

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of the Meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday 1 October 2015 at 6.35pm at Telford College of Arts & Technology, Wellington, Telford

PRESENT:

Councillors J.C. Ashford, S.L. Barnes, S. Bentley, K.T. Blundell, M. Boylan, A.J. Burford, S.P. Burrell, L.D. Carter, E.A. Clare, G.H. Cook, N.A. Dugmore, A.J. Eade, A.R.H. England, N.A.M. England, I.T.W. Fletcher, V.A. Fletcher, J.A. Francis, C.A. Furnival, E.J. Greenaway, K.R. Guy, M.B. Hosken, J. Jones, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, N.C. Lowery, C.N. Mason, A.D. McClements, A.A. Meredith, J.C. Minor, C.P.R. Mollett, L.A. Murray (Mayor), R.A. Overton, J. Pinter, G.C.W. Reynolds, S.A.W. Reynolds, S.J. Reynolds, H. Rhodes, K.S. Sahota (Leader), P.J. Scott, J.M. Seymour, R.J. Sloan, C.F. Smith (Speaker), M.J. Smith, B.D. Tillotson, K.L. Tomlinson, W.L. Tomlinson, C.R. Turley, P.R. Watling and D.G. Wright

33. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 9 July 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors E.J. Carter, S. Davies, R.C. Evans, J. Loveridge and T.J. Nelson

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A.R.H. England declared a personal interest in agenda item 8(ii) – Youth Justice Plan – in relation to his role as a JP in the Youth Court.

36. LEADER'S REPORT & ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) Telford Street Pastors

The Leader welcomed representatives from the Telford Street Pastors, and presented them with an Excellence in the Community award in recognition of their invaluable and inspiring work within the Borough. They began working in the night time economy of Telford on 1 July 2011, and had provided help and support to thousands of young people. Working closely with partners in the Council and Police, they had made a significant contribution to reducing night-time crime and anti-social behaviour in the areas of the Borough where they had worked. Rev K Osmund-Smith, on behalf of Telford Street Pastors, thanked the Council and other partners for their support.

(ii) Telford Fairtrade Alliance

The Leader invited Cllr V A Fletcher to inform the Council about the work of the Telford Fairtrade Alliance. Cllr Fletcher was pleased to announce that the Borough had recently obtained Fairtrade Status, and thanked all those who had worked on the application. She hoped Members would continue to support the work of the Alliance, and in particular the next 'Fairtrade Fortnight' in February/March 2016.

(iii) NHS Future Fit Programme

The Leader provided Members with an update on the NHS Future Fit programme following an announcement from the local NHS bodies earlier that afternoon. They had decided not to progress to consultation on any future hospital reconfiguration until more had been done to address the current financial deficit at the Hospital Trust. The Leader stated that it was hard to understand why the Future Fit process had been allowed to go so far without taking account of the ability of the Hospital Trust to fund any proposals. There was still concern that, despite the delay, the downgrading of the Princess Royal Hospital (PRH) in terms of A&E and other services remained a very real possibility. The Leader stated that the Council would continue to fight for the retention of full 24 hour A&E services at PRH, and that everyone should remain vigilant. Councillor A J Eade (Conservative Group Leader) and Cllr W L Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader) added their concerns at the delay in the Future Fit process and the continuing uncertainty for local people and hospital staff. They reiterated the support of their Groups in the campaign to retain 24 hour emergency cover at the PRH.

(iv) Other matters

The Leader reported on the financial challenges facing the Council, and that in the lead-up to the next budget there would be conversations with residents and partners about the way forward and how to address funding shortfalls. Progress was well under way on the construction of the initial 132 houses in the Council's 'Nuplace' housing project, and there had been over a thousand expressions of interest already for these rented homes. The current stabilisation work in the Ironbridge Gorge was nearing completion, although another £60m was needed for further works to protect this important site. The Leader also referred to the recent consultation on the draft Local Plan, and thanked all those who had taken part and submitted comments.

37. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported on a number of engagements that he had attended since the last meeting of the Council, including visits to local schools and further education establishments.

His charity launch event was held on 22 September 2015, and he thanked all those Members who attended. £1090 was raised at the event for his charities for this year – Samaritans, Multiple Sclerosis Society and Wellington Cottage Care.

38. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The following questions from the public had been submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 7.11 and 7.12:

(i) Thomas Hoof, a local resident and Parish Councillor, asked Councillor K S Sahota, the Leader of the Council:

"Has the Leader of Telford & Wrekin Council, or any member of his cabinet attended any meetings relating to Combined Authorities, more specifically any meeting relating to the West Midlands Combined Authority or West Midlands "Super Council" and if so who?"

The Leader replied that neither he nor any Cabinet members had attended any formal or informal meetings with the prospective West Midlands Combined Authority. The Council had its own Devolution Deal that it had already submitted to Government, but this could benefit in economic terms with being linked to the Midlands "Engine for Growth". It was about getting the best for the Borough and its residents in terms of jobs and growth, and Cabinet would be discussing a proposal at its meeting on 8 October to seek associate membership of the Combined Authority. Under such an arrangement, the Borough would not come under the control of an Elected Mayor for the West Midlands, and would remain free to work with other partners in the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership etc.

(ii) The Speaker reported that Lucy Allan, Member of Parliament for Telford, had submitted a question for the Leader of the Council, but had been in touch earlier that day to say she was not able to get to the meeting and therefore had asked for her question to be withdrawn. Nevertheless, he had requested the Leader to send the MP a written response to her question.

(iii) Fiona Hunter, Director, Clifton Community Arts Centre Ltd, asked Councillor E A Clare, Cabinet Member: Leisure Services & Culture:

"Does the Council support and endorse the creation of a significant Arts-based complex within the borough to provide a community-run facility for all sections of the population and to provide a wider range of programming, involvement, training and educational facilities than currently exists?"

The Cabinet Member replied that she could not currently say whether the Council could endorse or support such a facility. There were already a wealth of cultural facilities and activities in the Borough, and the Council did not have the money to provide any significant financial assistance. However, Council Leisure Officers were very happy to help explore any ideas or initiatives with local people/groups. The Council was about to embark on a Cultural Strategy, and would be consulting widely with local groups and the public.

39. 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.

Telford & Wrekin Local Plan

In response to a question from Councillor N A Dugmore, Councillor R A Overton, Cabinet Member: Housing, Public Health & Protection clarified that the Council's new proposed 'Green Guarantee' initiative would be about protecting locally important green spaces which had value to local communities. Within a planning context, these spaces were not to be confused with green-field sites that might be subject to development proposals.

The additional delegations to Officers granted at the 23 July and 17 September 2015 Cabinet meetings were noted.

40. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET

i) Financial Management 2015/16

Councillor L D Carter, Cabinet Member: Council Finance & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance, which provided an update on progress relating to the Capital Programme. There were some new capital allocations, virements and slippage which required formal approval by Full Council.

RESOLVED – that the changes to the Capital Programme, as shown in paragraph 1.2 of the report, be approved.

ii) Youth Justice Plan 2015/16

Councillor P R Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People and Families, presented the proposed Youth Justice Plan for 2015/16, which required formal approval by Full Council.

The Youth Justice Plan was a statutory document that set out how youth justice services across West Mercia (Herefordshire, Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin & Worcestershire) were to be structured, provided and funded. It identified a number of priorities, and key actions to address risks to service delivery and improvement. The Plan identified four main priorities for 2015/16 – improving performance and developing practice, understanding young people, improved joint working and integration, and governance & communication.

RESOLVED – that the Youth Justice Plan 2015/16 be approved.

41. MINUTES OF BOARDS & COMMITTEES

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

Audit Committee	30 th June 2015
Health & Wellbeing Board	10 th June 2015
Licensing Committee	9 th June 2015
Planning Committee	24 th June, 15 th July, 5 th August and 25 th August

42. QUESTIONS

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

1 Councillor Peter Scott asked Councillor Angela McClements, Cabinet Member: Communities, Regeneration & Transport, the following question:

"Newport has a rising population of school students who are using the main Telford & Wrekin car parks for most of the day which results in fewer spaces for shoppers, workers and tourists. Most days especially during term time, the car parks are full by 9am and remain so until after 4pm. The issue gets worse as time goes by with residential streets also being used for school parking. Can the Member for Communities, Regeneration and Transport offer any assistance in helping us deal with this problem? "

Councillor McClements replied that the Council was working with Newport Town Council to look at different options for addressing this issue – for example, the possibility of splitting the car parks into long and short stay areas. In response to a further question from Councillor Scott, she confirmed that a meeting with the Heads of the secondary schools in Newport would be held in the next few weeks to see if any school-led solutions could be found.

2 Councillor Peter Scott asked Councillor Richard Overton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Housing, Public Health & Protection, the following question:

"I have noted and welcomed the planned 10 hectares of employment land in the Newport area as part of the draft Local Plan. Having a land allocation is only the first step to attracting new employers to our town. Can you confirm that the Newport area will get at least the same emphasis with prospective businesses moving to the Borough as other current established employment zones?"

Councillor Overton referred to the new Enterprise Area designation for the Borough, which was not limited to specific sites and would apply to all areas of the Borough, including Newport. Through 'Enterprise Telford', the Council would be working with existing and prospective employers to attract further investment and growth.

3 Councillor Andrew Eade will ask the following question of Councillor Kuldip Sahota, Leader of the Council.

“Does Councillor Sahota welcome the change of Leadership of the Labour Party and what, if any, effect does he think that it will have on the future of the Borough?”

Councillor Sahota replied that he welcomed the new Leader of the Labour Party and would be working with him. In response to a further question regarding education policy, he stated that the Labour Party would be following its published manifesto.

43. NOTICES OF MOTION

- (i) Councillor A J Eade moved, in accordance with Council procedure rule 8, the following motion:

“This Council notes with concern the Labour Administration’s refusal to adopt the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in February 2012 which has prevented the Authority from raising money from Developers to pay for secondary school provision across the Borough over a number of years.

The adoption of the CIL will also: -

- deliver additional funding for T&W to carry out a wide range of infrastructure projects that support growth and benefit the local community.
- give the local community flexibility and freedom to set their own priorities for what the money should be spent on.
- ensure greater transparency for local people who will be able to understand how new development is contributing to their community
- enable local authorities to allocate a share of the levy raised in a neighbourhood to deliver infrastructure the neighbourhood wants.

Consequently this Council resolves to instruct that a report on adoption of the CIL is presented to Cabinet as a matter of urgency.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor S Bentley.

The Speaker ruled that this matter came within the remit of the Leader and Cabinet, and the motion would be referred directly to Cabinet for consideration without discussion.

- (ii) Councillor A D McClements moved in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8, the following Motion:

“Since the Government announcement that they will support 20,000 Syrian refugees, this Council, together with other councils across the country, have responded by saying we wish to play our part by offering support for refugees fleeing the Syrian war zone.

“However, we note with concern that the Government will only currently fund councils for the first year and expect those councils to fund a further 4 years. We therefore welcome the Local Government Association’s (LGA) stance on lobbying Government on behalf of all councils, in asking Government to recognise the long-term impact of resettling Syrian refugees in communities and urging them to make a

firm commitment to make long term funding available to councils. We feel that it is not right or fair to local council tax payers that this Council should be expected to pick up the tab.

This Council therefore calls upon the Government to fully fund Councils like Telford and Wrekin who wish to help and respond to this humanitarian crisis.”

Councillor R J Sloan seconded the motion.

A number of Members spoke in favour of the motion, although the Conservative Group Leader believed that, while the Borough should take in its fair share of refugees, the motion was premature because it was not yet known to what extent the Borough would be asked to provide support. In replying to the debate, Councillor McClements stated that this decision needed to be taken tonight so the Council’s voice could be added to those of other authorities in lobbying the Government.

Upon being put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved.

The meeting ended at 7.42 pm.

Mayor:

Date: