

## BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

### Minutes of the Meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday, 21 September 2017 at 6.00pm at The Place, Oakengates, 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, 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, J A Francis, C A Furnival, E J Greenaway, K R Guy, M B Hosken, J Jones, R T Kiernan, A Lawrence, J Loveridge, N C Lowery, C N Mason, A D McClements, R Mehta, A A Meredith, 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 (Speaker), M J Smith, B D Tillotson, K T Tomlinson, 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 E A Clare, V A Fletcher, and R J Sloan

#### **36. Declarations of Interest**

Councillors A J Burford declared an interest in minute number 44(a) 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 S P Burrell declared an interest in minute number 44(a) 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.

#### **37. Minutes of the Council**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

#### **38. Leader's Report & Announcements**

The Leader remarked upon the civic reception which had taken place to honour the volunteers who came together as a community to support the DIY SOS Big Build earlier in the year at the Cooper family home. He commented upon the continuing Future Fit campaign and consultation on the modified Local Plan. He drew attention to the first 'Meet the Leader' event which had recently taken place and thanked the members of the public who had attended. He drew attention to recent investment in

road improvements. He also welcomed significant interest in the Leader and Cabinet Member's Young Person's Bursary Scheme, funded by voluntary reductions in Cabinet Member allowances, and he was delighted to confirm that the scheme would continue for a second year. He noted that the West Midlands Rail Franchise had recently been awarded to West Midlands Trains Ltd and looked forward to future discussions and continued improvement to the local rail network. He commented upon the temporary business rate relief which was due to be provide to local businesses, the ongoing success of Nu Place developments. Looking back at the excellent attendance at events held in the borough over recent months, he celebrated the return of the Panto and Christmas Market and upcoming Telford @ 50 events.

### **39. Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor referred to the excellent work he was seeing from the voluntary sector during his year in office. In particular he noted that he had been delighted to attend Telford & Wrekin Parkinson's Support Group Queen's Award Presentation and also the TACT Recovery Conference. He thanked supporters for backing his recent charity walk and was looking forward to his formal charity launch event on 29 September 2017.

### **40. Public Questions**

The following questions from the public had been received.

- (i) The following question to Cllr L D Carter, Cabinet Member: Finance, Commercial Services & Economic Development was submitted by Nick Gauden:

"Twenty-two authorities have adopted Additional Licencing to deal with unlicensed HMOs. Given that the Council's own research proves that many of the housing problems throughout the Borough gravitate to HMOs, why has Selective Licensing been proposed when Additional Licensing would solve many issues throughout the whole Borough?"

Cllr L D Carter, Cabinet Member: Finance, Commercial Services & Economic Development responded that the Council agreed that there were issues and that it was the correct and responsible thing to do to seek to address those issues to support the Administration's focus on making Telford & Wrekin the best place it can be to live, work & do business. To this end, the idea of Selective Licensing had been put out to consultation to seek the views of all stakeholders - not just on Selective Licensing but in addition to extract alternative ideas, solutions and suggestions.

The consultation had not just allowed that to happen, but had also enabled engagement with the local Landlords Association in a really constructive and purposeful way and allowed time for Council Officers to look at alternatives and best practice from across the region and country.

It was essential that the exercise resulted in a model which better educated landlords and tenants and offered better accreditation and incentives; built constructive and purposeful relationships with local and regional landlords and tenants associations,

maximised the benefits of the Council's influence on partner organisations such as local Registered Social Landlords and robustly enforced against poor standards and behaviour.

- (ii) The following question to Cllr R A Overton, Cabinet Member: Housing & Enforcement was submitted by Kelly Davies of Peter Richardson Estates Ltd:

“As a letting agent, we have noticed a significant rise in tenant evictions in recent months. This is primarily down to the benefit cap, tax changes and the potential introduction of Selective Licensing. How do the Council propose to deal with the homelessness issue as it continues to worsen?”

Cllr R A Overton, Cabinet Member: Housing & Enforcement responded that the Council would continue to monitor cases approaching to the homeless service and look at the reasons for homelessness. The Council would also continue to work proactively to prevent people becoming homeless in the first place.

Funding had recently been secured for two additional fixed term posts within the Housing Team to focus on preventing homelessness in key groups such as young people and those affected by domestic violence. Where this was not possible, the work would continue between Council services and with external partners, including private landlords to identify sustainable properties for homeless clients. Thoughts and ideas regarding ways to tackle these issues were welcomed from all partners.

- (iii) The following question to Cllr L D Carter, Cabinet Member: Finance, Commercial Services & Economic Development was submitted by Gillian Herbert-Jackson:

“Selective Licensing has NOT received cross party support. Scrutiny terms of reference state all meetings will be held in public and working group meetings are informal. When will the authority's proposals return to scrutiny and as policy condition 3, could landlords be co-opted in to supplement knowledge and clarify misunderstandings?”

Cllr L D Carter, Cabinet Member: Finance, Commercial Services & Economic Development responded that a definitive response was not possible due to the work that still needs to go into developing a policy that was robust and helped achieve the mutual aims of the Council, Landlords and Tenants.

However, the Council was committed to involving Landlords through the Wrekin Landlords Association (WLA) and appropriate regional Landlords association in the refining of proposals prior to them being presented further. This joint working had already been assured through a meeting held between the Cabinet Member and the WLA in August and which would be regularly followed up over the coming weeks and months.

The Cabinet Member noted that it would be down to the members of the relevant scrutiny committee to decide if the proposals need further scrutiny and the best way of scrutinising them, but he did not envisage a departure from their usual practice of engaging with stakeholders.

#### **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 Mercia Fire and Rescue Governance Proposals

The Speaker permitted Councillor E J Carter to make a statement which thanked all the Local Authorities involved for their support of Fire and Rescue Services. Although he noted that the PCC claimed a majority of consultation responses were in favour of the proposals, he felt that the proposals were unacceptable and hoped that common sense would prevail.

##### Telford & Wrekin Cycling and Walking Strategy

Councillor N A Dugmore asked why no long term strategy was in place.

Councillor A D McClements, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Broadband noted that the strategy was an ongoing piece of work, welcoming the short to medium term strategy and continued work towards a long term strategy.

Councillor T J Nelson asked what the budget percentage increase year on year would be for the ongoing maintenance of existing cycle and footpaths paths would be.

Councillor A D McClements, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Broadband responded that funding would be available from the £1m Pride in the Community fund and budget funds of £100K for rights of way.

Councillor S Bentley asked for an update on the proposed closure of Horton Lane and queried whether the Strategy included any reference towards respect being given by cyclists towards pedestrians.

Councillor A D McClements, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Broadband replied that the consultation on the closure of Horton Lane was ongoing; all account responses received would be taken into account but she was not yet in a position to provide an update. She also confirmed that the strategy included reference to the relationship between cyclists and pedestrians.

Councillor I T W Fletcher asked whether any consideration had been given to the timing of the light change on pedestrian crossings which was currently not very long and based on an old set of guidelines. .

Councillor A D McClements, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Broadband advised that LED reactive lights were in use but she was happy to take on any comments regarding the operation of lights at pedestrian crossings.

#### **42. Recommendations from Cabinet**

Cabinet – 13 July 2017

(i) 2017/18 Financial Management Report

Councillor L D Carter, Cabinet Member: Finance, Commercial Services & Economic Development, presented the report of the Assistant Director: zyx.

**RESOLVED that the changes to the capital programme in section 1 of the report be approved.**

(ii) Telford Land Deal

Councillor L D Carter, Cabinet Member: Finance, Commercial Services & Economic Development, presented the report of the Assistant Director: zyx.

**RESOLVED that –**

- (a) **delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director: Business, Development & Employment in consultation with Assistant Director: Finance & Human Resources and the Cabinet Member Council Finance, Commercial Services and Economic Development to consider the business case and determine the investment of the balance of the liability capital settlement as set out in section 6.2 of this report; and**
- (b) **delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director: Business, Development & Employment to undertake the investments following approval to the business case as set out in the report at 2.4.**

#### **43. Questions**

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

- (a) Councillor P J Scott asked the following question of Councillor A D McClements, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure & Broadband

"As Newport is now getting more and more housing developments built which will result in a lot more daily traffic with parking needs, have the council any plans either now or in the near future to improve the road infrastructure in and around the town and crucially expand the current Telford & Wrekin public car parks or provide any new car parks?"

Councillor A D McClements, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Broadband responded that the Council had been working closely with Newport Town Council and the Community Safety Partnership for a number of years with regards to the parking and traffic issues within Newport.

The Council had been successful in securing £6.3m from the Marches LEP to assist in delivering the Newport Innovation Park and wider housing and employment growth. This package included highway improvements to provide sufficient capacity on the A518 and A41 but also included £300,000 for Town Centre improvements to help reduce the impact of growth.

The package was being worked up in conjunction with the Town Council and included proposals such as reviewing issues in relation to school parking, reducing speed limits, addressing accident or speeding concerns through a range of measures and preventing issues of traffic particularly HGV's using unsuitable routes.

Subject to agreement by the Community Safety Partnership, the Council would engage in wider public consultation before delivery towards the end of 2017/18 and early 2018/19.

The work followed on from significant investment within Newport which included £730,000 into improving the condition of highways and footways in the Newport area. The Council had also delivered an improved layout on Stafford Street car park to maximise space along with additional cycle parking in the Town Centre.

The Council had worked on proposals with Newport Town Council to provide short stay parking in Stafford Street and New Street car parks. However, following consultation there was insufficient public support at that time for these measures. The Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Broadband was open to look at new ideas and solutions for providing car parking spaces in town centres and would be happy to meet again with Councillor Scott to further discuss the proposals, which could include looking at the successful Wellington model which had seen ticket machines installed to provide an improved system for managing enforcement together with a regular turnover of spaces.

#### **44. Notices of Motion**

- (a) Councillor S Davies moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

“The Council is disappointed by the decision of the CCGs to select a preferred option – of the Emergency Centre and Women & Children’s Centre at Shrewsbury to go out to consultation. This would see a down grading of our A&E department at the PRH to an Urgent Care Centre. It would also move the current consultant-led in-patient services available at our ‘state of the art’ Women & Children’s Centre in Telford to Shrewsbury.

This Council opposes the selection of this as the preferred option as it makes no sense to move the Women & Children’s Centre. It was built just 3 years ago, at a cost of £28m precisely because SaTH identified a clinical need for Telford – that clinical need has not changed and will not change in the future.

The preferred option is also the most costly and could limit further investment in community health services – keeping care closer to home and people out of hospital for as long as possible.

Furthermore, this option causes the most disruption with over 38,000 more journeys for patients living across Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire and Mid-Powys being affected under the preferred option compared to the alternative. The alternative is siting the Emergency Centre and Women & Children’s Centre at Telford.

**In the light of this, Telford & Wrekin is clear that its Preferred Option is both the Emergency Centre and existing Women & Children's Centre located at PRH**

With 33,000 residents signed up to PHR4me, this Council will keep campaigning and will do everything possible to encourage the residents of Telford and Wrekin to protect services at Telford's hospital."

Councillor R A Overton seconded the Motion.

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

**RESOLVED - that the motion be approved**

(b) Councillor S P Burrell moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

"This Council notes with deep concern that following the recent end of our £200M *Building Schools for the Future* programme, the Labour Administration's own report "*Local Places for Local Children*" forecasts a disastrous shortfall in Secondary School places in the Borough as soon as 2018.

Members are all aware of the need for Telford and Wrekin to offer the very best in secondary education to secure the future prosperity of young people and that of the Borough, instead of which this Council has let down pupils and parents alike.

The current Administration was given a once in a lifetime opportunity to provide secondary education in the Borough fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century instead of which, and despite repeated warnings, this Borough will run out secondary school places, special needs provision, and a promised 6<sup>th</sup> form provision at Newport.

**This Council demands an urgent and detailed report as to how new secondary school provision will now be funded to meet this disastrous short fall in school places, bearing in mind that: -**

- a) the current Labour Administration has woefully failed to collect any funding from housing developers between 2011 and 2016 to pay for additional secondary school provision.**
- b) spending between 2011 and 2017 by the current Labour Administration has resulted in both Council debt and Council borrowing quadrupling to record levels since taking control in 2011**

As a result of this huge failing and despite a new Cabinet Member being appointed to oversee this debacle; this Council has no confidence in the current arrangements and calls for an urgent inquiry to establish the causes of the Authority's failings."

Councillor A J Eade seconded the Motion

At the end of a robust and lengthy debate, a vote was taken on the motion put forward by Councillor Burrell which was LOST. In accordance with Committee

Procedure Rule 9.5, a recorded vote on the motion was taken, the voting being as follows:

*For (20)*

*Councillors J C Ashford, S L Barnes, S Bentley, M Boylan, S P Burrell, E J Carter, N A Dugmore, A J Eade, I T W Fletcher, J A Francis, E J Greenaway, M B Hosken, R T Kiernan, A Lawrence, N C Lowery, A A Meredith, T J Nelson, J M Seymour, B D Tillotson, and D G Wright*

*Abstentions (4)*

*K T Blundell, C A Furnival, K T Tomlinson and W L Tomlinson (3)*

*Against (27)*

*Councillors A J Burford, L D Carter, G H Cook, S Davies, A R H England, N A M England, R C Evans, K R Guy, J Jones, J Loveridge, C N Mason, A D McClements, R Mehta, J C Minor, L A Murray, R A Overton, J Pinter, G C W Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, S J Reynolds, H Rhodes, K S Sahota, P J Scott, C F Smith, M J Smith, C R Turley, and P R Watling*

**RESOLVED - that the motion not be approved**

(c) Councillor S Bentley moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

“This Council calls upon the Speaker to write a strongly worded letter on behalf of the Full Council to the Home Secretary Amber Rudd MP and Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice The Rt Hon David Lidington MP calling upon them to utilise their statutory powers to review sentences imposed on, particularly, individuals convicted of crimes which relate to child trafficking.”

Councillor P R Watling seconded the Motion.

Following legal advice and discussion regarding Ministerial responsibility, it was moved and seconded that the Motion be amended to replace the words “the Home Secretary Amber Rudd MP and Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice The Rt Hon David Lidington MP” with the words “the Government”.

It was unanimously:

**RESOLVED - that the amendment be approved**

Councillor S Bentley then moved the amended Motion, which was seconded by Councillor P R Watling and it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED - that the motion be approved**

The meeting ended at 8.01pm

**Mayor:** .....

**Date:** .....