

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of the Meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday, 22 November 2018 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, 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, M B Hosken, R T Kiernan, A Lawrence, J Loveridge, N C Lowery, C N Mason, A D McClements, R Mehta (Mayor), A A Meredith, L A Murray, T J Nelson, R A Overton, J Pinter, G C W Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, S J Reynolds, H Rhodes, P J Scott, J M Seymour, R J Sloan, C F Smith, M J Smith (Speaker), B D Tillotson, K T Tomlinson, W L Tomlinson, C R Turley, P R Watling and D G Wright

48. Prayers

The Reverend Keith Osmund-Smith said prayers.

49. Apologies for Absence

Councillors E A Clare, K R Guy, J Jones, J C Minor and K S Sahota.

50. Declarations of Interest

Councillors S Bentley declared an interest in minute number 57, Review of Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy, due to lottery sales at his place of employment and indicated that he would leave the room during determination of this item.

Councillors A J Burford, S P Burrell and R J Sloan declared an interest in minute number 59, Notice of Motion, due to their membership of the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and indicated that they would not take part in the debate and would abstain from the vote.

51. Minutes of the Council

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2018 and the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 29 October 2018 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

52. Leader's Report & Announcements

The Leader noted that it had been a busy and exciting time in the approach to Telford's 50th Birthday and drew attention to a number of recent achievements including winning the Association of Public Sector Excellence award for the Best Collaborative Working Initiative over the Telford Land Deal, a number of free events over the summer, financial support for five Town Councils as part of the legacy fund, investment through the Pride in Our Community Fund, Pride Fund supporting safety outside schools and promoting safer routes to schools, the imminent opening of the Telford Footbridge, and the work of the Find It, Fix It pot holes had resulted in better than average national roads according to the Department for Transport.

The Leader summarised recent efforts to help recruit staff to the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust whose A&E department in Telford had been facing overnight closure from December 2018, referring to a call on the Government to scrap pay caps for doctors and nurses, a meeting had taken place with the Indian Consul General to secure Commonwealth Doctors, resulting in a number of approaches from doctors in India, the Council was working on the creation of a Telford medical school to 'grow our own' doctors and nurses and in the words of a consultant anaesthetist, in a 'game changer' move, he was delighted to report that the community had come together to help in a Council-led project to refurbish doctors accommodation on the hospital site which would be offered free of charge to junior and middle grade doctors. The Leader thanked the volunteers, businesses, organisations and town and parish councils who had supported the project to help the Princess Royal Hospital recruit A&E doctors: Dave Roscoe, Emma Tilley, Paul Jones, Tony Pooler, Steve Cureton, Mary Lewis, Revive, TWS, Limetree Nurseries, Denso, Lovell Homes, Wrekin Housing Trust, Mitre, WSP and the Parish and Town Councils: Hadley & Leegomery, Great Dawley, Wellington, Wrockwardine Wood & Trench, Newport, Oakengates, St Georges & Priorslee and Dawley Hamlets.

The Leader looked forward to the Telford Community Pride Awards, the return of the European Christmas market and the repeat of some successful Telford 50 events. He also noted a continued commitment to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and welcomed the appointment of Eversheds Sutherland as the inquiry's independent Commissioning Body.

53. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor commented upon the engagements he had attended since the meeting on 20 September 2018, welcoming conferences at the TIC, opening the newly refurbished Odeon Cinema and Entertainer Store and launching further housing developments. He had supported fundraising events and awards ceremonies including Zac-fest and the Council's Hotshots Awards, and attended Telford 50 events. He continued his focus on his pledges for the year in support of the Building Bridges theme including visiting schools, nursing and residential homes across the borough. The Mayor's Telford 50 Art Competition had recently launched and attracted participation from a number of local schools. He looked ahead to upcoming events in support his charity - a golf day and Christmas Afternoon Tea - and expressed thanks to those who had supported him so far.

54. Public Questions

No questions were received.

55. 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. No questions were raised.

56. Recommendations from Cabinet

Cabinet – 15 November 2018

(i) 2018/19 Financial Management Report

Councillor L D Carter, Cabinet Member: Finance, Commercial Services and Economic Development, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance & HR (Chief Financial Officer).

RESOLVED that the changes to the capital programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

57. Review of Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy

In accordance with his declaration of interest, Councillor S Bentley left the room during determination of this item.

Councillor C R Turley, the Chair of Licensing Committee presented the Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy for the Gambling Act 2005 which was due for its 3 yearly review. Members of the Licensing Committee had considered the revised Statement of Licensing Principles following a recent consultation.

Councillor V A Fletcher referred to the Gambling Commission's recently published report summary on Children's Attitudes to Gambling which referred to increasing numbers of underage gambling in pubs and elsewhere and asked for the Licensing Committee Chair's comments on the report, what the position was regarding under age gambling in Telford and what action was being taken to prevent it. Councillor Turley indicated that he would provide a written response.

RESOLVED that the revised Statement of Licensing Principles for the Gambling Act 2005 be approved, to take effect from 31st January 2019 for the Borough of Telford & Wrekin.

58. Questions

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

- (a) Councillor P J Scott asked the following question of Councillor R A Overton, Communities, Housing and Enforcement

In Newport we now have many student let properties with up to 6 living in one house. This can mean that a minimum of 6 vehicles need to be parked there during the day or night. Many of the residential roads in Newport already have a severe parking issue especially with poor pavement parking. There needs to be something added to the Landlord Accreditation Scheme that can help us.

Can the council do anything to control the numbers of student lets on residential streets and can the landlord be made to accommodate cars being parked only on their own driveways and garage areas?

Councillor Overton responded that Harper Adams was a growing university which was welcomed however the Council must help create conditions where students and residents could live well together

The Council recognised that under planning legislation dwellings could be converted to provide accommodation for up to 6 people provided they lived as a

single household, without the need for a planning application. If however more than 6 people were accommodated planning consent would be required and the Council would be able to consider material planning matters including planning policy, levels of parking and amenity.

The majority of the student accommodation referred to had been converted without the need for permission from the Local Authority. The only way to require a planning application would be through the removal of permitted development rights, through an Article 4 direction. However in making such a direction, there must be significant evidence for the identified need, demonstrating to the Secretary of State the evidence of harm.

However as the Government continued to drive the delivery of a wide variety of homes, increasing permitted development rights for changes of use to dwellings, required the Council to have a robust case; as such the Council continued to gather evidence to identify the harm in order to justify the removal of such permitted rights and the Cabinet Member would keep members informed of progress regarding this opportunity.

Additionally, the Council had given a commitment to apply in the New Year to adopt Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) powers from the police. One of the options that would come with CPE powers was the potential to consider implementing residential permit parking schemes. In the longer term this may offer a partial solution to Councillor Scott's concerns in Newport.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Scott sought the attendance of a Council representative at a future meeting of Newport Town Council to discuss the issue and Councillor Overton indicated that he would be pleased to attend.

- (b) Councillor P J Scott asked the following question of Councillor R A Overton, Communities, Housing and Enforcement

The whole borough continues to have a dog fouling problem which is currently managed by TWS, the single dog warden and volunteers. Going forward it looks like we lose the Dog Warden and that dog fouling will slip into the margins of the new idVerde contract.

I have spent the last 2 years working to highlight and deal with the dog fouling problems in Newport and other volunteers elsewhere have done a great job too.

Can we be confident that dog fouling and stray dogs will be dealt with properly under the new contract and will the Council commit to keeping at least one dog warden in the borough area?

In response, Councillor Overton acknowledged the excellent work the current Dog Warden undertook around the Borough and thanked Councillor Scott and all the volunteers for their efforts in raising awareness of dog fouling, which was a crime and continued to be an unwanted feature on the environment.

The Dog Warden Service had been part of the Environmental Maintenance Services Contract which had been delivered by TWS Ltd since 2001. The role of the Dog Warden had been to deal with stray dogs, either by safely returning them to their owners or transporting stray dogs to kennels. The Dog Warden Service

was not originally designed to address dog fouling, serve Fixed Penalty Notices or provide an education and awareness service. That said, the Dog Warden had worked with Councillors, Parishes and volunteers as and when requested.

Councillor Overton stressed that dog fouling would not slip into the margins of the new Grounds & Cleansing contract. On the contrary, removal of dog fouling from the landscape, was integral in the new improved service standards and would be addressed more effectively.

The original Dog Warden Service was put in place due to the many hundreds of reported stray dogs across the Borough. This was before micro chipping of all domestic dogs became lawful. Councillor Overton was pleased to say the numbers of reported stray dogs had reduced dramatically year on year from 480 in 2014 to only 75 in the first half of this year. This equated to less than 3 stray dogs a week.

Due to this dramatic drop off in numbers, the Council had considered various options and was tendering for a dedicated Stray Dog service which would include the collection and kennelling of stray dogs. This would be a more cost effective solution and was separate to the new Grounds & Cleansing Contract. The call off service reflected the low numbers of reported stray dogs since the Council no longer needed a dedicated Dog Warden.

The Council would continue to use all its enforcement powers and resources to target dog fouling hotspots and would continue to use issue Fixed Penalty to the few who blighted the community. This Council also provided over 1million free dog poo bags every year to the community so there was no excuse for people not to clean up their dogs' mess.

59. Notice of Motion

With the consent of the seconder and in light of the recent announcement that the proposed overnight closure of the Accident and Emergency Department at Princess Royal Hospital would not go ahead, Councillor A J Eade withdrew the motion of no confidence in the leadership of SaTH or Future Fit.

The meeting ended at 6.46pm

Mayor:

Date: