

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Wednesday, 7 December 2016 at 6.00pm at Telford College of Arts & Technology, Haybridge Road, Telford

PRESENT:

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

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors E A Clare, C A Furnival, K R Guy, A A Meredith, M J Smith, and P R Watling

(NB Councillors J C Ashford, S P Burrell and A Lawrence were also absent from the meeting)

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M Boylan declared an interest in minute number 62 due to his position as Director at Healthwatch Telford & Wrekin and indicated that he would withdraw from the meeting.

Councillor A J Burford declared an interest in minute number 62 due to his position as joint Chair of the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and indicated that he would not take part in the debate and, on legal advice, would abstain from the vote.

Councillor V A Fletcher declared an interest in minute number 62 due to her Membership of the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and indicated that she would withdraw from the meeting.

Councillor R J Sloan declared an interest in minute number 62 due to his Membership of the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and indicated that he would not take part in the debate and, on legal advice, would abstain from the vote.

62. RECONFIGURATION OF HOSPITAL SERVICES

In accordance with the Constitution, five members of the Council had submitted a request to the Speaker to arrange an urgent extraordinary public meeting of the

Council with a single item of business – a motion relating to the reconfiguration of hospital services in the County as set out in the agenda papers.

The Leader, Councillor S Davies, moved the following Motion:

“This Council deplores the decision made by the Future Fit Board and is appalled that their preferred option is to close A&E and the Women’s & Children’s Unit at Telford Princess Royal Hospital.

This Council has no confidence in the decision-making process of the Future Fit Board and is astounded at their abject failure to satisfactorily address concerns that this Council has raised.

This Council is bitterly disappointed that the Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt has failed to respond to any correspondence from this Council or intervene in this matter despite his 2014 pledge that both Shropshire A&Es would remain open. We now call on Telford & Wrekin MPs Mark Pritchard & Lucy Allan to seek an urgent meeting with the Health Secretary and demand that he intervenes and stops this fiasco immediately.

This Council agrees that, subject to the decision of the Joint CCG Committee, the Cabinet now be authorised to pursue all necessary actions including a Judicial Review of the decision.”

In supporting the motion, Councillor Davies commented upon the lack of logic to the decision made by the Future Fit Board to relocate the Women’s and Children’s Unit when the greatest clinical need for the facility was in Telford. Councillor Davies went on to comment upon the flawed Future Fit processes and reports that NHS England doubted that funding would be available to support the preferred option. Councillor Davies noted that the Council’s own analysis of the evidence would shortly be published and that this demonstrated that Telford demographics strongly supported the position for the Women’s and Children’s Unit and Accident and Emergency to remain in Telford. He also noted the enormous support for the PRH4Me campaign. Councillor Davies informed the meeting that the Council had pushed for the publication of the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP) which had been widely condemned on publication and questioned how the proposals could materialise without appropriate funding being available. Councillor Davies asserted that the County needed two fully equipped Accident and Emergency Units, and reflected upon statements by the Health Secretary in this regard in the previous two years and urged the borough’s two MPs to lobby the Health Secretary. He concluded by vowing that the Council would do all that it could to protect services in the borough.

The motion was seconded by Councillor W L Tomlinson. Councillor Tomlinson commented upon the wider funding picture in the NHS and questioned the costs which would be incurred in moving the newly built Women’s and Children’s Unit to Shrewsbury before asserting that there continued to be a clinical case for the Unit to remain in Telford. He expressed concern at the weighting attributed to Powys during the Future Fit consultation. Councillor Tomlinson urged support from the borough’s MPs. He went on to note that there had been some comments at the last

Extraordinary Council Meeting which critiqued spending large sums on Judicial Review but it was his belief that the public would expect the Council to mount a fight against injustice in the process as individuals would not be able to do so themselves.

A number of Members spoke to the proposal, making points which included the social injustice of moving the Women's and Children's Unit, whether the process was at an appropriate stage to instigate judicial review, whether the Motion was drafted correctly, whether the Motion was premature, that the meeting on 6 October had supported the filing for Judicial Review rendering this meeting unnecessary, and that the CCGs should be allowed to make their decision without political pressure. Further points were made regarding the fairness and legality of Future Fit processes, health inequalities and demographic issues which supported the case to retain the Women's and Children's Unit and Accident and Emergency in Telford, the lack of evidence to support the assertion that an Urgent Care Centre would take up the claimed Accident and Emergency activity, poor training and lack of guidance for those undertaking the non-financial appraisal and the weighting of evidence towards a preferred option C, lack of funding to support changes and limited support from MPs to date despite promises in election literature. An assurance was given that Mark Pritchard MP was due to meet with the Health Secretary after Christmas but that the Minister's intervention would not be possible before public consultation had taken place.

Councillor S Davies concluded the debate by reiterating his opinion that the Future Fit process was a shambles and that there was a legal and moral obligation on the Health Secretary to intervene. He noted that the Leader of Shropshire Council was also awaiting a response from the Health Secretary and called again for the support of both the borough's MPs in lobbying the Health Secretary, urging all parties to unite and fight for services in the borough. He criticised recent comments in the press which had leaked the views of the CCGs ahead of the Joint Committee meeting. Councillor Davies assured Members that he had taken legal advice about the appropriateness of launching Judicial Review and, acknowledging criticism of his decision to request this meeting, he noted that he could have used his Strong Leader powers to decide to file for Judicial Review but that he had acknowledged comments made at the meeting on 6 October and sought cross party support instead. He trusted that all Members would unite to fight for the right services across Shropshire.

At the end of a robust and lengthy debate, a vote was taken on the motion put forward by Councillor Davies which was CARRIED. In accordance with Committee Procedure Rule 9.5, a recorded vote on the motion was taken, the voting being as follows:

For: 40

Councillors S L Barnes, S Bentley, K T Blundell, E J Carter, L D Carter, G K Cook, S Davies, N A Dugmore, A J Eade, A R H England, N A M England, R C Evans, I T W Fletcher, J A Francis, E J Greenaway, M B Hosken, J Jones, R T Kiernan, J Loveridge, N C Lowery, C N Mason, A D McClements, J C Minor, L A Murray, T J Nelson, R A Overton, J Pinter, G C W Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, S J Reynolds, H Rhodes, K S Sahota, P J Scott, J M Seymour, C F Smith, B D Tillotson, K T Tomlinson, W L Tomlinson, C R Turley, and D G Wright

Against: 0

Abstentions: 2
Councillors A J Burford and R J Sloan

The meeting ended at 7.11pm

Mayor:

Date: