-operative council model of service delivery.

A further report would be received by Council at its meeting of 19 January 2012 detailing the required constitutional changes for approval, the linking of the Head of Paid Services role and Returning Officer and Registration Officer with the role of Managing Director, agreeing any recommendation from the Personnel Board regarding the appointment of the successful candidate into the role of Managing Director, agreeing the designations of Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer to the newly created posts. Swift and sound recruitment to the position was very

important in order to provide leadership to, and completion of, the significant changes proposed in the Senior Management report.

Key recommendations in the report included :-

1. The creation of a full time post of Managing Director on a salary of £137,000 (£12,000 below that of the previous Chief Executive);
2. A net reduction in the number of Corporate Directors by one and a proposed reduction in salary for all Corporate Directors from £119,000 to £109,600pa;
3. The re-designation of Heads of Service to Assistant Directors with no increase in salary;
4. A reduction in the number of Heads of Service (Assistant Directors) and the identification of two part time, specialist positions, a net reduction of 2 posts at this level;
5. The re-shaping of responsibilities and a comprehensive programme to achieve the aims of the Co-operative Council;
6. Re-shaping the Local Strategic partnership structure better to enable delivery of key priorities and to address key issues in the Borough;
7. Putting in place arrangements to seek to address poverty and social exclusion within our communities;
8. Proposals to improve the support provided to all Borough Councillors; and
9. A stronger organisational focus on delivery and excellent customer service.

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Conservative group, felt that significant reductions in senior management costs had already been achieved. There was a danger that the proposed structure would not be able to deliver key services, he cautioned against going ahead with the proposals. Services should be reconfigured, following which, the structure could then be reviewed. He confirmed that the Conservative group had withdrawn from the recruitment process for the Managing Director post because they considered that the post should be advertised externally.

Councillor Sahota told the meeting that the process was open and transparent and that an external recruitment process would potentially cost at least £30k. He drew Members' attention to the £406k savings resulting from the re-structure and recommended the report to Council. Councillor S. Bentley felt that the Council had a duty to find the best possible candidate and this should involve an external recruitment process. The Interim Chief Executive post that had been advertised as a part time post whereas the proposed Managing Director post was a different role.

RESOLVED – That Council's comments on the senior management restructure be noted by Cabinet

Prior to discussion of the following item the Interim Chief Executive returned to the room

65. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Council Constitution Committee 8 November 2011.

Boundary Review Terms of Reference

Councillor K.S. Sahota, Leader of the Council, presented the report (Annex I) of the Head of Governance which contained recommendations (shown at Annex 1 of the report) for the Terms of Reference of the Council's Boundary Review Committee.

The committee had been appointed at the Annual General Meeting of the Council on 26 May 2011. A defined Terms of Reference were required to identify those matters that would be considered by the Boundary Review Committee.

The report proposed that the Boundary Review Committee should have powers to deal with all boundary review matters. Those delegated powers relating to Boundary Review matters that were currently with Licensing Committee would be transferred to the Boundary Review Committee.

RESOLVED-

- a) **That the Terms of Reference of the Boundary Review Committee, as set out at Annex 1, be approved and reflected in the Council's Constitution.**
- b) **That the Terms of Reference of Licensing Committee are amended and the Constitution amended to reflect the delegated powers being transferred to the Boundary Review Committee, shown at paragraph 3.4 of the report.**

66. ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2010/11

Councillor D.R.W. White, Chairman of Scrutiny Management Board, presented the Scrutiny Annual Report, 2011. Councillor White told the meeting that the year had seen the establishment of 7 new Scrutiny Committees linked to the Council's priority areas. There were now 5 service themed Scrutiny Committees which looked at service issues within their area, overseen by the Scrutiny Management Board which monitored the delivery of the work programme and reviewed issues of strategic importance.

The planned reconfiguration of acute hospital services by the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust was a key issue for the people of the Borough. The Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) had conducted robust scrutiny on behalf of the public, concluding that proposals were in the best interests of the people of the Borough and the people of Shropshire. Councillor J.M. Seymour paid tribute to the work of the JHOSC in 2010/11 and to the excellent work of Councillor V.A. Fletcher who had been lead Scrutiny member and joint Chairman of the Committee in the previous year.

The year had seen major changes to the ranks of Scrutiny Members and to the organisation. The Scrutiny team had undergone changes during the year but had continued to produce excellent work during very challenging times. Looking ahead, the Borough, like all Councils, was required to make large spending reductions.

There was arguably no better time for Members who were not part of the Cabinet to engage in the decision making process. Key challenges ahead were scrutiny of the budget priorities for 2012/13, scrutiny of health and adult care and support in the light of NHS reforms and continued monitoring of the full business case for the hospital reconfiguration.

As part of the ethos of a Co-operative Council there was a commitment to engage openly with local people, to involve partners and residents in the Council's work and to challenge which, and how, services would be funded and delivered by the Council and its partners. Scrutiny Committee meetings were now held in public in order to make the process open and transparent.

Councillor White urged all Members to engage with the Scrutiny process and thanked everyone who had contributed to scrutiny work undertaken during the year.

RESOLVED – That the Annual Scrutiny Report 2010/11 be noted.

67. AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

Councillor R.K. Austin, Vice-Chair of Audit Committee presented the report (Appendix K) of the Head of Governance which provided Members with an annual report of the operations of Audit Committee for 2010/11.

RESOLVED – That the Audit Committee Annual Report 2010/11 be noted.

68. MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Council noted the following resolved minutes.

Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee	27 th September and 25 th October.
Audit Committee	20 th September and 1 st November
Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee	12 th October
Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee	19 th September
Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee	12 th September
Council Constitution Committee	8 th November
Health Scrutiny Committee	25 th August and 22 nd September
Licensing Committee	7 th September

Plans Board	24 th August, 14 th September, 5 th October and 26 th October
Scrutiny Management Board	13 th September
Standards Committee	21 st September

69. QUESTIONS

The following questions were submitted under Council procedure rule 10.

- a) Councillor E.J. Carter asked the following question of Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development

How is the Council influencing the Marches LEP to work with the Black Country & Birmingham LEP's to further Telford's interests, particularly in the light of the Enterprise zones at both I54 and Hereford?

Councillor Smith replied that the Council was an active player in the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) whilst also recognising that strong economic links existed with the Black Country. The Chairman of the Marches LEP saw the Borough's work with the Black Country as being complementary to the work of the Marches LEP. Officers were working together on supply chain development, research & development, skills & workforce development and transport & logistics.

Councillor Carter asked whether, in the light of Hereford's recently acquired Enterprise Zone status, the Council would keep lobbying for Enterprise Zone status. Councillor Smith replied that the Council would continue to lobby hard on this issue. The Council could learn from the Hereford experience in developing our own enterprise zone ideas.

- b) Councillor E.J. Carter asked the following question of Councillor H. Rhodes, Cabinet Member: Transport & Community Protection

What are the Council doing, via the Strategic Rail Group, to lobby the Department for Transport for the return of the direct rail service from the county to London?

Councillor Rhodes replied that the Shropshire, Telford & The Marches Strategic Rail Group had written to the Department for Transport in April 2011 in a consultation response asking that the bidders for the franchise be required to include a Shropshire to London route in their bids. MP's had been lobbied and work would continue in lobbying for a direct rail service between the county and London.

- c) Councillor E.J. Carter asked the following question of Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development

How is the Council progressing the handover of assets from the Homes & Communities Agency (as it is my understanding that the Treasury have recently changed the rules on these matters)? If the rules have changed what can be done to

make an application under the TIF route to secure these assets for the Borough at the earliest possible time?

Councillor Smith replied that the work was progressing well; key strands had now been agreed with the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA). There was currently a delay to the process whilst the Treasury assessed the Milton Keynes plan. Councillor Smith was not aware that TIF rules had changed.

In response Councillor Carter noted that Milton Keynes had opted to use prudential borrowing. Councillor Smith responded that he could not speak for Milton Keynes but that this Council would consider the financial implications of such an option extremely carefully were it ever to be suggested.

- d) Councillor A.J. Eade asked the following question of Councillor K.S.Sahota, Leader of the Council.

Would Cllr. Sahota confirm as to whether any formal contracts or agreements exist for the sale of Council owned land in Newport to a major retailer or developer?

Councillor Sahota replied that there was no contract. The only contract he could identify for Council owned land in Newport related to a joint venture arrangement agreed by the previous administration for infrastructure work at the Audley Avenue site. A Planning application had been made and a budget receipt for this was shown in the previous administration's budget.

Councillor Eade asked if there were any informal agreements in place. Councillor Sahota replied that he not aware of any informal agreements.

- e) Councillor A.D. McClements asked the following question of Councillor Kuldeep Sahota, Leader of the Council.

Wearing a white ribbon is a pledge from men never to commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women. With 1 in 4 women experiencing intimate partner violence in their lifetime; 2 women a week being killed in the UK by their partner or ex-partner and one million children witnessing domestic violence in their homes every year in the UK, can I ask the Leader whether he has any plans for this Council becoming a White Ribbon Town?

Councillor Sahota replied that he would approach senior officers to discuss how the Council might seek to obtain White Ribbon status in 2012.

Prior to the next agenda item the Mayor reminded Members that the following agenda item related to planning applications for Newport and that in the interests of good governance Members should be mindful of this during the debate. Specifically, he urged Members not to comment on any individual planning applications for Newport. In respect of individual applications, Members understood their responsibility to only make decisions based on all the relevant information and advice provided to them at the time any application was considered.

Councillor K. R. Guy notified the meeting that all members of the controlling group who were members of Plans Board had decided that they would leave the meeting for the duration of the debate on the motion proposing a Newport referendum. Councillor N.A. Dugmore also confirmed that the two main opposition group members present who were Members of Plans Board would leave the meeting for the debate on this matter.

The following members left the room for the debate on this matter:
Councillors K.R. Guy, A.A. Meredith, S.A.W. Reynolds, L.A. Murray, C.R. Turley, S. Bentley, N.A. Dugmore and B.J. Thompson.

70. NOTICES OF MOTION

- a) The following motion had been submitted by Councillor A.J. Eade and seconded by Councillor A.J. Stanton.

“In the best spirits of its Co-operative status, this Council commits to conduct a referendum of the people of Newport and surrounding area, giving them the opportunity to express their views about the development proposals facing the town”.

Councillor Eade, proposing the motion, told Members that he was disappointed that the Council appeared to have already made its mind up on this matter. The development proposals for Newport would change the face of the town. He felt strongly that in the interests of local democracy local communities should be trusted and be allowed to have their say. Councillor E.A. Clare, Cabinet Member: Adult & Social Care, noted that planning processes existed and that it would be wrong to deviate from the regulatory planning processes which were applied to all development matters. Councillor R.A. Overton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with special responsibility for Borough Town development & policy, believed that the impact on overall budgets of changes to the Newport development proposals would be an issue for the whole of the Borough. The planning process should not be undermined in this way. Councillor E.J. Carter felt that the size of the proposals for between 850 and 1100 homes were excessive and would have a detrimental impact on the town. Councillor C. B.A. Elliott noted that development proposals for Newport were contained in the budget of the previous administration. He asked where, under current economic conditions, the money for a referendum would come from. Councillor M.G. Ion thought that the principle of consultation was laudable but believed the request for a referendum was cynical. Councillor R.J. Sloan believed that the Council had a responsibility to residents to maximise the effectiveness of its assets. He noted that a capital programme which included Newport development had been endorsed at a Cabinet meeting of the previous administration as far back as February 2009.

Councillor A.J. Stanton, seconding the motion, believed that building a large number of houses would place strains on the existing infrastructure.

Closing the debate, Councillor A.J. Eade believed that the towns of Telford and Newport were different. Telford had been designed as a new town and was able to cope with significant population growth whilst Newport was not. The proposals

represented a substantial change in development policy and, as such, a referendum should be held to allow the people of Newport to express their views.

A vote was taken and the motion was defeated.

RESOLVED – That the motion not be approved

- b) The following motion had been submitted by Councillor A.J. Eade and had been seconded by Councillor E.J. Carter.

“This Council calls on the Director General of the BBC to reconsider proposed service reductions in its local radio network and in particular its proposals for debilitating cuts in services and programming at BBC Radio Shropshire”.

Councillor Eade told the meeting that BBC Radio Shropshire reached 29% of the population of Shropshire; many of the people who used the service were elderly or vulnerable.

Councillor K.S. Sahota told Members that he fully supported the motion and that he had recently written in response to the current BBC consultation. Savings should be identified in consultation with communities and any final decisions on cost reductions should focus on minimising the effect on those communities. Councillor Sahota felt that it would be appropriate for a further letter of response, signed by all three political group leaders, to be submitted. This would reinforce the Council’s views on the proposed cuts to BBC Radio Shropshire which would have a disproportionate effect on Shropshire.

A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED – That the motion be approved

Councillor F.R. Picken left the room for the debate of the next item.

- c) The following motion had been submitted by Councillor C.F. Smith and seconded by Councillor R.A. Overton.

“This council believes that in order to resolve the impending housing crisis, a programme of investment in good quality affordable/social housing is urgently needed across the Borough. Such investment will help the building and construction industry, reduce homelessness, provide employment and give a much needed boost to the economy.

This council calls on the government to urgently direct capital funds to build social/affordable housing to meet the needs of our communities and lift the economy, whilst at the same time helping the building industry.”

Councillor Smith told Members that affordable housing would help the many people who would otherwise find the purchase of a property unaffordable. He was aware that the government were proposing an initiative on this matter but, as yet, he did not believe details had been finalised. Homelessness was on the increase and such a measure would provide an economic boost and provide help to the people who were

most in need. Councillor S.P. Burrell broadly supported the motion. He would support the motion if it were amended to specify the requirement for a comprehensive and effective housing needs survey. Councillor Burrell proposed the following amendment to the motion; this was seconded by Councillor A.J. Eade.

That the following words (second paragraph of motion) be deleted

"This council calls on the government to urgently direct capital funds to build social/affordable housing to meet the needs of our communities and lift the economy, whilst at the same time helping the building industry."

That the following words be added

"Upon completion of a comprehensive survey of the need for affordable and social housing across the Borough, this Council will call on central government to urgently direct capital funds for the construction of affordable and social housing to meet the needs identified in our communities. "

The motion thus read:

"This council believes that in order to resolve the impending housing crisis, a programme of investment in good quality affordable/social housing is urgently needed across the Borough. Such investment will help the building and construction industry, reduce homelessness, provide employment and give a much needed boost to the economy.

"Upon completion of a comprehensive survey of the need for affordable and social housing across the Borough, this Council will call on central government to urgently direct capital funds for the construction of affordable and social housing to meet the needs identified in our communities. "

Following a debate the amendment was withdrawn with the agreement of the meeting and a vote was taken on the original motion which read.

"This council believes that in order to resolve the impending housing crisis, a programme of investment in good quality affordable/social housing is urgently needed across the Borough. Such investment will help the building and construction industry, reduce homelessness, provide employment and give a much needed boost to the economy.

This council calls on the government to urgently direct capital funds to build social/affordable housing to meet the needs of our communities and lift the economy, whilst at the same time helping the building industry."

The motion was unanimously approved

RESOLVED – That the motion be approved.

The meeting ended at 9.16 pm

Speaker.....

Date