

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN**Minutes of the Meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday
26 November 2015 at 6.30pm at The Place, Oakengates.****PRESENT:**

Councillors J.C. Ashford, S.L. Barnes, S. Bentley, M. Boylan, A.J. Burford, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, L.D. Carter, E.A. Clare, G.H. Cook, 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, 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, A.D. McClements, A.A. Meredith, J.C. Minor, C.P.R. Mollett, L.A. Murray (Mayor), T.J. Nelson 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

44. PARIS TERRORIST ATTACKS

The Mayor made a short statement on behalf of the Council and offered condolences to the victims and bereaved families of the Paris terrorist attacks. A minutes silence was then held as a mark of respect for the victims and their loved ones.

45. TRIBUTE TO GEORGE WHYLE

The Speaker paid tribute to former Councillor and Freeman of the Borough, George Whyte. A number of councillors also paid tribute to his achievements and to his outstanding commitment to local government. A number of those speaking spoke warmly about his generosity of spirit and exceptional character.

46. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting and of the Extraordinary Council meeting, both held on 1 October 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors K.T. Blundell, J. Loveridge and C.N. Mason.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor C.P.R. Mollett declared a personal interest in agenda item 9, Appendix H, Review of the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy.

49. LEADER'S REPORT & ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) Borough Council Certificate of Fairtrade Status

The Leader of the Council accepted the Certificate of Fairtrade Status which had been recently awarded. Paul Birch from Telford Fairtrade Alliance told Members of the hard work and commitment by the Alliance over the last three years which had led to the Borough achieving Fairtrade status.

(ii) Leader's Report

The Leader reported on various matters including Enterprise Telford, Nu Place, MOD Logistics centre, Superfast Broadband and the White Ribbon campaign. He highlighted the funding issues facing the Council and the inevitability of further huge budget cuts which would directly impact on the services provided by the Council.

50. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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51. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions were received.

52. 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.

i) Non-Constituent Membership of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

In response to a question asking what tangible benefits membership of WMCA would bring to Telford & Wrekin, Councillor K S Sahota, Leader of the Council, told Members that membership would help to bring jobs and business investment to the Borough.

ii) Adoption of a Telford & Wrekin Planning Enforcement Policy

In response to a question asking how the policy would be enforced and what improvements it would bring, Councillor R A Overton, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing, Public Health & Protection: replied that the Council were doing what they could with very limited resources.

iii) Green Guarantee

In response to a question, Councillor R A Overton, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing, Public Health & Protection: replied that the guarantee applied only to land in the Council's ownership. In response to a further question he replied that Cabinet approval would be required for any change of use to this land.

iv) West Midlands Rail Governance

In response to a question Councillor K S Sahota, Leader of the Council, confirmed that the Strategic Rail Group could be updated on West Midlands Rail Governance activity.

v) Public Health Grant Savings Proposals 2015/16

In response to a question Councillor R A Overton, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing, Public Health & Protection: replied that the savings proposals were as a result of government grant cuts.

53. 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 section 1 of the report, be approved.

ii) West Midlands Rail Governance

Councillor P R Watling, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People and Families, presented the report which proposed the appointment of the Leader of the Council as a Director of WMR Ltd with Councillor A. D. McClements as his substitute. Their role would authorise them to make decisions relating to the strategic direction for the new West Midlands Rail Franchise.

RESOLVED – that Cllr Kuldip Sahota is appointed as a Director of WMR Ltd and that Cllr Angela McClements attend as his substitute if he is unable to attend any Board meetings and note that in this role they will be authorised to make decisions in this capacity relating to the strategic direction for the new West Midlands Rail Franchise

iii) Property Investment Portfolio – Investing in Telford’s Growth

Councillor S Davies, Cabinet Member: Business, Neighbourhood and Customer Services presented the report of the Assistant Director: Development, Business & Employment which sought approval for borrowing to establish a £20m Growth Fund to attract inward investment and deliver economic growth and revenue income, through the development of the Council’s Property Investment Portfolio (PIP).

RESOLVED – that the approval of necessary changes to the in-year (2015/16) budget framework to enable the strategy detailed in the report to be used in this financial year to facilitate the ongoing rationalisation and expansion of the PIP, as outlined in the report, be approved

RESOLVED - that the necessary changes to the capital programme and revenue budget from 2015/16 to facilitate the ongoing rationalisation and expansion of the PIP as outlined in the report be approved

54. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOARDS & COMMITTEES

i) Audit Committee Annual Report 2014/15

Councillor R J Sloan, Chairman of Audit Committee, presented the report of the Section 151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer for noting.

RESOLVED – that Members note the contents of the Annual Report 2014/15.

ii) Review of the Council’s Statement of Licensing Policy

Councillor H Rhodes, Chairman of Licensing Committee, presented the report of the Service Delivery Manager: Public Protection, which sought approval for the revised Statement of Licensing Policy.

RESOLVED – that the revised Statement of Licensing Policy be approved.

iii) Review of the Gambling Act 2005- Statement of Licensing Principles

Councillor H Rhodes, Chairman of Licensing Committee, presented the report of the Service Delivery Manager: Public Protection, which set out the revised Statement of Licensing Principles, following a recent consultation.

RESOLVED – that the amendments made to the Statement of Licensing Principles, following a consultation exercise which ended on 14 September 2015, be approved

55. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

Councillor S A W Reynolds, Chairman of Scrutiny Management Board, presented the Annual Scrutiny Report for noting by Members.

56. MINUTES OF BOARDS & COMMITTEES

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

Audit Committee	15 th September 2015
Customer, Community & Partnership Scrutiny Committee	30 th June 2015
Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee	9 th June 2015
Health & Wellbeing Board	9 th September 2015
Planning Committee	16 th September, 7 th and 28 th October 2015
Scrutiny Management Board	10 th July 2015

57. QUESTIONS

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

1 Councillor Peter Scott asked the following question of Councillor Shaun Davies, Cabinet Member: Business, Neighbourhood & Customer Services

"Dog fouling is becoming a massive nuisance in all areas of the Borough. Not a day goes by without many councillors receiving complaints on this issue. There is currently just one dog warden for the whole of Telford & Wrekin who has to deal with all aspects regarding dogs including hundreds of strays. Can the Cabinet Member tell me if there are any plans to increase the number of dog wardens in Telford and Wrekin or any plans to help our areas combat dog waste with any new or existing initiatives?"

In response Councillor Davies said that were currently no plans to employ more dog wardens but a campaign had resulted in a 40% decrease in dog fouling. He said 300 additional litter bins had been installed. Fixed penalty notices were given to offenders.

2 Councillor Chris Turley asked the following question of Councillor Shaun Davies, Cabinet Member: Business, Neighbourhood & Customer Services

The Nu Place development in my ward has been welcomed by residents. Can the Cabinet Member for the Housing Programme confirm what partnership work is being done with local stakeholders to ensure that the construction on the former Randlay Lorry Park is completed smoothly?"

Councillor Davies confirmed that the Council, together with the contractors, Parish council and other stakeholders had worked together successfully and for the benefit of the local community on the Nu Place development.

3 Councillor Steve Reynolds asked the following question of Councillor Angela McClements, Cabinet Member: Communities, Regeneration & Transport

"As a new Councillor on Telford & Wrekin, I very much welcome supporting the Council's White Ribbon Campaign on men working to end violence against women. Could the Cabinet Member for Communities, Regeneration and Transport please give us an update on the campaign for this year and whether she has plans for next year?"

The launch at Southwater had been very successful. The Council was urging residents, particularly men, to help protect women from domestic violence by pledging their support for this year's White Ribbon campaign. White Ribbon Day was a symbolic campaign which demonstrates that domestic abuse is unacceptable. Men - including those in high profile public positions – wearing a symbolic white ribbon to demonstrate that domestic abuse was not acceptable and should not be tolerated.

A number of events had taken place around the borough in the build-up to White Ribbon Day on Wednesday 25 November, to raise awareness of the campaign.

A football match had been arranged for 29 November. Male colleagues were encouraged to support the event. The football match would be between Telford & Wrekin Council (both councillors and colleagues) and employees of West Mercia Police. A fun run had also taken place on Saturday 21 November.

4. Councillor Nathan England asked the following question of Councillor Shaun Davies, Cabinet Member: Business, Neighbourhood & Customer Services

"Could the Cabinet member responsible for the Housing Investment Programme update me on the number of homes reserved under phase 1 of Nu Place?"

Over 50 homes had already been reserved. Nu place was a commercial company set up by Telford & Wrekin Council limited by shares and established to develop and manage a programme of 400 market rental properties. It had the aim of supporting social and economic regeneration, addressing a shortfall in providing quality homes in the rental market and generating revenue to protect frontline council services. The first two sites being built were 101 homes at Woodland Walk in Madeley and a further 31 at Pool View in Randlay. Foundations were already completed and brickwork had started on 80 per cent of the properties at both sites. The access road was also nearly completed at both sites, as were the drainage systems. Woodland Walk was on the site of the former Woodlands Primary School and Pool View was the site of a former lorry park at the junction of Storchley Avenue and Randlay

Avenue near to the Town Park. Phase two was subject to planning approval and was expected to include a number of homes across the borough.

Phase three was at an early design stage and would look at the feasibility of providing a number of one and two bedroom apartments in Southwater. Public engagement and consultation on this phase would take place as options were progressed.

In response to a follow up question Councillor Davies noted that the development utilised brownfield sites on Council owned land. This would generate Council Tax revenue and also New Homes bonus. .

5. Councillor Steven Bentley asked the following question of Councillor Kuldip Sahota, Leader of the Council

“Does Cllr Sahota share my concerns for the future success of AFC Telford United?”

Councillor Sahota said he did share these concerns. In response to a follow up question asking if he would attend the club’s AGM, Councillor Sahota replied that the meeting was the business of the football club.

6. Councillor Tim Nelson asked the following question of Cllr Richard Overton, Cabinet Member: Housing, Public Health & Protection

“Could the Cabinet Member confirm that a space accepted by the current Administration’s Green Guarantee will never be built on and remain a green space in perpetuity”?

In response he replied that Cabinet approval would be needed for any change of use on this land. The government set the law around planning and development and the Council was doing its best to protect green space in the Borough.

7. Councillor Andrew Eade had submitted the following detailed questions to Cllr Richard Overton, Cabinet Member: Housing, Public Health & Protection relating to the ‘Green Guarantee’ that was approved by Cabinet on 15 October:

3.0 Summary Impact Assessment.

In the section Community Impact, the statement is made ‘...that qualitative improvements of natural green spaces would help address health and wellbeing needs’.

Question 1 – “what types of ‘qualitative improvements’ to the sites identified in Appendix 1 to the report do the Council intend to undertake to ‘help address health and wellbeing?’”

Financial/value for money impact.

Question 2 – “if the inclusion of a site under the Green Guarantee will not commit the Council to undertake additional maintenance on any of the sites listed in Appendix 1, how will the ‘qualitative improvements’ of the ‘natural green spaces’ be undertaken and which budget will include the costs of such qualitative improvements?”

4.0 Background.

Question 3 - “in para. 4.3 on what basis was December 2016 chosen as the starting point for identifying a further 50 (approx) sites?”

5 Protection

Question 4 - “Para 5.3 – what criteria will the Council apply in considering either the disposal or change of use of a Green Guarantee site?”

6 Selection of Sites

Question 5 – “will the Council publish the full list of sites considered by the various officers and the criteria applied under the table in 6.2 giving the reasons for the omission of each site from the list in Appendix 1?”

7 Next Steps

Question 6 – “will the Council provide a list of the local interest groups and organisations who are being consulted on the initial list of sites contained in Appendix 1 and will these be the same groups to be asked to identify the further 50 Community Green Spaces as per para. 7.3?”

8 Impact Assessment

Question 7 – “as regards the reference in para. 8.1 to ‘diverse range of species and habitat’ and to ‘natural green spaces’, did the officers who applied the criteria in section 6 of the report agree that each site listed in Appendix 1 was a ‘natural green space’ which had a ‘diverse range of species and habitat present?’”

Question 8 – “Is it the intention of the Council to include the responses to the consultation referenced in para. 7.1 of the report within the evidence submitted to the Planning Inspector at the Examination. When do the Council anticipate that the Examination of the Local Plan will commence?”

The Speaker asked that a written answer be provided as the time allowed for questions had elapsed before this question could be raised.

58. NOTICES OF MOTION

i) Councillor P J Scott moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8, the following Motion:

"Over the next few years Telford & Wrekin Council has to make further cuts of around £30 million. The residents of the borough will be looking to all members to get the best value for their area whilst bearing in mind that reductions in some services are inevitable. This is a time for party politics to be set aside as we should all be working as closely as possible together. It is time to forget about cheap points scoring and concentrate on what is best for the whole borough therefore we call upon all members from all parties to form closer working links through what will be financially a difficult time.

Therefore, the Liberal Democrat and Independent Party call on all members of TWC regardless of political persuasion to resolve to put aside all political differences over the coming weeks and months to show the residents of Telford & Wrekin that we can work as one when circumstances demand unity."

Councillor W L Tomlinson seconded the motion.

A debate took place with Members expressing support for the motion.

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved

(ii) Councillor L D Carter moves, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8, the following Motion:

"Since 2010 this Council has seen a cut of 50% to the grant it receives from Government, meaning that £80 million less is now being spent on local services in Telford and Wrekin year on year than it was in 2010. As a result, enormous pressure has been heaped on already stretched local services with the Government's failure to fully assess and understand the impact of their cuts to grants when making spending decisions to local authorities.

We have reduced our senior management posts by 50%, with a real terms pay cut of 25%; a 35% reduction in middle management; a £7million per annum reduction in back office costs and £2million per annum savings in reduced accommodation costs. Over 1200 posts have been cut saving over £20million per annum.

In addition, through our 'Business Winning, Business Supporting' Agenda, we now enjoy record levels of income from Business Rates, Council Tax and Sales Ledger activity. Despite this, forecasts indicate that the Government will reduce the level of its grant given to this Council by a further £11 million per annum, meaning that by 2018 there will £113 million less spent on local services year on year than there was in 2010.

The abject failure of this Government to support local authorities runs the risk of causing an existential crisis in many services currently used and funded by the local taxpayers. This Council therefore demands that the Government urgently reviews its

current policy on funding for Local Government and provides fairer funding for Telford & Wrekin. Cuts do have consequences and we call on both our MPs for Telford and The Wrekin to wholeheartedly support us in lobbying Government so that we can continue to protect frontline services.”

Councillor A R H England seconded the motion.

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

For : *Councillors Burford, L Carter, Clare, Cook, Davies, A England, N England, Evans, Guy, Jones, McClements, Minor, Murray, Overton, Pinter, G Reynolds, SA Reynolds, SJ Reynolds, Rhodes, Sahota, Scott, Sloan, C Smith, M Smith, K Tomlinson, W Tomlinson, Turley, Watling (28)*

Against : *Councillors Ashford, Barnes, Bentley, Boylan, Burrell, E Carter, Dugmore, Eade, I Fletcher, V Fletcher, Francis, Furnival, Greenaway, Hosken, Kiernan, Lawrence, Lowery, Meredith, Mollett, Nelson, Seymour, Tillotson, Wright. (23)*

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved.

The meeting ended at 9.11 pm.

Mayor:

Date: