

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of a meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday, 27th November, 2014 at 6.30 p.m. at The Haybridge Restaurant, Telford College of Arts & Technology, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford

PRESENT:

Councillors R.K. Austin, S. Bentley, K.T. Blundell, E.C. Carter, E.A. Clare, S. Davies, A.J. Eade, C. Elliott, A.R.H. England, N.A.M. England, R. Evans, V.A. Fletcher, G.M. Green, J. Greenaway, K.R. Guy, M. Hosken, M. Ion (Speaker), A.S. Jhawar, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, J. Loveridge, A.A. MacKenzie, C. Mason, A.D. McClements, W. McClements, C.P.R. Mollett, L.A. Murray, R.A. Overton (Deputy Leader), F.R. Picken, J. Pinter, G.C.W. Reynolds, S.A.W. Reynolds, H. Rhodes, R.G. Scammell, P. Scott, J. Seymour, R.J. Sloan (Deputy Speaker), C.F. Smith, M. Smith (Mayor), K. Stringer, B.J. Thompson, K.L. Tomlinson, W.L. Tomlinson, C.R. Turley, P.R. Watling and D.R.W. White.

27. WELCOME TO NEW COUNCILLORS

The Speaker welcomed new Borough Councillors Peter Scott (Newport West) and Ken Stringer (Ironbridge Gorge) to their first Full council meeting.

28. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 11th September 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors F. Bould, S.P. Burrell, N.A. Dugmore, I. Fletcher, T Hope, A Meredith, J.C. Minor and K.S. Sahota (Leader).

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

31. LEADER'S REPORT & ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Deputy Leader's Report

The Deputy Leader reported on the Southwater Development . He also emphasised the need for a full Accident & Emergency service for the Borough. Youth unemployment had fallen by a third in the last year, the Job Box programme continued to have a positive impact and a further Jobs Fair was planned for March. ONS Figures showed that Telford was a top performing town based on average business turnover. £1m in grants had been made available for capital projects in the Borough through the Pride in the Community programme.

b) Announcements

The Deputy Leader then invited the Mayor to present the APSE Horticulture Apprentice/Trainee of the Year finalist award to Councillor S Davies who accepted on behalf of the council.

The Deputy Leader also invited Councillor A England to make an individual presentation to Samantha Smith, finalist in the APSE Horticulture Apprentice/Trainee of the Year.

32. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported on a number of engagements that he had attended since the last meeting of the Council.

33. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The following public question had been received under Council Procedure Rules 7.11 and 7.12 by Mr K Mallard.

1. To Councillor Charles Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns:

“Telford has a large quantity of Brownfield sites, and Greenfield sites should only be preferred by councils for development in exceptional circumstances. What criteria are used for the exceptional circumstances, for the proposed housing development of 2658 houses on valuable farm land and greenfields surrounding Breton Park Retirement Village Muxton?”

Councillor Smith replied that no site had been allocated for development, consultation was taking place on potential development sites across the Borough. The government's National Planning Policy Framework did not specify the development of Brownfield sites before Greenfield sites, nor did it specify exceptional circumstances for development of Greenfield sites. The government did encourage councils to develop previously used land but in some case the cost of restoring land for development were very high, meaning that this option was not always viable. It was inevitable that some Greenfield sites would need to be used due to the amount of development required.

34. 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.

In response to questions, Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services & Co-Operative Council made the following points arising from discussion on the Community Pride Fund grant allocations.

- Nearly every area had benefitted from grant allocations

- Partnership arrangements were in place with the Parish council for the regeneration of Hollinswood Centre. The council was working closely with all parties involved.
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- Rural applications were not disadvantaged as could be demonstrated by the grant for Edmond Village Hall. He would be happy to arrange for detailed feedback on any unsuccessful applications

35. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET

a) Award of the Design & Build Contract for Lawley Village Primary School

Councillor P Watling, Children, Young People & Families, presented the report.

RESOLVED that – a capital approval and estimate of £4.5m in respect of Lawley Village Primary School be approved

b) Extension to Gypsy & Traveller Site at Lodge Road Donnington Wood

Councillor C Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns presented the report.

In response to questions, Councillor Smith told members that it was not true that advice had been received advising the site should not be extended. The extension of the site was a logical step. A transit site was required and he did not believe there was anything for the council to apologise for regarding the site.

RESOLVED –

(a) short term Prudential Borrowing of £775,000, as detailed in the report be approved;

(b) the capital receipt realised from the sale of land at Snedshill for employment purposes is used to repay the short term borrowing as detailed in the report.

c) Regeneration of Hollinswood Centre

Councillor S Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services & Co-Operative Council presented the report. In response to a question regarding capital receipts from the sale of flats Councillor Smith replied that alternative arrangements would be announced shortly.

RESOLVED – that Prudential Borrowing of £200,000 be approved if the capital receipts funding as detailed in the report was not secured.

d) Financial Monitoring 2014/15

Councillor W McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery presented the report on the 2014/15 Financial Monitoring which provided an update on the progress relating to the capital programme.

RESOLVED – that the new allocations and slippage detailed in the report, along with the funding changes to the capital programme, including the transfer to the Community Pride Fund, be approved

36. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Audit Committee 16 September 2014

Updated Anti Fraud & Corruption Policy

Councillor R Sloan, Chairman of Audit Committee, presented the Report.

RESOLVED – that the Updated Policy be adopted

37. MINUTES OF BOARDS & COMMITTEES

Council noted the resolved minutes of the following Boards and Committees:

Audit Committee	16 th September 2014
Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee	1 st September 2014
Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee	19 th August 2014
Health & Wellbeing Board	24 th September 2014
Planning Committee	3rd & 24th September, 15 th October and 5 th November 2014
Scrutiny Management Board	19 th September 2014

38. QUESTIONS

The following Questions were asked in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7:

1 Councillor A McClements asked Councillor R Overton

“Could the Deputy Leader please inform us whether he has had a response from Jeremy Hunt, Minister for Health, on the Council’s campaign to retain 24/7 A&E Services at PRH?”

Councillor Overton replied that the response had been disappointing, the Minister had indicated that this was a matter for the local NHS and that he would not

intervene. The council had previously unanimously supported the retention of full Accident & Emergency services in the Borough. An article had been printed quoting the Member of Parliament for The Wrekin indicating that he had been reassured that services would be safe and that he believed the council was scaremongering.

In response to a further question Councillor Overton confirmed that he would write to the Member of Parliament for The Wrekin informing him of cross party support and asking for an apology for the comments made.

2 Councillor N England asked Councillor S Davies

"As part of the Pride in the Community Programme, could the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services & Employment and Skills please give me an update on the progress of the Hollinswood Centre?"

Councillor Davies confirmed that the Woodcutter and shops had been demolished. An application had been prepared for an Activity Hub and the Community Centre would be extended. Landscaping improvements were on track.

3 Councillor K Stringer asked Councillor W McClements

"I welcome the initiative by the Council to set up a ethical loan scheme using a credit union. Could the Cabinet Member for Finance and Enterprise please inform me of the benefits to our residents in term of interest payments compared with high street loan sharks?"

Councillor McClements noted that legislation limited interest rates from such a scheme and residents would be offered an ethical alternative to the very high interest rates charged by loan sharks. In response to a further question on increasing poverty Councillor McClements replied that he believed the government should do more to curb the practices of some payday lenders.

4 Councillor G Reynolds asked Councillor H Rhodes

Could the Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Libraries and Transport confirm how many residents of Telford and Wrekin have used the new library facilities at Southwater since it has opened?

Councillor Rhodes replied that 81,000 people had visited the library at Southwater since 14 July. Books loaned had increased and new customers joining the Library had also increased. Young people had also benefitted from Summer activities. In response to a further question Councillor Rhodes stated that despite government cuts Libraries would not close as long as she remained Cabinet Member.

5 Councillor E Carter asked the following question of Councillor R Overton, the Deputy Leader

" Does the Councils Leader/ Cabinet believe that the probable linking together of a number of West Midlands Councils into a Combined Authority will have a negative effect on Telford & Wrekin's ability to influence its own future"?

Councillor Overton replied that no discussions had taken place on combined councils, the local economy continued to grow despite significant funding cuts. There would be no sell out of the residents of the Borough by combining with neighbouring authorities.

Councillor Carter believed it was naive not to look at all options for working with other councils.

6 Councillor D White asked the following question of Councillor S Davies

Further to your recent comments in the Shropshire Star about the Council's Crisis Support Fund, would you clarify the position in relation to Government's Funding?

Councillor Davies replied that government funding had been withdrawn from April 2015. The council had retained this funding by sensible budgetting in order to protect people in need of assistance.

39. NOTICES OF MOTION

a) Councillor S Davies moved, in accordance with Council procedure rule 11, the following motion:

"This Council congratulates the Administration, Council Staff, Employers and Partners in reducing Youth Unemployment in the Borough by almost a third over 12 months, bringing rates of Youth Unemployment in line with regional levels, with the fall being at a steeper rate than regional comparators.

This Council demands that the Minister for Employment meet with the relevant Cabinet Member and Officers of the Council and match fund the £1.3m this council has invested into reducing Youth Unemployment to demonstrate that Telford and Wrekin Young People matter to the government."

The motion was seconded by Councillor K.R. Guy.

Following a debate a recorded vote was requested and voting was as follows

For:(34)

Councillors K. Austin, K.T. Blundell, E.A. Clare, S. Davies, C Elliot, A.R.H. England, N.A.M. England, R Evans, G.M. Green, K.R. Guy, M.G. Ion, A.S. Jhawar, J Loveridge, A.A. Mackenzie, C Mason, A.D. McClements, W McClements, L Murray, R.A. Overton, F.R. Picken, J. Pinter, G.C.W Reynolds, S. Reynolds, H. Rhodes, P Scott, C.F. Smith, M Smith, K Stringer, B.J. Thompson,

K.L. Tomlinson, W.L. Tomlinson, C.R. Turley, P.R. Watling, D.R.W. White

Abstentions: (11)

Councillors S. Bentley, E.J. Carter, A.J. Eade, V.A. Fletcher, E Greenaway, M.B. Hosken, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, C.R.P. Mollett, R.G. Scammell, J M Seymour

Absent: (1)

Councillor R Sloan

RESOLVED – that the motion be agreed.

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

“This Council once again calls upon the Administration to abandon Section 106 payments and contributions made by developers towards infrastructure requirements in the Borough and adopt the alternative CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) in its place.”

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

Following a debate a recorded vote was requested and voting was as follows:

For: (11)

Councillors S. Bentley, E.J. Carter, A.J. Eade, V.A. Fletcher, E Greenaway, M.B. Hosken, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, C.R.P. Mollett, R.G. Scammell, J M Seymour

Against: (27)

Councillors K. Austin, E.A. Clare, S. Davies, C Elliot, A.R.H. England, N.A.M. England, R Evans, K.R. Guy, M.G. Ion, A.S. Jhawar, J Loveridge, A.A. Mackenzie, C Mason, A.D. McClements, W McClements, L Murray, R.A. Overton, F R Picken, J. Pinter, H. Rhodes, C.F. Smith, M Smith, K Stringer, B.J. Thompson, C.R. Turley, P.R. Watling, D.R.W. White.

Abstentions: (5)

K.T. Blundell, G Green, P Scott, K.L. Tomlinson, W.L. Tomlinson

Absent: (3)

Councillors G Reynolds, S Reynolds and R Sloan

It was

RESOLVED – that the motion be defeated.

The meeting ended at 8.24 pm.

Mayor:

Date: