

CABINET

Decision Notices and Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 24th April, 2014 at 5.00 p.m. at the AFC Telford Learning Centre, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford

PUBLISHED ON TUESDAY, 29TH APRIL, 2014

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: FRIDAY, 2ND MAY, 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-107 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CB-108 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr K.S Sahota (Leader)

CB-109 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CB-110 SHAPING PLACES – CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT SITES

Key Decision identified as **Shaping Places Local Plan – Consultation on Potential Housing and Employment Development Sites** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 26 February 2014.

Council Decision – not subject to Call-in

Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Development & Borough Towns, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist, regarding the next stage in the Local Plan process to consult on proposed housing and employment sites in the Borough. A copy of the proposed consultation document was appended to the report. There was a minor omission from one of the housing site maps, and an amended page 58 of the document was tabled.

Following public consultation in 2013 on the Shaping Places Local Plan Strategy & Options document, comments received had been used to inform the emerging Local Plan including the identification of proposed sites for future housing and employment development. The proposed sites balanced growth with the protection of green space, and were distributed across both the urban and rural areas of the Borough. The Plan would protect and enhance the green open space and landscape features to ensure that Telford & Wrekin continued to be an attractive place in which to live, work and invest. The proposed consultation document included the following sections:

- Growth Strategy – proposal for c20,000 additional homes to be built over the Plan period (2011-2031) of which 11,885 were already committed or had been identified in an adopted development plan. A detailed target had yet to be confirmed for the quantity of employment land required.
- Location of Development – previous consultation showed there was broad support for Option 3 – ‘Growth Hub’, which proposed a focus for development in the urban area with some development on the urban fringe and a low level in the rural area.
- Selection of Housing Sites – the starting point for assessment of housing sites was the Strategic Housing Number Assessment (SHNA) and the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The sites were assessed against a list of criteria and in consultation with Council Officers. The process had been assisted by the availability of a substantial number of developable sites within the Borough, many of which were brownfield and in public ownership.
- Selection of Employment Sites – this had been based on an assessment of sites identified in the Employment Land Review. In addition five potential Strategic Employment Areas had been identified to satisfy the requirement in the National Planning Policy Framework for strategic sites for attracting local and inward investment.

The proposals would address the delivery of local priorities and opportunities, and provide greater certainty to developers and investors enabling the delivery of growth which was key to the Council’s overall strategy for prosperity and providing a supply of new homes. Subject to ratification by Council, the document would be available for comment during a six week consultation period from 6 May 2014. There would be engagement with Scrutiny members, Parish & Town Councils, Young Persons Forum and via various social media.

Councillor A. Eade (Conservative Group Leader) expressed the view that the timetable for the adoption of the new Local Plan needed to be accelerated because of the current situation of uncontrolled development and the associated threat to the green network. The views of rural communities about whether they wanted further development in their villages also needed to be reflected in the eventual site allocations. The Cabinet Member explained the timetable for the Shaping Places Plan, and that work could not have started earlier than 2012 when the National Planning Policy Framework was produced. The document sought to promote sustainable growth in both urban and rural communities, and suitable sites had been identified for consultation. Members commented that Telford & Wrekin was one of many authorities who

had been affected by Government changes to rules on housing land supply. People wanted to see development and growth of the Borough, with the right balance of development and a mix of housing types available.

Councillor W. Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader) broadly welcomed the proposals, but expressed concern at the impact that some of the larger scale developments might have on the existing highways network. The Cabinet Member advised that Telford's New Town infrastructure was designed for a higher population of over 200,000.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the “Shaping Places Local Plan – Proposed Housing and Employment Sites” document be approved for public consultation;**
- (b) To RECOMMEND to FULL COUNCIL that the document be approved for public consultation.**

CB-111 WEST MERCIA ADOPTION PROJECT

Key Decision identified as **West Mercia Adoption Service** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 6 December 2013.

Councillor P.R. Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Children's Safeguarding & Specialist Services regarding a project to develop a single West Mercia Adoption Service. A Detailed Business Case for the Project was appended to the report.

Telford & Wrekin currently had a joint adoption service with Shropshire Council, with a similar arrangement between Herefordshire and Worcestershire Councils. Following publication of the Children & Families Bill 2013, all four authorities had recognised that working collaboratively provided a genuine opportunity to respond to the national agenda. It was envisaged that a single service would deliver a more efficient and effective service to a wider range of children, with particular emphasis on improving the timeliness of placing children and young people for adoption. There would also be cost benefits arising from economies of scale. However, it was emphasised that initially each Authority would retain some individual functions at a local level.

The Detailed Business Case set out the options available. The preferred Option 2 would deliver some functions within a single adoption service, hosted by a lead West Mercia authority, with some specific functions continuing to be delivered within the individual local authorities. Under this option, the budgets for the combined functions would be pooled and managed by the West Mercia Adoption Partnership – and the report detailed the likely financial and staffing arrangements for implementing this. It was envisaged that this would be the first phase in moving towards an Option 3 service model by 2016/17 – a single adoption service, incorporating all the adoption services, hosted by a lead West Mercia authority.

Cabinet Members welcomed the proposals for the transformation of adoption services, particularly as they would help to deliver a faster process for adoption while retaining the current safeguards. It was also seen as a good example of joint working to get the best and most efficient service model.

RESOLVED -

- (a) that the direction of the proposed future operating model for a West Mercia Adoption Service be approved;**
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Director: Children & Family Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, to take any future decisions on the implementation of the operating model (Option 2) including appointments, key milestones and appropriate legal documentation.**

CB-112 PRIDE IN YOUR COMMUNITY – COMMUNITY PRIDE FUND

Non-Key Decision.

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services, Employment & Skills, presented the report of the Managing Director which sought approval for the proposed arrangements for implementing the previously agreed Community Enabling Fund.

In January 2014, Cabinet had agreed the establishment of a Community Enabling Fund to support the delivery of the Pride in Your Community programme. The Fund was a two year £1m grant programme administered by the Council to support the delivery of capital projects and schemes within the Borough. It would be launched as the 'Community Pride Fund' in May 2014 and would be open to applications from public, private and voluntary sector organisations within the Borough. The funding would be divided into two 'pots' - £500k for small to medium grants (£2,000 to £50,000) and £500k for medium to large grants (£50,001 to £100,000).

It was proposed that the grant funding process would involve the completion of a funding application form, which would be assessed against a number of criteria. The criteria would include the project's contribution to delivering the Council's priorities, value for money, sustainability and the level of community engagement and support for the project. Applications meeting the criteria would be submitted to a Funding Advisory Panel who would make recommendations on the approval of grants to Cabinet. The Advisory Panel would consist of five Councillors (politically balanced) and five members of the Co-operative Commission (including the Chair). Ward Members would be able to support local applications for funding, and their endorsement would be part of the criteria against which applications would be considered.

During the ensuing debate, it was suggested that decisions on applications for smaller amounts of £2-10,000 could be delegated to Officers. A question was

also raised as to what help and support would be available to applicants to submit their application. The Cabinet Member advised that Officers would be doing much of the work in assessing applications against the criteria etc, but the Advisory Panel would generally retain oversight of the process. The application process would be as simple as possible, and that the Council's Community Participation Team and Telford & Wrekin CVS would be able to provide advice and help to applicants.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that the process set out in the report for allocating the Community Pride Fund, including the criteria for the Fund outlined in paragraph 4.2, be approved;
- (b) that the process for agreeing applications, including the establishment of a Funding Advisory Panel who will evaluate applications and make recommendations on grant applications to Cabinet for a decision, be approved;
- (c) that the Funding Advisory Panel comprise of 5 cross party Elected Members from Telford & Wrekin Council and 5 representatives from the Co-operative Commission;
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Managing Director to implement the funding decisions made by Cabinet.

The meeting ended at 5.34 pm.

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Jonathan Eatough
Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & People Services
Date: 29 April 2014

Signed:

Date: