

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of a meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday, 12 September, 2013 at 6.30 p.m. at The Place, Oakengates, Telford.

PRESENT:

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

29. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11 July 2013, be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors Keith Austin, Clive Elliott, Jayne Greenaway, Tracy Hope, Mike Ion, Terry Kiernan and Malcolm Smith,

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Derek White, Veronica Fletcher and John Minor, as members of the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee, declared an interest in agenda item 14 (i) the motion on 24 hour A & E facilities at the Princess Royal Hospital.

Councillor Rae Evans also declared an interest in agenda item 14 (i). The Speaker noted that all four members would not take part in or vote on the debate on this motion.

32 . LEADER'S REPORT & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Kuldip Sahota. Leader of the council, drew members' attention to a number of significant issues. £50m of budget cuts had already been achieved with a further £22m required. The council faced stark challenges. Every effort would be made to protect front line services but due to the huge scale of cuts this could not be promised.

- Plans for a Solar Farm to generate £5m over 20 years
- House building programme currently undertaking a feasibility study
- T Party and T Live events highly successful with 12,000 people attending
- Street Pastors thanked for their vital support
- 14m invested in Borough roads once Town centre box road completed
- Residents thanked for their patience during the recent significant road repairs in the Borough

- Good news from Denso who were taking on 140 staff
- Business winning council activities continuing

33. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Announcements

Members received the report of Mayoral engagements undertaken since the last meeting of the council on 10 July 2013. The Mayor, Councillor Leon Murray, told the meeting that he was grateful to be serving the Borough and was enjoying his role as Mayor. He drew members' attention to a number of highly successful recent engagements around the Borough. The Mayor paid tribute to the excellent support received from Emma Price, Member Services Officer and told members that he would be holding a Caribbean evening in preference to the traditional Mayor's Ball. He hoped that all members would support his Mayoral events.

b) Corporate Health & Safety Award

The Mayor presented Steve Carter, Duty Officer, Neighbourhood & Leisure services, with a Corporate Health & Safety Award. The award was to recognise Health and Safety improvements resulting from Steve's excellent work in the management of Lifeguard training.

34. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No valid questions received.

35. SUPPORTING FAIRTRADE IN TELFORD & WREKIN – PROGRESS REPORT

Councillor Gilly Reynolds presented the report of the Managing Director which noted progress over the past year. The report also recommended continued support for the Telford & Wrekin Fairtrade Alliance and the endorsement of the Council's renewed Fairtrade resolution which was set out in the report. The recommendations were seconded by councillor Veronica Fletcher.

Sylvia Ruxton from The Bridges gave a short presentation on the work being done with local schools.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) **That the progress achieved over the last 12 months be noted.**
- (ii) **That the council continues to support the Telford & Wrekin Fairtrade Alliance and continues to work towards its goals for achieving Fairtrade Borough status.**

- (iii) **Members are asked to endorse the Council's renewed Fair Trade Resolution as set out in section 6.2 of the report**

36. 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 10 July 2013.

In response to a question on item 2.1.5 of the report, relating to acquisition of land at Donnington Wood and Snedshill, Councillor Charles Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns confirmed that full planning permission would be sought for this site.

37. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET

- a) Financial Monitoring 2013/14

Councillor Bill McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance which sought approval for changes to the capital programme.

Following a vote it was:

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

38. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

- (a) 18 July Council Constitution Committee

Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committees

Councillor Charles Smith, Vice- Chairman of Council Constitution Committee, presented the recommendations from the meeting held on 18 July 2013 in relation to revisions to the voting scheme for Co-opted members, procedures to establish future committees and consequent changes to the constitution.

RESOLVED : –

- (i) **To approve the voting Scheme for the Co-opted Members of the Joint HOSC as set out in Appendix 1 and the consequent changes to the Constitution as set out in Appendix 2**
- (ii) **To approve the procedure to establish future Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees as set out in section 5 of this report and the consequent changes to the constitution set out in Appendix 2.**

b) 24 July 2013 Planning Committee

Councillor John Minor, Chairman of Planning Committee, presented the recommendations from the meeting held on 24 July 2013 in relation to reducing the time allocated for speaking at Planning Committee to a maximum of 3 minutes.

RESOLVED - That the scheme for Public Speaking at Planning Committee be amended to reduce the time allocated to each category of speaker to a maximum of 3 minutes

39. UPDATE ON BOROUGH BOUNDARY REVIEW

Councillor Rob 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 published draft proposals which were open to public consultation until 9 September. The council's response to the draft recommendations had been completed and returned to LGBCE.

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. The council's response had been strongly opposed to this proposal, favouring an alternative of 2 single member wards for Shawbirch and Admaston and Bratton. The response had also proposed that the Preston area should remain in Church Aston & Lilleshall whilst Eyton should remain in Ercall Magna and not move to Hadley & Leegomery ward.

40 MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Council noted the resolved minutes of Boards and Committees:

Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee	2 July
CYP Scrutiny	6 June
Health & Wellbeing Board	17 July
Planning Committee	3 & 24 July and 14 August
Scrutiny Management Board	12 July
Standards Committee	10 July

41. QUESTIONS

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

1 Councillor Eric Carter asked the following question of Councillor Shaun Davies
Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services & Employment and Skills
An article in the Shropshire Star on Wednesday 28 August, quoting Councillor Davies, referred to planned improvements in Dawley. Is this the same Borough town on which the previous Conservative administration delivered a massive regeneration of the High Street, car parks and the proposal to build the new Phoenix school, which is now nearing completion?

Councillor Davies replied that the article related to a report produced by Dawley Town council. In response Councillor Carter asked if Councillor Davies would acknowledge the £8.4m spent by the previous administration on Dawley and why had it taken so long to move towards reopening the market facility?

In response, Councillor Davies said there had been a number of problems with the previous regeneration plan, particularly in relation to parking. With regard to the market, this was not within the remit of the council. This would require Department of Transport support. The MP for Telford had lodged a petition which lobbied for the return of the market to Dawley High street

2 Councillor Andrew Eade asked the following question of Councillor Shaun Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills
Was an economic impact assessment done to consider the potential effect on Wellington that the shambolic and disorganised road repairs would have on traders in the town?

In response Councillor Davies noted that research had indicated that for every £1 invested in highways maintenance there was a return of the equivalent of £1.50 to the local economy.

Councillor Eade asked whether compensation would be made available to traders who had lost income during the road repair work. Councillor Davies replied that he understood that it might be possible to apply for business rate relief

3 Councillor Kevin Guy asked the following question of Councillor Bill McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise.

Could the Cabinet member for Finance & Enterprise give us an update on progress to resolve the long running funding issues in Adult Care , resulting from dramatic cuts in continuing healthcare expenditure by the NHS in Telford & Wrekin?

Councillor McClements replied that there had been numerous meetings between the council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Council funding had reduced from £13.9m to only £3.8m in 2011. The government was encouraging councils and the NHS to have joint services. There was still a great amount of work to do.

4 Councillor Nigel Dugmore asked the following question of Councillor Charles Smith, Cabinet member for Housing, Development & Borough Town Development. What is Telford & Wrekin council's policy on fracking (shale gas extraction) ?

Councillor Smith replied that he was not aware of any applications or proposals for survey work related to fracking within Telford & Wrekin at the present time. Any company wanting to conduct exploratory drilling in the UK has first to obtain a licence from the Department for Energy and Climate Change. It would also need permits from the Health and Safety Executive and the Environment Agency and would also have to apply for planning permission. The Local Planning Authority would have to consider local issues such as impacts on the landscape and traffic, as well as whether there would be a need for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). If a company considered proceeding with commercial operations it would need to submit further planning applications to allow a permanent operation.

Councillor Dugmore asked whether the full Shaping Places document would contain a Minerals plan? Councillor Smith confirmed that yes it would at the appropriate time.

5 Councillor Nigel Dugmore asked the following question of Councillor Charles Smith, Cabinet member for Housing, Development & Borough Town Development. How many empty dwelling management orders has Telford & Wrekin council issued and implemented since they came in to being in 2004?

Councillor Smith replied that the answer was none. The council adopted a more productive approach by working with people to get properties back in to occupation.

Councillor Dugmore believed that latest figures showed 396 dwellings being empty for 6 months or more and asked if it would not use empty dwelling management orders to bring them back in to occupation?

Councillor Smith replied that teams were working proactively and that the council believed in working with people to resolve these issues.

6 Councillor Stephen

Bentley asked the following question of Councillor Charles Smith, Cabinet member for Housing, Development & Borough Town Development.

Now that this Authority has endorsed the strategy and options contained within Shaping Places how does he intend to ensure that Neighbourhood / Community Plans are to be respected within Shaping Places and ancillary planning documents?

Councillor Smith replied that Neighbourhood Plans were subject to referendum and that the council would be required to take them in to account.

7 Councillor Miles Hosken asked the following question of Councillor Hilda Rhodes, Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Libraries & Transport.

Would the cabinet member agree that the proposal to move a great number of cases from localised magistrates courts to Kidderminster will penalise people living in Telford and Wrekin and its rural areas. Not only by distance but financially. Giving reason to think that this will increase the number of people pleading guilty and also an insidious reason to reduce driving licences. Would she accept that we have reason to object?

Councillor Rhodes replied that consultation on this matter had closed earlier in September and that contested and motorway offences would still be heard locally. She believed that Councillor Hosken should lobby the government with his objections.

28. NOTICES OF MOTION

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

“This Council is committed to campaigning for the retention of a full 24 hour Accident & Emergency Service at the Princess Royal Hospital”.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Richard Overton.

Councillor Sahota noted that Telford was the main population centre in the area, showing strong growth over 20 years and further predicted growth. The area was a housing growth hotspot with the capacity to accommodate further growth. The town of Telford needed a dedicated 24 hour Accident & Emergency unit in order to support the health needs of the Borough.

Councillor Richard Overton told the meeting that communities need hospitals and that the issue had arisen again because hospitals and the health economy were receiving reduced funding. He called for cross party support for the motion.

Councillor Andrew Eade, Leader of the main opposition group, called for a joint campaign to send a clear message that consideration of removing a full Accident & Emergency service was entirely unacceptable. Councillor Shaun Davies believed that all political groups should join to fight any plans to reduce Accident & Emergency cover. A clear message should be sent to the Health Minister telling him that he must intervene in this matter. Councillor Arnold England asked where the evidence was that might suggest retaining two full sites at Telford and Shrewsbury was unsustainable.

A number of other members spoke on the motion, support was unanimous for the motion. Most members believed a cross party concerted campaign should be launched to defend against any reductions to the services in Telford.

RESOLVED – that the motion be approved

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

“That this Authority welcomes the successful trial of visual and sound recording of full council meetings, and urges members of the community to exercise their right to record and film all other meetings which are open to members of the public”.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Andrew Eade.

Councillor Charles Smith moved the following amendment deleting all words after ‘full council meetings’ and replacing with ‘and subject to the council’s Filming and Transparency policy, the council therefore extends the Visual and Sound Recording policy to all council meetings which are open to the public.’

The amended motion was seconded and duly read:

“That this Authority welcomes the successful trial of visual and sound recording of full council meetings, and subject to the council’s Filming and Transparency policy, the council therefore extends the Visual and Sound Recording policy to all council meetings which are open to the public.”

Following a brief debate the amendment was voted upon and carried, a further debate ensued on the substantive motion which was also voted upon and approved.

RESOLVED – that the motion, as amended, be approved

c) Councillor Stephen Bentley moved, in accordance with Council procedure rule 11, the following motion:

“This Council welcomes the action by the Prime Minister and H. M. Government to introduce laws that tackle the use of the internet for procurement of sexual images involving children and minors”.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Nigel Dugmore

RESOLVED – that the motion be approved

The meeting ended at 8.32 pm

Mayor:

Date: