

## **CABINET**

**Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 28th February, 2013 at 5.00 p.m. at the AFC Telford Learning Centre, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford**

**PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 6<sup>th</sup> MARCH, 2013**

**(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 11th MARCH, 2013)**

**PRESENT:** Councillor 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), Councillor W.L. Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader)

### **CB-98      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 31st January 2013 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

### **CB-99      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

### **CB-100     DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

### **CB-101     FINANCIAL MONITORING 2012/13**

**Key Decision** identified as **Financial Monitoring 2012/13** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 30 January 2013.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance, which provided Members with the latest financial monitoring information for 2012/13.

Revenue spending was projected to be within budget at year end, which within the context of having to make savings of £19m, was a very positive position. Since the last report to Cabinet in January 2013, the service overspend had increased by £0.134m. The 2013/14 Service & Financial Planning Strategy proposed that £2.5m be carried forward to create a one-off contingency to support next year's budget, and this was now included in the overall position. The remaining unused contingency was projected to be £1.97m. There were still a number of significant pressures on the budget,

including the cost of Children in Care placements and use of agency staff in the Safeguarding service (projected variation of £3.1m overspent); the cost of Adult Care and Support services following withdrawal of PCT funding (projected net overspend of £0.304m); and the cost of Specialist Education (projected net overspend of £0.539m), along with income shortfalls of £1.5m relating to a number of services. Projected variances of over £0.100m for individual service delivery units were detailed in the report. There were benefits from active treasury management, a one-off refund of £0.351m from the Government in relation to academies funding, and savings against employee budgets relating to vacant posts totalling £1.9m.

The capital programme totalled £79.7m, which included approved changes for slippage and new approvals. Spend was currently standing at 51%, which was broadly in line with previous years. Robust programme management and monitoring was in place to ensure schemes were delivered. The capital programme over the next few years relied on a significant amount of capital receipts as part of its funding, and the position was being closely monitored. Total receipts over the medium term were currently on track, although receipts for 2012/13 were lower than budgeted. This could be accommodated within the lower than budgeted projected spend.

Collection levels for Council Tax and Sales Ledger debt were behind target, while NNDR income was ahead of target at the end of December 2012.

Councillor W.L. Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader) referred to the continuing concern at the overspend in children's services, and suggested that the formal scrutiny arrangements for Children & Young People services could be separated, so that one group focussed on the financial and qualitative issues around safeguarding and children in care, while another group dealt with other issues such as the BSF Programme. In response, Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families, advised that a cross party/agency corporate parenting/monitoring group was already in place. However, involvement and engagement in this issue was welcomed, and the suggestion could be explored with the Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board and other relevant Members/officers.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) that it be noted that 2012/13 revenue spend is currently projecting to be within budget at year end;**
- (b) that the position in relation to capital spend be noted;**
- (c) that it be noted that collection rates are currently ahead of target for NNDR, and behind target for council tax and sales ledger.**

#### **CB-102      SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING 2013/14 - 2015/16**

**Key Decision** identified as **Service & Financial Planning 2013/14 – 2015/16** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 30 January 2013.

## **Recommendation to Council- not subject to Call-In**

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member for Resources & Service Delivery, presented a series of reports of the Managing Director, the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance (Chief Financial Officer) and the Assistant Directors for Development, Business & Housing and for Environment & Leisure Services. The reports, detailing the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators, formed the Council's overall Medium Term Service & Financial Planning framework, and identified the service priorities and budget for 2013/14 as well as savings proposals to be delivered over the next three years, and a medium term capital programme. He thanked Officers for preparing the budget against a backdrop of such financial constraint, and thanked all those people who had taken part in the budget consultation exercise.

The Overview and Revenue Budget report set out the pressures facing the Council, including projected grant cuts of around £40m in real terms, reduced income from having a relatively low council tax, increasing numbers of older people needing adult care services, the impact of the PCT's withdrawal of funding for Continuing Healthcare cases and the resulting costs on the Council, the impact of the economic recession and inflation, and the repayment of debt incurred in respect of past capital investment decisions.

The report also outlined the actions already being taken to meet the financial challenges, including reducing the number of senior managers, cost savings of 35% in "back-office" functions, a strong focus on procurement to deliver savings, a rationalisation of operational buildings across the Borough, and the provision of services through shared or partnership arrangements with other local authorities and agencies. Following publication of the Cabinet's budget proposals in January 2013, there had been extensive consultation via a wide range of media and settings to involve local people and allow them to express their views. In total, 1,539 people were involved with the consultation programme, and the full findings/responses were appended to the report. Among the key results, were broad support for the Council's plans to encourage jobs, growth and protection of services, as well as support for the Council's campaign for a Fair Deal for government funding. A key part of the budget was to bring growth and jobs into the Borough to mitigate against the failure of national Government to generate economic growth, and the continued investment in the Southwater redevelopment, the building of new schools as part of the BSF programme, and the land stability work in the Ironbridge Gorge were highlighted.

Since the draft budget proposals were approved for consultation, the Government had issued the final settlement for 2013/14, and the forecast budget gap for 2013/14 was restated to £7.106m to reflect this and other changes. As reported in the Financial Monitoring item earlier on the agenda, the overspend on children's safeguarding had risen to £3.1m, and it was considered prudent to create a one-off additional budget contingency of £1.3m for safeguarding, following robust modelling of the projected costs based on the latest placement information and the likely impact that the

Safeguarding and Early Help Cost Improvement Plan would have on identifying savings. The funding would only be released following a review and approval process by Cabinet. It was also anticipated that further redundancy costs would be incurred during 2013/14 as a result of the on-going need for savings, and it was therefore being recommended that £1.219m be transferred to the severance fund.

In terms of council tax, the consultation on the budget strategy had indicated broad support for a moderate, below inflation increase in order to reduce the levels of cuts to services. It was therefore proposed to increase council tax by 1.9% for 2013/14. The Government had offered a short-term grant if council tax was frozen, but it was considered that the soundest option was to decline this offer in order to make the budget more sustainable over following years.

An equality impact analysis of the overall impact of the budget was appended to the report, along with environmental and economic impact assessments.

The Council's Chief Financial Officer was required to give a view on the robustness of the Council's financial strategy, including the use of balances, and this was appended to the report. This had concluded that the Council was pursuing a sound financial strategy in the context of the most difficult financial position it had ever faced.

The report on the Capital Programme presented the Council's Capital Strategy for 2013/14 – 2015/16 and later years and a capital programme of £287.306m that included the proposed investments contained in the overall budget strategy. Details of the major projects and investments to be resourced were annexed to the report. It also set out the Council's Asset Management Plan and planned building maintenance programme, particularly focusing on 2013/14, and the three year Highways and Transport capital investment programme.

The report on the Treasury Management Strategy detailed the Treasury Strategy to be adopted for 2013/14. The Strategy was set within the parameters of the latest guidance and accounting standards. It was expected the Council would borrow £3.4m in 2013/14 and would adopt a flexible approach, with consideration given to affordability, maturity profile of existing debt, interest rate and refinancing risk, as well as borrowing source. Where possible, maturing investments would be used to reduce the level of additional borrowing, and investment periods would be lengthened for new investments in order to achieve higher interest rates within acceptable risk parameters. The report also provided an update on the treasury management activities during 2012/13. The weighted average return on internal investments at the end of December 2012 was 3.9% compared to a benchmark return for the period of 0.51%.

The report on Prudential Indicators sought approval of the prudential indicators for 2013/14 to 2015/16 required under the Prudential Code of Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

Recommendations by Cabinet would be considered at full Council on 7th March 2013 as full Council was responsible for setting the overall revenue and capital budget framework. At that meeting full Council would also set the Council Tax for 2013/14.

The Chairman of the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee, Cllr S.A.W. Reynolds, presented the comments of the Committee on the budget proposals. The Committee recognised the challenge that was faced in setting the budget in the context of unprecedented cuts to the Council's grant funding. The Committee welcomed a number of the proposals within the budget strategy, including the generation of additional income and co-operative working with partners to deliver services that might otherwise be under threat. In relation to the overspend on children's services, the Committee had raised concerns, which were detailed in the appended paper, but were satisfied that there was a robust plan and monitoring in place to address this. There had also been good work within Adult Social Care to reduce costs.

The Main Opposition Group Leader Cllr A.J. Eade was invited to comment on the Cabinet's budget proposals. He accepted that the Council was facing a difficult financial position, and welcomed the proposals to attract businesses to the Borough and the continuing investment in Southwater and the Ironbridge Gorge. However, he was strongly opposed to the decision not to freeze Council tax using the one-off grant funding from central Government, and highlighted continuing concern at the deficit in children's services and the impact that could have on the delivery of other services.

Councillor W.L. Tomlinson, Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader, was then invited to comment on the budget proposals. On balance, he supported the proposed Council Tax increase, which would help to protect services, and generally welcomed the main budget proposals.

During the ensuing debate, Cabinet members referred to the likely impact on local people of further Government cuts in welfare/benefits (including the "bedroom tax"), and the further strain this could place on Council services. Reference was also made to examples of co-operative working in the Borough that were now gaining national recognition, and the benefits that the 3 year core grant settlement would bring to the voluntary sector.

**RESOLVED – to RECOMMEND to COUNCIL on 7th March 2013:**

**(i) Overview and Revenue Budget 2013/14 – 2015/16**

- (a) that the base budget summarised by Service Delivery Unit in Appendix 9a be approved;**
- (b) that the feedback from consultation summarised in Appendix 5 and from scrutiny in Appendix 6 of the report be considered;**
- (c) that an increase of 1.9% in council tax levels in 2013/14 (32 pence per week for the average property in the Borough) and a strategy**

**of increasing council tax by 1.9% in the following two years in order to maintain financial stability and to help protect the delivery of front-line services be approved;**

- (d) that the creation of a £1.3m contingency fund to offset pressures in the safeguarding budget, and potentially the adult services budget following the transfer of young people to semi-independent living be approved. This contingency to be held centrally and only allocated after consideration by Cabinet;**
- (e) that the 2013/14 net savings package of £8.611m detailed in Appendix 3, and the savings proposals set out in the appendix for future years, be approved;**
- (f) that the transfer of £1.219m to the severance fund as detailed in the report be approved;**
- (g) that the earmarking of £2.5m underspends in 2012/13 as a one-off budget contingency for 2013/14, as detailed in the financial monitoring report at minute 101 above, be approved. This amount may be increased further should the Council underspend at the end of 2012/13 as currently projected;**
- (h) that the Education budget position set out in section 18 of the report be noted;**
- (i) that the statement of the Chief Finance Officer in section 11 (supported by Appendix 14 outlining the robustness of the Budget Estimates and the Adequacy of Reserves) be approved;**
- (j) that the policy framework for Reserves and Balances outlined in Appendix 10 of the report be approved;**
- (k) that the revenue implications of the medium term capital programme for the period 2012/13 - 2015/16 set out in the Capital Programme report be noted;**
- (l) that the Council's Pay Policy Statement, as shown at appendix 11 of the report, be approved;**
- (m) that, subject to the savings proposals being accepted, the updated Care & Support Community Care Policy & Procedure Document shown at Appendix 12b (amended to reflect the savings) be approved;**
- (n) that the Impact Assessments contained in Appendices 4a to 4d be noted;**
- (o) that the Safeguarding and Early Help Cost Improvement Plan contained in Appendix 2 be approved;**

- (p) that the Care & Support savings proposals and Public Health budget proposals contained in Appendices 12a, 13a and 13b be approved;**
- (q) that Telford & Wrekin's global Local Council Tax Support scheme reduction be confirmed at 21% in line with the provisional agreement at full Council in November 2012;**
- (r) that a one-off sum of £0.065m should be earmarked to award discretionary discounts in cases of extreme financial hardship arising from the introduction of the LCTS scheme;**
- (s) that the deferment of auto-enrolment in the local government pension scheme for existing employees until 30th September 2016 be approved;**
- (t) that authority be delegated to the Managing Director, after consultation with the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Resources & Service Delivery, to approve any expenditure to be funded from the £1m Capital "Commercial and Business Fund" and the £0.15m "Destination Telford" revenue budget;**
- (u) that, in recognition of our valued relationship with Town and Parish Councils and in line with our cooperative working principles, the full amount of LCTS grant attributable to Town and Parish Councils is passed on to them, reflecting the incidence of LCTS scheme claimants. In future years, the quantum of the grant to be devolved will be changed in line with the year on year percentage change in the Council's Revenue Support Grant and the allocation between Town & Parish Councils will be updated annually to reflect changes in the incidence of LCTS scheme claimants;**

**(ii) Capital Programme**

- (a) that the Capital Programme and associated capital estimates and variations for 2012/13 and 2013/14 – 2015/16, which incorporate the Capital Strategy, the Planned Building Maintenance Programme, the Asset Management Plan and the three year Highways & Transport capital investment programme, be approved.**

**(iii) 2012/13 Treasury Strategy and Treasury Update**

- (a) that the treasury management activities for the first half year be noted;**
- (b) that the updated Treasury Management Policy Statement, as shown at Appendix A of the report, be approved;**

- (c) that the Treasury Strategy, including the Annual Investment Strategy for 2013/14, together with the associated Treasury prudential indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, be approved.
- (iv) Prudential Indicators
- (a) that the prudential indicators for 2013/14 to 2015/16, as set out in the report, be approved.

**RESOLVED** – that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing to deliver the planned programme of works within the Asset Management Plan, and to the Assistant Director: Environmental & Leisure Services to deliver the Highways and Transport capital investment programme, in line with the approved budgets with any variations or changes to schemes in these programmes, that remain within overall approved budgets, after consultation with the appropriate Cabinet members.

**CB-103      DRIVING DELIVERY OF THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES – 9 MONTH POSITION**

**Non-Key Decision**

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Managing Director which presented a review of performance against the Council's priorities at 9 months (April – December).

Appended to the report was a detailed breakdown of performance against a basket of measures adopted for each priority area. For some indicators, data would not be available until the end of the year. Among the headline messages were a continued fall in recorded crime and anti-social behaviour; confirmation of the continued progress in educational attainment (particularly at 5 GCSE A\*-C which was now above the national average); another reduction in teenage pregnancy rates; and the overall level of unemployment continuing to fall and now being close to the national average. However, youth unemployment continued to be a concern – although the latest data showed a marginal improvement. For key children's social care measures, there were areas of good performance, but in some areas (such as rate of children in care) performance was poor and detailed work was being undertaken to improve the position.

**RESOLVED** – that the performance analysis contained in the report be reviewed to identify areas where further improvement or a greater emphasis on performance is required.

## **CB-104      CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL UPDATE**

### **Non-Key Decision**

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services & Co-operative Council, presented the report of the Managing Director, which updated Members on the progress that had been achieved over the previous 6 months in putting co-operative working into practice, as well as setting out plans to develop the approach in future.

The report included updates on a number of the Adopter Projects for co-operative working, including Family Connect (single point of contact for children and family services), establishment of an Employment and Learning Partnership covering Brookside, the employment of 100 apprentices within the Council, £230k from the Small Business Loans Fund loaned to 7 local businesses, the opening of the Business & Planning First Point reception at Wellington Civic Offices, and the development of Parish Environmental Teams.

Another adopter project that had been developed over the last 6 months was the Telford Loyalty Card (TLC), which was designed to encourage more people to 'shop local'. TLC would replace and enhance the Council's existing Flex card and would offer card-holders discounts on Council leisure activities and participating businesses. It was proposed to launch TLC in April 2013, with cards distributed via "Your Voice" to every household in the Borough, significantly increasing access to and potential uptake of discounted leisure activities. There would be two main sponsors – AFC Telford and Telford College of Arts & Technology – who would contribute a total of £10,000 towards the costs associated with the proposed scheme. Nearly 50 local businesses were already signed up to the scheme.

The report also summarised the work to date of the Co-operative and Employee Commissions - and the next steps for these groups, and also latest developments in partnership working.

Councillor A. McClements, Chair of the Co-operative & Community Scrutiny Committee, reported on the work the Committee had undertaken in looking at the priority for a business winning council. The Committee had recommended the setting-up of a First Point for Business, and it was pleasing that this had now been established at the Wellington offices. The Committee would continue to monitor progress on various initiatives, and was also about to start work on looking at how co-operative values were embedded within the organisation.

### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) that the progress in delivering the Co-operative Council Work Programme be noted;**
- (b) that the launch of the Telford Loyalty Card, as set out in Section 4.1 of the report, be approved.**

**CB-105      INVEST IN TELFORD – A PROGRAMME FOR CHANGE**

**Key Decision** identified as **Invest in Telford** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 30 January 2013.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing setting out proposed actions to establish Telford as the destination of choice for development and business investment in the region.

The report outlined the work and achievements following the adoption of the Business & Development Charter in June 2012. In order to continue to drive the Council's strategy for growth, it was proposed to strengthen the Charter by extending the pledges with a focus on ensuring developmental viability. The revised Charter was appended to the report. Other proposed changes within the Charter related to improving the efficiency of the planning process by increasing officer delegation of planning decisions. This would provide quicker resolutions for investors. In relation to planning obligations such as commuted sums and affordable housing, it was proposed to publish a Development Management Guidance Note – a copy of which was appended to the report – to help potential investors.

The Borough's offer would be further enhanced by a new Business Support Service. Among other things, the new Service would offer account management to businesses from Business Support Officers, solutions to meet business needs, 'Open for Business' events, such as the recent Telford Business Summit attended by over 100 businesses.

Councillor A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) welcomed much of the report, although the support being offered should also be available to existing local businesses as well as new ones. The holding of land in the Borough by the Homes & Communities Agency was still a key issue, and it was felt the Council should link more with the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). In response, the Cabinet Member advised that existing local businesses were not excluded from using the enhanced "one-stop shop" business support services, and that contacts and co-operation were maintained with the Black Country LEP.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) that the measures and changes set out in the report be approved;**
- (b) that Plans Board be commended to approve the changes set out in the report to the scheme of delegation to officers in relation to the determination of planning applications;**

- (c) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, to further expand the Business & Development Charter and introduce a Development Management Guidance Note for Planning Obligations, as outlined in the report;
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection to seal or sign any documents necessary to give effect to the above resolutions.

**CB-106      TIMETABLE FOR SHAPING PLACES LOCAL PLAN – LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

**Key Decision** identified as **Timetable for Shaping Places Local Plan: Local Development Scheme** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 30 January 2013.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing concerning the timetable for preparing a new Local Plan, which would bring forward planning policies to support the growth and development of the Borough.

There was a statutory requirement for the Council to publish a “Local Development Scheme” (LDS), which set out a programme for the preparation of development plan documents over the period 2013 – 2015. A copy of the proposed Scheme was appended to the report. The document was in two parts – the first part describing the context, the documents to be prepared and current statutory policies in place, while the annex contained a detailed timetable for production of the Shaping Places Local Plan. The new document replaced a previous version of the LDS published in 2009, and reflected recent significant changes in national planning policies and processes.

The Shaping Places Local Plan would require public examination by a government-appointed inspector, and to be found sound, the Plan had to be prepared in accordance with the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme. Once approved the LDS would be available via the Council’s website.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) that the Local Development Scheme, as shown at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved;
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, to amend the Annex to the Local Development Scheme in order to reflect minor changes to the programme.

**CB-107      DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENT AND COUNCIL TAX  
SUPPORT HARSHIP ASSISTANCE POLICY**

**Key Decision** identified as **Discretionary Housing Payments and Council Tax Support Exceptional Hardship Payment Policy** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 30 January 2013.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Customers & People which sought approval for a revised policy on Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and the new Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance. A copy of the new document was appended to the report.

The Council's existing policy on discretionary payments to provide financial assistance towards housing costs had been reviewed in the light of the Government's welfare reforms, which introduced a number of changes such as abolition of council tax benefit and the introduction of an overall benefit cap. The new policy included guidelines on the length of award, including the recognition that due to changes in legislation it might be necessary to make long-term awards of up to 12 months. The revised policy would also allow consideration for one-off housing costs such as deposits in exceptional circumstances. It was anticipated that demand on the DHP budget in 2013/14 would exceed the funding provided by the Department for Work & Pensions, and so it was important that awards were made to those with the greatest need and who had limited ability to take steps to reduce their financial hardship.

From 1 April 2013, Council Tax Support replaced the national Council Tax Benefit scheme, and it was estimated that customers in receipt of the new Support would receive 21% less than they did under the previous scheme. It was anticipated that the cut in support to individuals to help them pay their Council Tax would have a significant impact, and Council had committed £65k of funding to an Exceptional Hardship Fund to aid and assist the most impoverished claimants. The principles of the scheme had also been approved by Council, and were now incorporated within the Policy.

The report outlined the consultation that had taken place with stakeholders and interested parties, as well as feedback on the draft policy from the Co-operative & Community Scrutiny Committee.

The Cabinet Member added that it was difficult to predict the pressures and demand on these schemes, and the situation would be monitored on a monthly basis.

## **RESOLVED –**

- (a) that the revised Discretionary Housing Payment and new Council Tax Support Hardship Assistance Policy, as shown at Appendix A of the report, be approved;**
- (b) that the delegated authority for decision making on appeals as outlined in both Policies be approved;**
- (c) that the concerns raised by the Co-operative & Community Scrutiny Committee that the £65k Council Tax Support Hardship funding set aside by the Council may not meet demand, and that the position be kept under review, be acknowledged. If necessary, the Cabinet Member for Resources & Service Delivery will be requested to approve use of part of the corporate budget contingency to supplement the resources available, which will be reported to Cabinet as part of regular financial monitoring and 12 month review of the new scheme.**

## **CB-108      MARCHES LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY**

### **Non-Key Decision**

Councillor H. Rhodes, Cabinet Member: Transport & Community Protection, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Neighbourhood & Leisure Services regarding further arrangements for the establishment of the Marches Local Transport Body (LTB).

Cabinet, on 6 December 2012, approved the Council's role in the establishment of an LTB as the delivery vehicle for the devolvement of major transport scheme funding beyond 2015, and appointed two Cabinet Members to the new Board. Since then, the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership had indicated that it did wish to become a member of the LTB, and this meant that the LTB would need to be set-up as an informal partnership rather than a joint committee between Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire and Herefordshire. Further information on the revised structure was detailed in the report.

Following further discussions with the other two Authorities, it had been agreed that Telford & Wrekin would act as the accountable body for the Marches LTB. The primary role would be to hold the devolved funding and to make payments to delivery bodies. The Department for Transport (DfT) had also circulated further information to help authorities complete the LTB assurance framework, which meant that the Marches LTB framework could not be completely signed off by the three Councils by the submission deadline. However, the DfT were content to receive further clarification and detail after the deadline.

## **RESOLVED –**

- (a) that the changes to LEP membership and to the establishment of a Marches Local Transport Body as an informal partnership be noted;
- (b) that it be noted that Telford & Wrekin Council will perform the accountable body role for the LTB;
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Neighbourhood & Leisure Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Transport & Community Protection and Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, to finalise the assurance framework for the Marches LTB;
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection to agree and execute all necessary documentation to give effect to the resolutions above.

## **CB-109      EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** – that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they may involve the disclosure of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **CB-110      ACQUISITION OF EMPLOYMENT LAND AND PROPERTY AT HADLEY PARK EAST, TELFORD**

**Key Decision** identified as **Acquisition of Employment Land and Development of Commercial Property at Hadley Park East** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 30 January 2013.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing which sought approval for the acquisition of 0.42 acres of employment land and the development of commercial property at the Hadley Park East designated employment site.

It was proposed to acquire and develop the site in order to facilitate the re-location to a larger site of an existing office/warehouse facility owned by an international company. This would safeguard 18 jobs and create a further 20, and strengthen the PIP through investment in new property. The Council would work with a local contractor (McPhillips Ltd) to construct the new purpose-built facility, and planning permission had been secured. The report provided details of the purchase of the freehold interest in the land; the proposed construction contract with McPhillips Ltd to deliver the new development; and the proposed terms for a lease agreement with the company concerned once the development had been completed.

## **RESOLVED –**

- (a) that the acquisition of employment land extending to 1.04 acres (0.42ha) and completed commercial development, to be held as part of the PIP, be approved;
- (b) that the requirement contained in the Council's Contract Procedure Rules to obtain four tenders be waived, and that the appointment of local contractor McPhillips (Wellington) Ltd to construct the new commercial property for the Council's PIP be approved;
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, to enter into any contracts required for the delivery of the commercial development;
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection to seal or sign any documents required to give effect to the resolutions above.

## **CB-111      RETENTION AND REFURBISHMENT OF THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE, TELFORD**

**Key Decision** identified as **Retention and Refurbishment of the Business Development Centre** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 30 January 2013.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing concerning the retention, and investment in, the Business Development Centre (BDC) to deliver an enhanced facility.

The BDC located on Stafford Park Industrial Estate provided 88 individual office and industrial sub-divided units available for lease, as well as conference facilities for hire. There was currently a high void rate due to the poor condition of some of the units, despite strong demand for such premises. To address these problems, it was proposed to refurbish the BDC internally and externally with a view to attracting small and medium high-end manufacturing and engineering businesses. Further details of the proposed works were provided in the report, as well as the financial implications. It was proposed that the Council's financial contribution to the works be funded in part by the sale of one unit that was separate to the main facility. The balance of the investment was being sourced from the West Midlands ERDF Programme, subject to the submission of a detailed application for funding.

Members welcomed the proposals, which would help further the Council's priority to support new and existing businesses and to generate economic growth and jobs.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) that the investment in the internal and external refurbishment of the BDC, and a rebranding of the facility as detailed in the report;
- (b) that approval be given to entering into an agreement for ERDF Priority 3 joint funding, subject to the terms being agreeable, and the expenditure of this funding on enhancements to the BDC, should a detailed application for funding be successful;
- (c) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, to negotiate and agree terms for the sale of Unit B4, with the capital receipt to be reinvested in the refurbishment of the remaining units;
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection to seal or sign any documents required to give effect to the resolutions above.

The meeting ended at 6.49 pm.

**Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices**

**Jonathan Eatough**  
**Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection**  
**Date: 6 March 2013**

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....