

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 27th March, 2014 at 5.00 p.m. at the AFC Telford Learning Centre, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 2nd APRIL, 2014

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 7th APRIL, 2014)

PRESENT: Councillors R.A. Overton (Deputy Leader and Chair for the meeting), E.A. Clare, S. Davies, A.R.H. England, W.A.M. McClements, H. Rhodes, C.F. Smith and P.R. Watling

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors A.J. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) and W.L. Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader)

CB-97 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 20th February 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CB-98 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr K.S Sahota (Leader)

CB-99 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CB-100 TELFORD & WREKIN DRUG AND ALCOHOL STRATEGY 2014/15 – 2016/17

Key Decision identified as **Telford & Wrekin Drug Strategy 2013-16** and **Telford & Wrekin Alcohol Strategy 2013-16** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 26 February 2014.

Councillor R.A. Overton, Cabinet Member: Public Health & Public Protection, presented the report of the Consultant in Public Health, which provided an overview of the Drug and Alcohol Strategy for Telford & Wrekin 2014/15-2016/17. A copy of the Strategy was appended to the report.

The Strategy set out the intention to work with partners to reduce the harm caused by alcohol and/or drug misuse in local communities, and would make a key contribution to the Council's priority to 'Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities and address health inequalities'. It highlighted the national and local picture relating to drug misuse and alcohol consumption, and the impacts this had on hospital admissions, treatment services and crime rates.

The Strategy and associated Action Plan had been developed following extensive engagement with stakeholders and key partners. It used as a framework the three pillars of the Government's National Drug Strategy – reducing demand, restricting supply and building recovery in communities. For each of these areas, there was a series of aims and objectives with related key performance and outcome measures. An associated action plan included detailed actions covering targeted prevention work, transformation of specialist treatment, and support for sustained recovery. The Telford & Wrekin Drug and Alcohol Action Team would be responsible for co-ordinating implementation of the Strategy and action plan, and monitoring the impact on outcomes.

The Strategy had received cross-party support from the Health & Wellbeing Board, and Councillor H. Rhodes added that it had been welcomed by the Community Safety Partnership.

Cabinet Members welcomed the Strategy, and highlighted in particular the importance of prevention and early intervention. Investing in this work, particularly for young people, reduced local authority and NHS treatment costs, reduced the cost of crime in local communities and offered life-time benefits in terms of health, education and employment.

RESOLVED –

- (a) **that the Telford and Wrekin Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2014/15-2016/17 be endorsed and approved;**
- (b) **that the governance which is in place to manage the implementation of the Strategy, and monitor the impact on outcomes and performance, be noted.**

CB-101 SUBMISSION OF MADELEY NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Key Decision identified as **Submission of Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 26 February 2014.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist regarding the submission of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) by Madeley Town Council, and the steps that now needed to be taken.

Since 2011, an NDP for Madeley had been in development led by a steering group and working with Officers from the Town and Borough Councils. Following designation of the Neighbourhood Plan Area in 2012, the Town Council had produced a NDP which had been subject to the required period of consultation. The final Plan and supporting documents were submitted to Telford & Wrekin Council on 11 February 2014. In response, and in accordance with statutory requirements, the Council had completed a number of checks to ensure that all the procedural and other requirements had been

met. These had concluded that the submission was compliant and that it was in 'general conformity' with the strategic policies of the adopted Development Plan for the local area. Therefore, based on the comprehensive nature of the Basic Conditions Statement, and the appropriate scope and nature of the evidence base used to underpin the NDP, it was considered that the relevant requirements had been met, and the NDP could be progressed on to the next stage and submitted for independent examination.

The NDP was currently subject to a 6 week publication period, and any representations received would be forwarded to an Independent Examiner (IE). The IE would be appointed by the Council in agreement with Madeley Town Council, and would check the contents of the Plan, supporting documents and written representations. The Examiner would then submit a report to Cabinet with a recommendation as to whether the NDP should be progressed to a referendum of electors in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Councillor P.R. Watling, as a local Ward Member, reported that a lot of work had gone into the development of this Plan, particularly with the input from Madeley Town Council and the local community. In response to a question regarding the status of a Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist advised that it would support the existing Core Strategy and saved policies from the adopted Wrekin Local Plan.

RESOLVED -

- (a) that a Decision Statement be issued to confirm that the Madeley Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and Regulations;**
- (b) that the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist be authorised to undertake all necessary arrangements for the Madeley Development Neighbourhood Plan to be processed in accordance with the relevant legislation through the Independent Examination stage.**

CB-102 DECLARATION OF DOTHILL LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Key Decision identified as **Declaration of Dothill Local Nature Reserve** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 26 February 2014.

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist which sought approval for a new Local Nature Reserve (LNR) comprising an area of open space surrounding a lake and pools at Dothill, Wellington. A plan of the site was appended to the report.

The proposal had been developed in liaison with the local community, the Wellington Conservation Area Working Group and the Dothill Open Space Steering Group, and would involve local volunteers carrying out small scale conservation tasks as part of the site management. The site was within the Council's ownership and met the necessary criteria for selection as a LNR –

including an up-to-date management plan and support from Shropshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England. Subject to approval, the next stage would be to progress the site further through the formal process with Natural England prior to final declaration. Designation would offer protection from future development or inappropriate use.

Members welcomed the involvement of the local community and volunteers in developing the proposal, which would help protect and conserve a valuable green space.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the declaration of Dothill Local Nature Reserve be approved;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Housing Development & Borough Towns, to complete the declaration process.**

CB-103 PLANNING OF SCHOOL PLACES – REVIEW OF SEND PROVISION

Key Decision identified as **School Organisation – SEND provision review** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 26 February 2014.

Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Education & Corporate Parenting, which sought approval to consult stakeholders on the possibility of providing post 16 educational facilities for students with severe and profound learning difficulties on the site of Telford College of Arts & Technology (TCAT), and alter the upper age range of pupils attending the Bridge School.

Currently, the Bridge School served pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties from the ages of 2 to 19 years. There was concern that the options available for students once they left the school were limited, with only a relatively small proportion of this group going on to access further educational opportunities. Accordingly, a bid had been submitted to the Demographic Growth Fund to expand the specialist provision available within TCAT. The bid was successful in providing £1.8m with which to expand provision to learners with complex needs and disabilities. The proposal was to use the funding to provide a specialist facility on the TCAT site for the 16+ age group. This would combine the expertise of the Bridge School with specialist accommodation and access to wider facilities within TCAT. It was not expected that the proposal would have any long term impact on the numbers of pupils attending Bridge School.

It was proposed to hold a formal consultation on the proposals over a six week period ending on 12 May 2014. Parents of children at Bridge School would all be consulted, as well as staff and other key partners and stakeholders.

The Assistant Director: Education & Corporate Parenting added that, if the proposal went ahead, there was agreement for a senior Leader from Bridge School to be seconded to the new facilities at TCAT in order to provide continuity and reassurance for parents.

RESOLVED –

- (a) **that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Education & Corporate Parenting to engage in formal consultation with key partners and stakeholders regarding the possible development of provision for post 16 learners with severe and profound special educational needs in partnership with Telford College of Arts & Technology, with associated consultation on the related proposal to alter the age range of the Bridge School so that it accepts pupils up to the age of 16 and ceases to make provision for 16 to 19 year olds;**
- (b) **that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Education & Corporate Parenting, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, to decide whether to progress the project following the formal consultation period.**

CB-104 DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF/DISCOUNT FOR BUSINESS RATES AND COUNCIL TAX

Non-Key Decision

Councillor W.A.M McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Customer Services, which proposed refreshed guidelines for the awarding of discretionary Council tax discount and the granting of discretionary rate relief for businesses.

Following the changes introduced in April 2013 under which 49% of business rates were retained locally by the Council, the Discretionary Relief Guidelines (last updated in 2010) had been reviewed and refreshed to ensure that they remained fit for purpose. Despite the economic climate, which had seen many local authorities reducing rate relief, Telford & Wrekin had taken a conscious decision to continue to support local charities and groups who actively contributed to the community. The proposed new Guidelines for the granting of discretionary rate relief for businesses were appended to the report. They also reflected the Council's priority to incentivise and support major business growth and inward investment to the Borough. It was estimated that the new reliefs would bring in an estimated £500k additional support into the Borough benefitting approximately 600 businesses. The new reliefs included a £1000 discount for all retail, pubs and cafes with rateable value below £50,000 for 2 years, and a 50% discount for 18 months for new occupiers of former retail premises which had been unoccupied for a year.

The Council had the discretion to reduce the Council Tax charge for individual properties or classes of property. The guidelines for the award of any discounts had been refreshed, and were appended to the report. They took

account of factors such as vacation of a property due to flooding or some other natural disaster, significant upheaval as a result of an environmental factor beyond the applicant's control and other exceptional circumstances.

The report also set out a revised appeals process for those applicants dissatisfied with the outcome of a decision made in regard of an application for discretionary relief.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the refreshed guidelines for awarding discretionary Council Tax discount in prescribed circumstances, as detailed at Appendix 1 of the report, be approved for implementation from April 2014;
- (b) that the refreshed guidelines for the granting of discretionary rate relief for businesses, as detailed at Appendix 2 of the report, be approved for implementation from April 2014;
- (c) that the refreshed process for appeals where a ratepayer or taxpayer is dissatisfied with the decision made be approved.

CB-105 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED – that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it 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 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

CB-106 INCENTIVISING GROWTH – THE TELFORD ‘DEAL FOR BUSINESS’

Key Decision identified as **Supporting and Incentivising Business in Telford & Wrekin** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 17 October 2013.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment concerning proposals to provide financial incentives to both existing and prospective businesses linked to a commitment from business to invest directly in the Borough's growth and employment.

This was part of the Council's "Business Supporting, Business Winning" approach to making investment in the Borough as easy and attractive as possible. The report provided information on the terms of how agreements, or Deals, with businesses would be negotiated and brokered. The Deals would only be considered once all other avenues of support and external finance had been exhausted. In return for any incentives offered, the Council would expect the business to make a firm commitment to support the wider growth

and prosperity of the Borough – including measures to provide employment and training opportunities for young people in the Borough.

RESOLVED -

- (a) that authority be delegated to the Director: Development, Business & Customer Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Finance & Enterprise and the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance, to enter into agreements with businesses in line with the terms set out in the report;
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services to execute all necessary documentation required for the purposes of resolution (a) above, in accordance with the Constitution including if relevant the affixing of the Common Seal of the Council.

The meeting ended at 5.19 pm.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services
Date: 2 April 2014

Signed:

Date: