

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of a meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday, 11 July, 2013 at 6.30 p.m. at The Place, Oakengates, Telford.

PRESENT:

Councillors S. Bentley, F.M. Bould, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, E.A. Clare, D.G. Davies (Speaker), S. Davies, N.A. Dugmore, A.J. Eade, C.B.A. Elliott, A.R.H. England, N.A.M. England, R.C. Evans, V.A. Fletcher, G.M. Green, K.R. Guy, T.J. Hope, M.B. Hosken, M.G. Ion, A.S. Jhawar, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, J. Loveridge, C.N. Mason, A.D. McClements, W.A.M. McClements, J.C. Minor, C.P.R. Mollett, L.A. Murray (Mayor), A.A. Meredith, R.A. Overton, F.R. Picken, J. Pinter, G.C.W. Reynolds, S.A.W. Reynolds, H. Rhodes, K.S. Sahota (Leader), J.M. Seymour, R.J. Sloan, C.F. Smith, M.J. Smith, B.J. Thompson, C.R. Turley, P.R. Watling and D.R.W. White.

15. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 23 May 2013, be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

16. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors R.K. Austin, K.T. Blundell, I.T.W. Fletcher, E.J. Greenaway, A.A. Mackenzie, R.G. Scammell, A.J. Stanton, K.L. Tomlinson and W.L. Tomlinson.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

18. LEADER'S REPORT & ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader asked Members to note the launch of the Invest in Telford project which had taken place in June. He reaffirmed his administration's commitment to jobs, growth and investment for Telford together with a desire to support business in the Borough.

The Leader went on to highlight a number of recent successes:

- 135 Apprentices now employed
- Mentoring and support scheme for young people not in employment, education or training
- Newport swimming pool refurbished and extended
- New Phoenix school due to open in September
- Work to start on three new school sites at Oakengates Academy, Priorslee Academy and Lord Silkin school
- Jiggers Bank due to be reopened on 15 July

19. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor told the meeting that he was privileged to be able to serve the Borough. He had been very pleased by the support and enthusiasm for the role of Mayor from the local community. The Mayoral Launch had taken place very successfully on 4 July at Castle Farm Community Centre, raising £1314. The Civic Service, held on 16 June had also been a successful event.

20. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No valid questions received.

21. CABINET DECISIONS MADE SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Members received the report on the Cabinet decisions made since the last meeting of the Council on 2 May 2013.

22. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET

a) Service and Financial Planning – 2012/13 Out-turn and 2013/14 Update

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance which provided financial out-turn, capital and income monitoring information. Gross Revenue budget for 2013/13 was £411m and the net budget for reporting purposes just over £216m. Against a backdrop of £19m in budget savings in 2012/13 this had been a particularly positive end of year position. There was an income shortfall of £1.7m based on historical targets that had become unrealistic in the current economic conditions.

Councillor S. Bentley asked for details on savings in Fleet & Community Transport. Councillor McClements confirmed that he would provide a written response.

Following a vote it was:

RESOLVED:-

i) That the Revenue outturn position and related virements in Appendix 3 for 2012/13, which are subject to audit by the Council's external auditors, and the transfer to reserves as detailed in paragraph 6.4 be approved

(ii) that the Capital outturn position and related supplementary estimates, virements and re-phasing shown in Appendix 4, as summarised in the report, be approved

(iii) that performance against income targets be noted

(iv) that the initial pressure areas identified for 2013/14 be noted

b) Shaping Places Local Plan - Strategy and Options

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist which detailed strategies and options for consideration in the preparation of a new Local Plan. The strategy and options document had been produced following engagement with key stakeholders and sought views on proposed strategy for development in advance of preparation of the Local Plan.

Councillor N.A. Dugmore was critical of the document, believing that the plan provided for too much development on green space. The total target of 26,500 homes from 2011-2031 was too ambitious. It would be better to build developments that had currently been approved rather than allowing more development applications. The needs of the population and local infrastructure limitations should be key in decisions on further development. Over development of rural areas and key rural settlements needed to be addressed. Councillor V.A. Fletcher, referring to proposed development in Priorslee, believed that suitable infrastructure and employment should be in place before development took place.

Councillor A.J. Eade believed that development should be sustainable and was opposed to building on 'green' land when brown field sites should always be first considered for development.

Following a vote it was:

RESOLVED - That the Strategy & Options document be approved

23. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

(a) 25 June Audit Committee

Corporate Fraud & Anti-Corruption Policy

Councillor R.J. Sloan, Chairman of Audit Committee, presented the recommendations from the meeting held on 25 June 2013 in relation to revisions to the Policy.

RESOLVED – That the updated Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy be adopted

24. UPDATE ON BOROUGH BOUNDARY REVIEW

Councillor R.J. Sloan, Chairman of the Boundary Review Committee, presented an update on progress of the review of ward boundaries by the Local Government Boundary Commission (LGBCE). The Commission had now published draft proposals which were open to public consultation until 9 September. Full council was not scheduled to meet again until after this date and Councillor Sloan sought

council's approval for the Boundary Review Committee to make a further response on behalf of the council

On the whole, much of the council's initial proposal had been accepted and included in the draft proposals. There were, however, some areas of concern. The council's proposals for a Lawley ward had not been adopted; Councillor Sloan felt that this was a missed opportunity. The council still believed that a Lawley ward was feasible but the creation of such a ward now seemed unlikely as this would require disassembling a large part of the draft proposals.

The other main area of contention had been the proposal for a 2 member Shawbirch ward which would include Admaston and Eyton. Boundary Review Committee had agreed to reject this proposal and would put forward an alternative of 2 single member wards for Shawbirch and Admaston and Bratton. The Preston area should remain in Church Aston & Lilleshall whilst Eyton should remain in Ercall Magna and not move to Hadley & Leegomery ward.

RESOLVED – that Boundary Review Committee be authorised to make the council's response to LGBCE's draft proposals before the deadline of 9 September.

25. ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT

Councillor D.R.W. White, Chairman of Scrutiny Management Board, presented the Annual Scrutiny report. Scrutiny were halfway through a 2 year work programme, particular thanks were given to co-optees who added value to the work of Scrutiny. The Chairman gave his thanks to staff and councillors who had worked tirelessly during the year. The year ahead presented significant challenges but Scrutiny members and staff would continue to work hard to ensure that these challenges were met. The Scrutiny function had recently been runners up in 'Working Together' category of the CfPS Good Scrutiny Awards. The work done on the impacts of welfare reform had been highly praised and demonstrated how the work of Scrutiny could feed in to policy making.

RESOLVED – that the Annual Scrutiny Report be noted.

26 MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Council noted the resolved minutes of Boards and Committees:

Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee	4 June
CYP Scrutiny	18 April
Health & Wellbeing Board	15 May
Licensing Committee	26 June
Plans Board	1 & 22 May and 12 June
Scrutiny Management Board	15 March

27. QUESTIONS

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

- a) Councillor J.M. Seymour asked the following question of Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care.

“Can the new Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Cllr Arnold England, confirm that he recognised the need for the Council to have a good relationship with local Care Homes, that he understands the constraints under which they operate and that he values the support they give to families, many of whom have spent long years caring for their loved ones before resorting to a Care Home? “

Councillor England replied that he agreed that the council had good relationships with Care homes, it was important that those homes primarily provided a good quality of care for residents. He valued the support given to families by care providers and paid tribute to the work being done by carers in the Borough.

Councillor Seymour asked if councillor England could explain why he had previously expressed the view that care providers used the council as a ‘cash cow? “

Councillor England agreed that he had said this previously and that there had been instances where this was true. He looked forward to the council and care providers working in partnership to provide good quality good value services.

- b) Councillor A.J. Eade asked Councillor K.S. Sahota, Leader of the council, the following question:

“Can Councillor Sahota explain why he has announced that the Council is to build 500 houses at Southwater when no decision has yet been made and the whole issue is supposedly subject to a feasibility study?”

Councillor Sahota replied that 551 houses would be built in the Town Centre/Southwater and other areas and that a feasibility study was being conducted.

Councillor Eade asked how much the cost was for the feasibility study
Councillor Sahota said the study was ongoing and that the information would be available once the feasibility study had been completed

- c) Councillor A.J. Eade asked the Leader of the council the following question:

“Could Councillor Sahota inform this Council if this Authority has registered with the Court of Appeal to seek leave to appeal following the damning dismissal of the Council’s case in the High Court by Mr Justice Turner?”

Councillor Sahota confirmed that an application had been lodged to seek leave to appeal.

Councillor Eade asked on what grounds the council had sought leave to appeal. Councillor Sahota replied that legal advice had been taken and the request to seek leave to appeal had been made to protect the public purse and in the interests of the Borough and its residents.

- d) Councillor E.J. Carter asked the Leader of the council the following question:

“Does the council leader agree with me that the continuing saga of the Audley Avenue versus Station Road sites in Newport is making this Authority a laughing stock? Will he and his colleagues accept that after two failed appeals they should concede defeat and back the Audley Avenue site and proposed Morrisons Supermarket Application?”

Councillor Sahota replied that he did not agree and referred to section 106 monies and off site highway works. The council had a duty to obtain the best value for land and to maximise capital receipts.

- e) Councillor T.J. Hope asked Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families the following question:

“With regard to children who runaway or go missing from home or care; could Councillor Watling tell me if an assessment of need is a standard part of a return interview and is a return interview conducted by and independent person away from the Childs home or placement?”

Councillor Watling provided the following response:

“The Council introduced a process based upon the West Mercia Protocol for working with missing persons earlier this year. The Joint Protocol for reporting Missing Children and Young People (October 2011 for review October 2014).

Since this time practitioners in the Borough had received awareness training and a detailed Return Interview Template developed for use by practitioners.

Our procedures had been forwarded to the National Missing People Charity who had agreed to undertake a health check to ensure that they were robust in safeguarding children and young people in the Borough.

Latest statistic information relating to missing persons showed:

- Number of Missing Persons episodes: 1/1/2013 to 5/6/2013 Number of missing reports 80
- Number Missing more than once: 12 Children missing more than once
- Number of return interviews completed/ number outstanding: 59 Completed / 21 Outstanding
- Number of External authority Missing Persons: 16 (6 external letters sent – new system in place)

The Protocols and partnership working with West Mercia police were very good and Liaison with the West Mercia police lead on missing Persons.

- f) Councillor A. Lawrence asked the following question of Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise:

“Given the economic climate can the administration confirm if there are any plans to reduce the financial support given by the Council to the trade union movement in line with the reductions to other budget areas?”

Councillor McClements replied that there had been a 25% reduction in this cost and that the cost was £105k for this year.

- g) Councillor M.B. Hosken asked the following question of Councillor H. Rhodes, Cabinet Member: Customer Services, Libraries & Transport:

“Will Cllr Rhodes agree that, following the announcement that Policing teams are to be cut by 50%, that response times and actions will be seriously damaged and that the council should enter in to immediate discussions with the Police Commissioner on this matter?”

Councillor Rhodes replied that she was very concerned by the proposed cuts but that the Borough had retained its Policing resources where other areas had not. The council would continue to work in partnership to help to reduce any threat to local communities. She had organised a meeting with the Police & Crime Commissioner and his Deputy.

- h) Councillor N.A. Dugmore asked the following question of Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns:

“Currently how many private homes in the Borough have been empty for more than six months?”

The Speaker noted that the allotted 30 minutes for questions had been elapsed and informed Councillor Dugmore that he would receive a written response to his question.

28. NOTICES OF MOTION

- a) Councillor K.S. Sahota moved, in accordance with Council procedure rule 11, the following motion:

“This Council agrees that there are no circumstances where a single Shropshire Council would be to the advantage of the residents of Telford & Wrekin and believes any plans to merge both Councils would lead to reduced services for our residents and threaten the future of the Princess Royal Hospital”.

The motion was seconded by Councillor R.A. Overton.

Councillor Sahota noted that the council had made significant reductions in order to deal with unique budget pressures. The Borough was a growth area and the people of the Borough were an individual community. He was totally opposed to any suggestion of a merger with Shropshire council. Councillor N.A. Dugmore suggested that the Leader of his group had suggested looking further at possibilities for joint working. Circumstances changed and it would be unwise to rule out any options that might provide better value for money.

Councillor A.J. Eade believed it might be possible to provide savings of up to £10m by exploring joint working. He was disappointed to hear a number of councillors dismiss this option for savings. He believed that the council should explore all possible options for providing savings. Councillor W.A.M. McClements believed that it would be in the interests of other councils to acquire the assets of Telford & Wrekin. He challenged Councillor Eade to provide a breakdown of the proposed figure of £10m that might be saved by joint working arrangements. Councillor R.A. Overton believed that the Borough had different identities and interests than Shropshire council.

Councillor Sahota, concluding the debate, told the meeting that the Borough already worked closely with other authorities in a number of areas.

Following further debate during which a number of views were expressed it was moved and seconded that a recorded vote be taken. Upon the requisite number of Members signifying their support, a recorded vote on the motion as published was taken:

Against(13)

S. Bentley, SP Burrell, EJ Carter, NA Dugmore, AJ Eade, VA Fletcher, TJ Hope, MB Hosken, RT Kiernan, A. Lawrence, A.A.Meredith, CRP Mollett, JM Seymour.

For: (32)

FM Bould, EA Clare, DG Davies, S.Davies, CBA Elliott, ARH England, NAM England, RC Evans, GM Green, KR Guy, MG Ion, AS Jhawar, J Loveridge, CN Mason, AD McClements, WAM McClements, JC Minor, LA Murray, RA Overton, FR Picken, J Pinter, GCW Reynolds, S Reynolds, H Rhodes, KS Sahota, RJ Sloan, CF Smith, MJ Smith, BJ Thompson, CR Turley, PR Watling, DRW White

RESOLVED – that the motion be approved

b) Councillor S. Bentley moved, in accordance with Council procedure rule 11, the following motion:

“This Council notes with great concern falling recycling rates over the past two years when compared to an increase of 9% experienced over the years 2007 – 2011. Also of major concern is the complete closing of some recycling centres and reduction of opening hours of the remaining that will further exacerbate this failure. In view of the high cost of landfill charges that will increase year on year, this Council urges the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services to produce a coherent plan that will save costs and maximise income for this authority”.

The motion was seconded by Councillor A.J. Eade.

Following a lively debate during which a number of views were expressed it was moved and seconded that a recorded vote be taken. Upon the requisite number of Members signifying their support, a recorded vote on the motion as published was taken:

For (12)

S. Bentley, SP Burrell, EJ Carter, AJ Eade, VA Fletcher, GM Green, MB Hosken, RT Kiernan, A. Lawrence, A.A.Meredith, CRP Mollett, JM Seymour.

Against: (28)

EA Clare, DG Davies, S.Davies, CBA Elliott, ARH England, NAM England, RC Evans, KR Guy, AS Jhawar, J Loveridge, CN Mason, AD McClements, WAM McClements, JC Minor, LA Murray, RA Overton, FR Picken, J Pinter, GCW Reynolds, S Reynolds, H Rhodes, KS Sahota, RJ Sloan, CF Smith, MJ Smith, BJ Thompson, CR Turley, PR Watling.

Absent: (5)

FM Bould, NA Dugmore, TJ Hope, MG Ion, DRW White.

RESOLVED – that the motion not be approved

The meeting ended at 8.49 pm

Mayor:

Date: