

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of the Meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday 22 September 2016 at 6.00pm at The Haybridge Restaurant, Telford College of Arts & Technology, Haybridge Road, Wellington, Telford

Present:

Councillors J C Ashford, S L Barnes, S Bentley, K T Blundell, 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, M B Hosken, J Jones, R T Kiernan, A Lawrence, J Loveridge, N C Lowery, C N Mason, A D McClements, A A Meredith, J C Minor, 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, R J Sloan, C F Smith (Speaker) , M J Smith, B D Tillotson, W L Tomlinson, C R Turley, P R Watling and D G Wright

34. Prayers

The Reverend Keith Osmund-Smith said prayers.

35. Apologies for Absence

Councillors K R Guy, C P R Mollett and K T Tomlinson

36. Declarations of Interest

None.

37. Minutes of the Council

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

38. Leader's Report & Announcements

The Leader congratulated Great Britain's athletes who had taken part in the Rio Olympics and Paralympics and reported on the busy Summer event schedule in the borough which had brought thousands of visitors to the area. He noted ongoing work to secure business in the borough was bearing fruit: the £20m Telford Growth Fund had helped enhance infrastructure at T54 and other industrial areas in the borough, the purchase of Audley Avenue Enterprise Park had secured the future of 13 businesses and prevented the site being sold for housing development; at T54, land had been purchased and work begun to create a new world-class aluminium casting facility for Magna International and production at Jaguar Land Rover was due to start in 2018. He was also pleased to confirm that work on the MOD Defence Fulfilment Centre buildings in Donnington was progressing well and on target for operations to begin in the New Year. He further reported that a Pride in Your High Street Grant from the Council had funded restoration of the War Memorial in Russell Square, Madeley which had been the site chosen for the unveiling of a

commemorative paving stone dedicated to Major 'CAL' Yate - the only man in the borough to be awarded the Victoria Cross during the First World War. He updated Members on the Council's housing initiative, Nuplace, which was now fully let in Randlay and nearly all properties at Woodland Walk in Madeley were reserved. Work would soon begin at two further sites in Dawley and Madeley. Looking forward, the Leader considered that there was much more work to be done to improve the road network in the borough in support of business growth and in order to increase the attractiveness of the area to prospective residents, visitors and inward investors. He called upon the support of both local MPs to secure a fair funding deal for the borough and commented upon the effects of further cuts in government funding. Finally, he noted that an announcement on the future of hospital services in the County was imminent. Whilst the Leader acknowledged the need for two well-resourced and well-maintained A&E facilities in the County, he reaffirmed the position of the PRH4Me Campaign that if there was to be only one, it should be co-located with the Women and Children's Unit in Telford.

39. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor reported on a number of engagements that she had attended since the last meeting of the Council. In particular, she thanked those who attended her Charity Launch on 30 July and highlighted her visit to the Telford Quakers Refugee Picnic which welcomed Refugees settled in Birmingham and her meetings with the Syrian Refugee family who had been settled in Telford. The Mayor reported that the Borough had a good reputation for the way the family had been settled locally.

40. Public Questions

No questions were received.

41. 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.

West Midlands Rail Collaboration Agreement

Councillor E J Carter asked whether the Cabinet Member agreed that collaboration was needed to make the International Rail Freight Terminal fit for purpose.

Councillor A D McClements responded that close working through meetings had already taken place; new personnel had recently become involved as it was important that the Council worked with all businesses, including the MOD. There was further work to be done and the Cabinet Member would keep Councillor Carter informed.

£20m Growth Fund – Investing in Telford's Growth

In response to a question from Councillor E J Carter, asking whether the hardwork of the Regeneration Partnership was recognised and whether the Leader saw a need to work closely with the Board, the Leader stated that he welcomed working together with anyone but that it should also be recognised that the purchase of the Enterprise Park had only been made possible by utilising Growth Fund monies.

Declaration of three New Local Nature Reserves: Apley Woods LNR, Ketley Paddock Mound LNR and The Beeches LNR

Councillor J A Francis asked whether the declaration of Ketley Paddock Mound as a Local Nature Reserve meant that the land would be exempt from building in perpetuity. Councillor R A Overton noted the Administration's intention to protect green space and confirmed that the land would be exempt from building work. He thanked the past local Ward Member, Amrik Jawar, who had previously worked with the Friends of Paddock Mound to seek protection for the land.

Article 4 Direction to Remove Permitted Development Rights for Conversion of Light Industrial Units to Residential

Councillor N A Dugmore asked how much land would be removed from development due to the implementation of the proposed Article 4 Direction. In response, Councillor R A Overton did not have the exact figure but noted that this report had been an extension to the previous proposed Article 4 Direction following a change in related government legislation and that it was subject to a period of consultation.

42. Recommendations from Cabinet

2016/17 Financial Management Report

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 new allocations, virements and slippage detailed in the report be approved;**
- (b) the draft Efficiency Strategy be approved and that delegated authority be granted to make final changes to reflect guidance and best practise as it continues to develop to the Managing Director after consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Council Finance & Service Delivery**

43. Questions

The following questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 6.2.2:-

- (a) Councillor Peter Scott asked the following question of Councillor Shaun Davies, Leader**

"Can the Leader of the Council update the Council on investments the Council is making in Newport?"

The Leader listed a number of investments:-

- The Acquisition of Audley Avenue Enterprise Park using the Council's £20m Growth Fund had secured the future of thirteen local employers and safeguarded 160 jobs.
- A Newport-specific bespoke package of incentives offered through the Enterprise Telford initiative.
- A £10m bid to government in conjunction with Harper Adams University to create an enterprise and science park on the edge of Newport which would include transport improvements to the A518 and A41. £1m of Council funds had been committed to the project. The Leader sought cross party support for the project together with support from the MP for The Wrekin.
- £0.5m investment into resurfacing roads
- £1.1m invested into Newport Pool refurbishment and health and fitness extension with a further £202K invested in new gym equipment for the facility
- Subject to planning approval, a Nuplace proposed to invest in 31 new affordable homes on land at Springfields.
- Refurbishment at the Toll House (£58.5K from Pride in Your High Street Funds)
- Enhancement of the existing Newport Heritage & Visitor Information Centre (£14,980)
- £10K to complement the Council's investment into Stafford Street Car Park which will deliver a full lighting and CCTV scheme.

Councillor Scott asked a supplementary question regarding positive and collaborative working between the opposition and administration and the Leader noted that Newport Town Council and Councillor Scott had worked with the administration but expressed his disappointment that the Main Opposition had not supported projects such as Pride in Your Community, Nuplace or the Growth Fund.

- (b) Councillor Stephen Bentley asked the following question of Councillor Angela McClements, Cabinet Member: Transport, Customer & Neighbourhood Services

“Whilst I welcome the opening of the new recycling facility on October 3rd, I would like to know if the administration is considering plans for future enhancements or improvements to our current collection regime.”

Councillor Angela McClements noted the positive response from all Councillors to the new facility which would be open 9am-5pm, 7 days per week, 362 days per year. This equated to 770 extra opening hours per year. In addition, the Veolia contract would deliver £30m savings over the life of the contract which was further enhanced by easier to use facilities in terms of the purple top bin, 150L recycling container and the ability to recycle black plastic.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Bentley asked if there was a public weighbridge on the site.

Councillor Angela McClements stated that there was a weighbridge but it was not public.

- (c) Councillor Stephen Bentley asked the following question of Councillor Gilly Reynolds, Cabinet Member: Education, Employment & Regeneration

“Does the cabinet member have concerns on the second consecutive rise in unemployment within the borough as reported in the Shropshire Star, or does she see this downturn as seasonal or related to other economic factors?”

Councillor Gilly Reynolds informed the meeting that the Council was making significant advances in tackling unemployment. The reported August increase of 1.8% on the previous month represented just 25 individuals and over the period June to July unemployment had fallen from 1710 to 1680 people so the August figures did not represent a second consecutive rise. Unemployment had fluctuated over the last seven months and there did not appear to be a trend or specific reason although it was possible that recent changes were due to young people leaving school/college or other studies. She highlighted the local Job Box initiative in proactively working to reduce unemployment.

Councillor Bentley asked what percentage of job losses related to skilled Labour. Councillor Reynolds responded that the figures quoted could be different people each month so it was not possible to say.

(d) Councillor Stephen Bentley asked the following question of Councillor Shaun Davies, Leader:

“I understand that a date of November 10th has been scheduled for scrutiny to review civil parking enforcement. This authority has reviewed this issue several times over the years, does the Leader not have the confidence to allow Cabinet to make this decision which would expedite the process?”

The Leader responded that he believed in the benefits of a cross party scrutiny review and was delighted that Scrutiny would review the issue in detail and report to the Cabinet with a full option appraisal of the benefits of Traffic Wardens in the Town. He noted that a number of Town and Parish Councils had opted to fund a PCSO for their area – PCSOs already possessed parking enforcement powers and could be tasked by their local Town or Parish Council to focus on specific ‘hot spots’. The Scrutiny review would take account of such arrangements. The Leader also noted that he had met with the Police & Crime Commissioner who had committed to provide some transitional funding if the Council agreed to take on Civil Parking Enforcement powers, an option which would not have been available without a full review. The Leader stated that he had confidence in the Cabinet and the work that all Members could play during the Scrutiny process.

Councillor Bentley asked a supplemental question regarding the expediency of such a process when the issue had already been debated many times and would contribute to resolutions for various types of anti-social behaviour.

The Leader noted the history of debate that Councillor Bentley referred to and noted that a report had been drafted during Councillor Bentley’s tenure as Cabinet Member in 2010 but that it had been deferred from the Cabinet Agenda on a number of occasions, and there had been no further work undertaken. The Leader welcomed the cross-party work which would now address the issue.

44. Notices of Motion

- (a) Councillor A J Eade moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

“This Council notes with extreme concern the recent reports concerning vulnerable children in Telford & Wrekin and calls on the current Administration to:-

Present a comprehensive plan at the November Full Council Meeting demonstrating a clear commitment to the improvement of Children’s Services and detail exactly how the Administration intends to raise all Children’s Services in the Borough to a minimum standard of ‘Good’.

Also to present to the same meeting, details of measures the current Administration will now introduce to ensure that vulnerable children in the Borough are fully protected in future and precisely how it will tackle the serious problems currently facing the Borough.”

Councillor T J Nelson seconded the Motion.

Following a lengthy debate and clarification that the Motion did not seek support for the commissioning of an Independent Inquiry, the motion was unanimously approved.

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved

- (b) Councillor R A Overton moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

“Council reaffirms its belief that it is important that a constituency based on the majority of Telford is essential for the Regional and National Profile of the Town

In the last review the Council opposed the proposals to create a Bridgnorth and Telford South constituency and a Telford North and The Wrekin constituency.

The Council’s proposals which were accepted (before the review was suspended) were for two constituencies as follows:-

- A Telford Constituency
- A Wrekin and Bridgnorth Constituency

Council agrees that this still represents the two constituencies that the voters of the Borough could identify with.”

Councillor A J Burford seconded the Motion.

Following a robust debate, the Motion was approved by a majority vote.

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved

The meeting ended at 7.39pm

Mayor:

Date: