

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of the Meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday 14 July 2016 at 6.00pm at 'The Place', Oakengates, Telford

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 K Cook, S Davies, N A Dugmore, A R H England, N A M England, R C Evans, I T W Fletcher, V A Fletcher, J A Francis, C A Furnival, K R Guy, M B Hosken, J Jones, R T Kiernan, J Loveridge, N C Lowery, C N Mason, A D McClements, A A Meredith, 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, P J Scott, J M Seymour, C F Smith (Speaker) , M J Smith, B D Tillotson, W L Tomlinson, C R Turley, P R Watling and D G Wright

18. The Late Jo Cox MP

Council observed one minute's silence in tribute to Jo Cox MP who was tragically killed after being stabbed and shot in the street outside the library in Birstall, West Yorkshire, where she held her regular constituency surgery. She had been campaigning to remain in the EU before her life was taken.

The Mayor noted that there had been reports across the country of a rise in racist and hate crimes against minority communities. She expressed her pride in the diverse and dynamic population in Telford and gave assurance that she and all political group leaders of the Council considered any hate crime to be unacceptable and that the Council would work with partners to identify, tackle and prosecute such behaviour.

A number of councillors also paid tribute to Jo Cox MP, expressing their horror at the events which had unfolded and sent condolences to the family.

19. Prayers

The Reverend Keith Osmund-Smith said prayers.

20. Apologies for Absence

Councillors K T Blundell, A Lawrence, J C Minor and R J Sloan

21. Declarations of Interest

None.

22. Minutes of the Council

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 26 May 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

23. Leader's Report & Announcements

The Leader noted the recent outcome of the EU Referendum, reported on the borough's plans for the future and continued ability to attract new investment, with the high profile recent investment from Magna being one of the biggest investment deals in the UK this year. He noted recently launched plans to improve the footbridge linking the Town Centre with Telford Central Rail Station and significant investment in repairing and rebuilding roads in Newport. Councillor Davies commended South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Trust, which provides mental health and learning disability services in Telford and Wrekin, for being rated "Good" by the Care Quality Commission and noted increasing support for the PRH4Me campaign. Councillor Davies noted the range of events planned in the borough over the summer including the Carnival of Giants and the survey on the design concept for Southwater Square. He welcomed continuing work with Town and Parish Councils which had played a key part in securing continued library services for local residents and enabled the success of the Parish Environmental Teams. Despite this, the financial outlook remained bleak, with continued cuts to be made on top of the £80m savings already secured. The Council would continue to seek ways to generate income and he vowed to campaign to secure a fair funding deal for Telford & Wrekin.

24. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor reported on a number of engagements that she had attended since the last meeting of the Council, particularly the Lives in Your Hands event and the formal award to the Council of White Ribbon Status. Looking forward, she invited Councillors to join her at her Charity Launch on 30 July 2016.

25. Public Questions

The following questions from the public had been received.

- (i) The following question to Cllr A R H England, Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care & Older People was submitted by Carol Scott MBE:

"680 women within the borough have signed the WASPI petition calling on the Government to reconsider transitional arrangements for women born on or after 6th April 1951. Will this Council pledge support to the campaign and write to the Prime Minister on behalf of local women affected by the changes?"

Cllr A R H England, Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care & Older People responded that whilst he did not dispute that women and men should have equal retirement ages, many women had expected the financial security to retire at 60 and the transitional arrangements were being introduced too rapidly and had not afforded them sufficient notice of the later retirement age. In the Ercall and the Gorge wards, over 8% of the population of women were affected by the changes.

However, the Cabinet Member did not have authority to make the pledge on behalf of the Council but he would give his personal support, and that of the

Leader, and take the issue to a formal meeting of the Cabinet at an early stage.

- (ii) The following question to Cllr S Davies, Leader had been submitted by Neil Phillips:

“I am concerned that Telford is suffering because Lucy Allan MP and the Council do not appear to be working together for the benefit of Telford residents. Can the Leader please tell us if there are any signs of an improvement in the relationship between the Council and Lucy Allan?”

Cllr S Davies, Leader responded that he had invited Mrs Allan to a budget briefing to explain the impact of cuts on the Council’s finances which she had cancelled on the day and not re-arranged, quarterly meetings with the Managing Director in March and June had been cancelled, a meeting with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Communities had similarly been cancelled and not rescheduled, a response to other requests to meet with Mrs Allan had not been forthcoming and she had refused to meet with the Leader. The Leader made his position clear: he wanted to work with both MPs for Telford and The Wrekin, particularly regarding the NHS Future Fit programme.

26. 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.

In response to a question from Councillor V A Fletcher regarding the Integration of Health & Social Care – Better Together report, Councillor A R H England, Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care & Older People told the meeting the report informed on the joint narrative that the Council had been working on with CCG colleagues and partners. This linked into work being undertaken for Community Fit.

Responding to a question regarding the Housing Assistance Policy, Councillor R A Overton responded that the changes were introduced to support individuals not as a cut to services.

In response to questions regarding the Green Guarantee report, Councillor R A Overton advised that the process of bring an additional 50 areas forward for protection via public consultation would take place at the start of December at the end of a lengthy process. Additionally, the Homes and Communities (HCA) Land Deal would see land brought back into use. In response to a further question, regarding the protection of sites brought forward under the Green Guarantee he noted that the aim of the Green Guarantee was to protect small local sites in accordance with the Administration’s manifesto commitments.

In response to a question regarding the Community Pride Fund, Councillor S Davies advised that an extension to organisations to complete their projects beyond the original deadline of 31 March 2016 had been granted. In response to a further question regarding any money left over in the Fund, Councillor Davies indicated such funds would be rolled over.

Responding to a question regarding the Housing Investment Programme Update, Councillor S Davies stated that the Council was committed to delivering a portfolio of properties available for both market and affordable rent and that residents had been welcoming of the Council as a landlord they could trust.

In response to question regarding the impact of the perceived slow progress of implementing the Local Plan on Neighbourhood Plans such as the Waters Upton Neighbourhood Plan, Councillor R A Overton reported that the Council was supportive of parishes in bring forward Neighbourhood Plans to complement the Local Plan process and, until the Local Plan was approved, speculative development would be considered by the Planning Committee. In response to a second question, Councillor Overton thanked Waters Upton Parish Council for their work towards the Neighbourhood Plan.

In response to a question regarding the Planning – Duty to Co-operate report, which sought clarification of cross-boundary discussions with Shropshire Council to protect the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site, Councillor R A Overton noted that the Council was legally obliged to sign an agreement with Shropshire Council on the making of the Local Plan. The Ironbridge Power Station fell within Shropshire's boundary and consultation would be undertaken with them at the time that their Local Plan came forward for renewal to ensure a positive outcome for the World Heritage Site.

27. Recommendations from Cabinet

Service & Financial Planning Report – 2015/16 Outturn and 2016/17 Update

Councillor L J Carter, Cabinet Member: Council Finance, Partnerships & Commercial Services, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance & HR (Chief Financial Officer).

RESOLVED – that

- (a) the Revenue outturn position for 2015/16 and related virements shown in Appendix 3 of the report (and subject to audit by the Council's external auditors), and the transfers to reserves and associated approval to spend the reserves as detailed in paragraph 5.3 of the report be approved;**
- (b) the Capital outturn position and related supplementary estimates and re-phasing shown in Appendix 4 of the report be approved;**
- (c) the performance against income targets be noted; and**
- (d) the key issues identified for 2016/17 and the Insurance update provided in paragraph 9.2 of the report be noted.**

28. Changes to the Constitution

Councillor M J Smith, Chair of the Council Constitution Committee presented the report of the Assistant Director: Governance, Procurement & Commissioning which sought approval for changes to the Constitution to come into affect at the end of the

meeting and extension of voting rights for co-optees appointed by this Council to the Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED that –

- (a) the revised Constitution as set out at Appendix 1 to the report be approved to come into effect from the end of this Council meeting; and
- (b) the Voting scheme in Appendix 2 of the report to extend the voting rights for the co-optees appointed by Telford and Wrekin Council on the Joint Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee be approved.

29. Annual Scrutiny Report

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

The report sets out in detail the range of issues which had been considered by Scrutiny over the year and the outcomes of the work. In particular, Councillor Reynolds highlighted the report of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee on Multi-Agency Working Against Child Sexual Exploitation. The report made 38 recommendations to a range of local and national organisations and would be presented to Cabinet on 21 July when the Cabinet and Local Safeguarding Children Board would present their response to the recommendations.

Councillor Reynolds also reported on key aspects of the work of the Finance & Enterprise Scrutiny Committee in relation to the budget proposals, the Customer, Community & Partnership Scrutiny Committee in relation to part-time traffic signals and the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee and the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to adult social care and NHS services locally and across the county.

She noted that scrutiny members also played a role in regional scrutiny on the West Mercia Police & Crime Panel for West Mercia Police and on the West Midlands Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee.

A review of co-optee arrangements had taken place and suggestions for the 2016/17 scrutiny work programme had recently been sought.

Finally, Councillor Reynolds thanked everyone who had helped and supported Scrutiny in its work over the course of the 2015/16 municipal year.

30. Recommendations from Boards and Committees

Audit Committee - Corporate Anti Fraud & Corruption Policy

RESOLVED – that the updated Corporate Anti Fraud & Corruption Policy be adopted.

31. Minutes of Boards and Committees

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

Boundary Review Committee – 13 April 2016

Council Constitution Committee – 25 April 2016

Customer, Community & Partnership Scrutiny Committee – 26 April 2016

Health & Wellbeing Board – 9 March 2016

Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 2 March 2016

Licensing Committee – 23 March 2016

Planning Committee – 24 February, 16 March, 6 April, 27 April, 18 May 2016 and 8 June 2016

Scrutiny Management Board – 17 March and 4 May 2016

32. Questions

The following questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 7:-

1. Councillor P J Scott asked the following question of Councillor A D McClements, Cabinet Member: Transport, Customer & Neighbourhood Services:

"There has been an upturn in fly tipping in the Newport area and across the borough. Will the council consider helping us to combat this anti social behaviour by looking at the hot spots and introducing extra anti fly tipping measures such as bollards, signage and discreet CCTV to help us catch the culprits?"

Councillor McClements responded that figures for reports of fly tipping in Newport and the borough had reduced year on year except in Church Aston and Newport which had seen a marked increase this year to date. She stated that the Council had high performance indicators in relation to fly tipping and enforcement through the issue of warning letters. She encouraged anyone witnessing fly tips to come forward to enable prosecution.

Councillor Scott responded that there were two outstanding collections in Church Aston and Lilleshall and Councillor McClements gave assurances this would be investigated with Officers.

2. Councillor Andrew Eade asked the following question of Councillor Richard Overton, Cabinet Member: Housing, Leisure & Health

"The Council has received substantial funds from New Homes Bonus and Council Tax from properties and residents from new housing developments across the Borough.

As landscape and management of these developments is often provided by separate companies for a time limited period can Cllr. Overton provide an answer to the following questions: -

- (i) What is the total value of Council tax and New Homes Bonus received from developments which have management companies in charge of infrastructure maintenance?
- (ii) What sums of money have been put aside to adopt roads, footpaths, landscape, car parks and lighting etc. when the term of private maintenance agreements expire?
- (iii) What assessments have been undertaken to ascertain likely expenditure on infrastructure items to bring them to a standard where the council can adopt them?
- (iv) Where Management Plans are specified as a condition of planning approval, what work is undertaken to ensure that Management Plans are approved and in place before any development takes place?
- (v) Has the council exercise due diligence by looking at alternative means of maintaining new estates?
- (vi) Telford and Wrekin Council have been aware of potential and future problems with the above issues for over two years. What have they done in that time to protect and give advice to vulnerable first time buyers on future implications of adoption, or non-adoption of infrastructure and maintenance?
- (vii) Will the Cabinet Member tell us what measures will be taken in future to warn or protect residents in the Borough from the implications of such schemes.

Does the Cabinet member agree with me that such schemes are no more than a two tiered Council tax system and that the Council is providing a limited service for residents in return for full Council tax payments by residents?"

Councillor Richard Overton advised that given the detail of the question, he would provide a written response.

Councillor Eade asked a supplementary question regarding the moral duty to consider these issues and Councillor Overton replied that these were legal issues which should be raised with home owners by solicitors and mortgage advisers.

33. Notices of Motion

- (i) Councillor E J Carter moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8, the following Motion:

"I call upon Telford & Wrekin Council to make a commitment to actively work towards producing a parking strategy and a business case, that can lead directly to submitting an application for a Civil Parking Enforcement Order."

Councillor N C Lowery seconded the Motion.

In accordance with Council procedure rules, the Speaker referred the motion without discussion to the relevant Scrutiny Committee for discussion and report.

RESOLVED - that the motion be referred to the relevant Scrutiny Committee.

(ii) Councillor S Davies moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8, the following Motion:

“The Land Registry has been state owned since its formation in 1862.

The Land Registry registers all land ownership in the UK, it provides a quality fully accountable impartial gold standard service in Land Registration and its system is copied across the World.

The Land Registry is no drain on the public purse, it is a trading fund, and has made a profit / surplus for the 19 years out of the last 20, in the last two years returned £246 million to the treasury.

It reduces its fees regularly and has a 96% customer satisfaction; being rated from good to excellent

The Land Registry employs around 300 people in Telford and Wrekin, these are well paid and highly skilled jobs.

This Council believes the Government plans to sell of the Registry will lead to a worse service for residents, which will cost more and diminish trust in the Registration of Land in this country. There is a real risk that these 300 jobs, which will be lost to the Borough of Telford and Wrekin, will have a detrimental impact on the workforce & their families and the negative economic impact to the Borough will be significant.

This Councils urgently calls on the Government to abort the sale of the Land Registry and re-affirm that Land Registry jobs will be kept in the Borough of Telford and Wrekin which have been based in the Town for over 30 years.”

Councillor A D McClements seconded the Motion.

Following a robust debate, the motion was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved

(iii) Councillor H Rhodes moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 8, the following Motion:

“This Council calls upon the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner to take all necessary steps to ensure there is a dedicated Police Commander for Telford and Wrekin Council area responsible for community and investigative policing. That Police Commander must be based in Telford and Wrekin within the Divisional Headquarters for the area in order to continue that vital connection between local communities and local partners. We feel that a ‘top down’ & centralist approach will have a negative impact on the strategic delivery of policing across Telford & Wrekin, with less accountability.

Telford and Wrekin is a growing Borough with a variety of challenges and opportunities and losing a dedicated Police Commander that is currently delivering policing that meets local priorities and local needs would be a backward step and have a detrimental impact on Borough residents and businesses.”

Councillor W L Tomlinson seconded the Motion.

Following a lengthy debate, the motion was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved

Mayor:

Date: