

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

Minutes of a meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday, 1 March, 2012 at 6.30 p.m. at the Civic Offices, Telford.

PRESENT:

Councillors M.J. Smith (Mayor), R.K. Austin, S. Bentley, K.T. Blundell, F.M. Bould, S.P. Burrell, E.J. Carter, E.A. Clare, S. Davies, B.H. Duce, A.J. Eade, C.B.A. Elliott, A.R.H. England, N.A.M. England, R.C. Evans, I.T.W. Fletcher, V.A. Fletcher, G.M. Green, E.J. Greenaway, K.R. Guy, M.G. Ion, A.S. Jhavar, A. Lawrence, J. Loveridge, A.A. Mackenzie, C.N. Mason, A.D. McClements, W.A.M. McClements, A.A. Meredith, J.C. Minor, C.P.R. Mollett, L.A. Murray, R.A. Overton, F.R. Picken, S.A.W. Reynolds, H. Rhodes, K.S. Sahota (Leader), R.G. Scammell, J.M. Seymour, R.J. Sloan, C.F. Smith, A.J. Stanton, B.J. Thompson, K.L. Tomlinson, W.L. Tomlinson, C.R. Turley, P.R. Watling and D.R.W. White.

84. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 19 January, 2012, be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

85. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors D.G. Davies, N.A. Dugmore, T.J. Hope, M.B. Hosken, R.T. Kiernan and G.C.W. Reynolds.

86. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor E.J. Greenaway declared a personal interest in agenda item 7, Financial Monitoring Report.

Councillor C.B.A. Elliott declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 8, Appendices E1 & E2, Overview & Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.

Councillor R.C. Evans declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 8, Appendices E1 & E2, Overview & Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.

Councillor V.A. Fletcher declared a personal interest in agenda item 10, resolved minutes of Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee.

87. LEADER'S REPORT & ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Announcements

The Leader presented a certificate of achievement to representatives from Redhill school. Kate Clark (Head Teacher), Mandy Ward (Deputy Head) and Michelle Sedgebeer, together with pupils from the school received the award. The school, in partnership with Makololwe Primary school, Kenya, had created a 'World in our School' cookbook. Proceeds from the sale of the book had raised £428 which had been sent to Makololwe school as a contribution to improve sanitary provision at the school. The project celebrated the cultural and ethnic diversity within Redhill Primary school, and raised awareness of the many causes of food insecurity around the world. The Leader invited Councillor V.A. Fletcher to speak about the

project. Councillor Fletcher, Ward Member and school governor, told Members that the Fairtrade and Executive Committees, staff, governors, parents and children had all worked extremely hard to make the project a success.

b) Leader's Report

The Leader told Members that the current year's budget had been the most difficult ever. He specifically thanked the Finance team for their exceptional hard work and more widely, paid tribute to the Council's valued workforce. He asked Members to note the highest ever number of responses to the budget consultation and commended the prudent and sustainable budget strategy which would be debated later in the meeting.

A letter had been sent to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, informing him of the unique financial challenges facing the Borough.

88. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Mayoral Engagements

The Mayor briefly updated Members on his recent engagements.

89. 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 on 19 January, 2012.

90. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET

23 February, 2012, 2011/12 Financial Monitoring Report

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report (Appendix D) of the Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance which showed overall revenue spending projected to be within approved budgets and provided an update on progress on capital programme spending. The report also highlighted some new capital allocations, virements slippage and accelerated schemes which required formal approval by Council.

It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the changes to the Capital programme shown in section 1 of the report be approved.

Prior to discussion of the following item Councillors C.B.A. Elliott and R.C. Evans left the room.

91. SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING 2012/13-2014-15

(A) Service & Financial Planning 2012/13 – 2014/15 – Overview & Revenue Budget

Prior to discussion of this item the Chief Executive reminded Members that section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, placed limitations on voting on the setting of Council Tax for the forthcoming year by any Member who was at least 2 months in arrears in the payment of outstanding Council Tax. Any Member in this situation would also be required to disclose the fact that this section of the Act applied to them. No disclosures were made by Members.

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Managing Director, Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance which sought approval of the Service & Financial Planning strategy (Appendix E1) for the period 2012/13 – 2014/15, including specific 2012/13 budget proposals and saving and capital investment plans for all three years, as recommended by Cabinet at its meeting on 23rd February, 2012. The report, together with those covering the Capital Programme (Appendix E2), the Treasury Management Strategy (Appendix E3), and the Prudential Indicators (Appendix E4) formed the overall Medium Term Service & Financial Planning framework for the Council.

In summary, key proposals were:

- In line with the responses to the consultation exercise, the report proposed an increase in the level of council tax of 2.5% in 2012/13. It is also proposed to plan on the basis of increases at this level for the remainder of the term of this Council. This would ensure that the financial position and ability of the Council to deliver services was more sustainable than the short-term alternative of taking a one-off grant from the Government which would otherwise force greater cuts or a higher council tax increase in 2013/14.
- Implementation of the further reductions to the number of senior managers recently consulted upon and continuation of the organisation wide restructuring and service review process currently underway which will see budgets cut by 20% in most parts of the Council although the actual level of savings would vary between different services. Staffing budgets would have been reduced by over £17m and non-staff savings proposals included in the report totalled over £21m over the three year period.
- To protect the adult social care budget by reinvesting savings of £2.5m back in to adult social care services.
- To continue the Council's investment commitment in key infrastructure projects such as new and improved schools and the regeneration of Telford Town Centre as well as some new investment in Brookside.

- To suspend the contribution to the single status provision until implementation which is planned for 2014/15.

Councillor McClements outlined the consultation process, discussing areas where changes had been proposed but had been withdrawn following consultation feedback. The Borough was already a low Council Tax authority which meant that cutting costs was more difficult. The government's unprecedented cuts in funding and 'damping' of grants available, significant capital debt repayments and low levels of reserves contributed to making this the most difficult budget setting ever faced by the Borough.

Councillor A.J. Eade, leader of the Conservative group, told Members that. He accepted these were difficult times but that there was no excuse for a Council Tax increase. He felt that this would have an impact on the local economy and felt that the consultation exercise had been flawed. He disagreed with a number of proposed service cuts and elements of the capital strategy and would not support the budget proposals.

Councillor W.L. Tomlinson, leader of the Liberal Democrat/Independent group believed that the level of cuts imposed on local government was too high and was being implemented too quickly. He was generally in agreement with the budget and accepted an increase in Council Tax with a heavy heart as there was no guarantee of what level of grant the Council would receive in future years.

A number of other Members spoke both for and against the proposed budget.

Councillor McClements, in response, told Members that the consultation process had been an open and honest process and carried out to a high standard. He was unhappy that there had been some suggestion that the process was flawed and that persons in receipt of benefits should not have their views heard in any consultation on the budget. Referring to the offer of a £1.4m grant from government, he pointed out that Members should note that last year this same grant had been £5.6m. The main opposition group had not submitted an alternative budget but he did not believe that the limited proposals made during debate were sustainable. Councillor McClements moved that the budget and Council Tax resolution proposals be approved.

A recorded vote was requested on the budget and the formal resolution of Council Tax, voting was as follows:

For: Councillors: Austin, Blundell, Bould, Clare, S Davies, Duce, A England, N England, Green, Guy, Ion, Jhavar, Loveridge, Mackenzie, Mason, A McClements, W. McClements, Minor, Murray, Overton, Picken, S Reynolds, Rhodes, Sahota, Sloan, C Smith, M Smith, Thompson, K Tomlinson, W Tomlinson, Turley, Watling & White (33)

Against: Councillors: Bentley, Burrell, Carter, Eade, I Fletcher, V Fletcher, Greenaway, Lawrence, Meredith, Mollett, Scammell, Seymour & Stanton (13)

Absent: Councillors: Elliot & Evans (2)

It was:

RESOLVED that:

- 2.1 The base budget summarised by Service Delivery Unit in Appendix 1**
- 2.2 An increase of 2.5% in council tax levels in 2012/13 (41 pence per week for the average property in the Borough) and a strategy of increasing council tax by 2.5% in future budgets set by the current Administration in order to maintain financial stability and to protect the delivery of front-line services.**
- 2.3 The reinvestment of £2.5m savings from Adult Social Care to offset service pressures being faced by Adult Social Care services in 2012/13 and the release of £0.9m from the proposed corporate inflation contingency in line with the savings proposals included in 2.5. This will set the corporate inflation contingency for 2012/13 at £2.5m**
- 2.4 To consider the feedback from consultation summarised in Appendix 11 and from scrutiny in Appendix 9**
- 2.5 The 2012/13 net savings package of £8.899m (£9.48m gross) from non-staffing budgets and £8.158m (£9.59m gross) from staffing budgets detailed in Appendices 4, 5 and 6 and the savings proposals set out in these appendices for future years.**
- 2.6 The planned savings targets in future years detailed in Appendices 3, 4 and 5.**
- 2.7 The earmarking of the projected one-off funding transfer of £3m as outlined in section 4.3 from the Primary Care Trust (PCT) anticipated to be received in 2011/12 to support the Adult Social Care budget on a one-off basis in 2012/13 following the transfer of significant costs relating to Continuing Health Care cases to the Council from the PCT.**
- 2.8 The earmarking of £2.145m underspends and savings delivered ahead of schedule in 2011/12 as a one-off budget contingency for use in 2012/13. This amount may be increased further should the Council underspend at the end of 2011/12 as currently projected.**
- 2.9 The suspension of the contribution to the single status provision until 2014/15 with an ongoing reduction to this budget of £0.9m to offset the cost of the elimination of fixed point grades and to recognise the reduction in the size of the workforce following organisational restructuring.**
- 2.10 The Education budget position set out in section 4.11**
- 2.11 The statement of the Chief Finance Officer in paragraph 6 (supported by Appendix 8 outlining the robustness of the Budget Estimates and the Adequacy of Reserves.)**
- 2.12 The policy framework for Reserves and Balances outlined in Appendix 8**

- 2.13 The use of £1.39m general balances to support the ongoing revenue budget in 2012/13
- 2.14 The earmarking of £0.25m of the General Fund balance as a reserve to support greater flexibility in the working of leisure services.
- 2.15 The revenue implications of the medium term capital programme for the period 2012/13 – 2014/15 set out in the Capital Programme report also on this agenda.
- 2.16 To confirm the council's priorities as set out in section 4.5 of this report and note that the Council Plan will be brought to cabinet for consideration during March.

Service & Financial Planning 2011/12 – 2014/5: Capital Programme

- p) That the report (Appendix E2) and associated capital estimates and variations for 2010/11 and 2012/13 - 2014/15, which incorporated the Capital Strategy, the Capital Programme (Annex I), the Planned Building Maintenance Programme (Annex II), Asset Management Plan (Annex III) and the three year Highways & Transport capital investment programme (Annex IV) be approved;

2012/13 Treasury Strategy and Treasury Update Report

- r) That the treasury management activities for the first half of the year be noted and that the updated Treasury Management Strategy Policy Statement (Appendix A) be agreed and that the Treasury Strategy, including the Annual Investment Strategy for 2012/13 together with the associated treasury Prudential Indicators and the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement be approved.

Prudential Indicators

- s) That the Prudential Indicators proposed in the report (Appendix E4), be approved as part of setting the budget for 2012/13.

(B) Council Tax – Formal Resolution for 2012/13

The Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Chief Financial Officer & Assistant Director: Finance, Audit & Information Governance which sought approval of the appropriate formal resolutions to determine the levels of Council Tax for Telford & Wrekin Council for 2012/13. The Localism Act 2011 had made significant changes to the Local Government Finance Act 1992; the authority was now required to set a Council Tax requirement for the year and not its budget requirement as had been the case previously.

The Council Tax base had been determined at the Council meeting held on 19th January 2012 and, following approval of the Council's General and Special Fund budgets for 2012/13 the Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, moved approval of the appropriate resolutions (Appendix E5) to formally set Council Tax levels throughout the area for the spending requirements of Telford & Wrekin Council, West Mercia Police Authority, Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority and the Parish and Town Councils.

Following a debate on the budget and on this item, a recorded vote was taken on approval of the budget and of the Council Tax resolution together, the result of the vote being shown above 83(A) and it was:

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that at its meeting on 19 January 2012 the Council calculated the following amounts for the year 2012/13 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (The Act):-

- (a) **51,345.1 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (The Regulations), as its Council Tax base for the year (The Council Tax Base).**

(b) **Part of the Council's Area
Tax Base**

The Parish of:-

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Chetwynd | 242.6 |
| Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote | 163.9 |
| Church Aston | 493.4 |
| Dawley Hamlets | 2,109.4 |
| Edgmond | 533.8 |
| Ercall Magna | 616.2 |
| The Gorge | 1,248.4 |
| Great Dawley | 3,211.6 |
| Hadley & Leegomery | 4,217.4 |
| Hollinswood & Randlay | 1,559.1 |
| Ketley | 1,182.6 |
| Kynnersley | 75.6 |
| Lawley & Overdale | 2,185.8 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Lilleshall, Donnington & Muxton | 4,507.7 |
| Little Wenlock | 232.6 |
| Madeley | 4,848.2 |
| Newport | 3,686.8 |
| Oakengates | 2,506.3 |
| Preston | 95.3 |
| Rodington | 347.4 |
| St. Georges & Priorslee | 3,858.5 |
| Stirchley & Brookside | 2,730.2 |
| Tibberton & Cherrington | 281.1 |
| Waters Upton | 392.4 |
| Wellington | 6,931.6 |
| Wrockwardine | 1,442.4 |
| Wrockwardine Wood & Trench | 1,608.7 |
| | 51,309.0 |

being the amounts calculated by the Council in accordance with Regulation 6 of The Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

3.2. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2012/13 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of The Act:-

- (a) £414,101,082 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act, taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
- (b) £353,230,382 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act.
- (c) £60,870,700 being the amount by which the aggregate at 3.2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3.2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year.
- (d) £1,185.52 being the amount at 3.2(c) above divided by the Council Tax base, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including

parish precepts and special items).

- (e) £3,782,892 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- (f) £1,111.84 being the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates (calculated by deducting from the amount at 3.2(d) above, the quotient of the amount at 3.2(e) above divided by the Council Tax Base). The only area that this relates to is the Parish of Eyton.

| (g) <u>Part of the Council's Area</u> | £ |
|---------------------------------------|----------|
| The Parish of: | |
| Chetwynd | 1,126.26 |
| Chetwynd Aston & Woodcote | 1,142.34 |
| Church Aston | 1,147.91 |
| Dawley Hamlets (SF2*) | 1,149.16 |
| Edgmond | 1,136.88 |
| Ercall Magna | 1,159.38 |
| The Gorge (SF2*) | 1,189.42 |
| Great Dawley (SF2*) | 1,215.96 |
| Hadley & Leegomery | 1,176.19 |
| Hollinswood & Randlay | 1,239.52 |
| Ketley | 1,206.36 |
| Kynnersley | 1,129.06 |
| Lawley & Overdale (SF1*) | 1,169.18 |
| Lilleshall, Donnington & Muxton | 1,156.76 |
| Little Wenlock | 1,159.13 |
| Madeley (SF2*) | 1,207.24 |
| Newport | 1,217.24 |
| Oakengates (SF2*) | 1,217.67 |
| Preston | 1,119.18 |
| Rodington | 1,138.58 |
| St. Georges & Priorslee (SF1*) | 1,148.28 |
| Stirchley & Brookside(SF2*) | 1,238.39 |
| Tibberton & Cherrington | 1,125.18 |
| Waters Upton | 1,143.95 |
| Wellington (SF2*) | 1,184.13 |
| Wrockwardine | 1,143.03 |
| Wrockwardine Wood & Trench (SF1*) | 1,177.89 |

**SF1 indicates a parish in the special fund area which has taken over responsibility for footway lighting. An additional charge is made for cemeteries.*

****SF2 indicates a parish in the special fund area which has not taken over responsibility for footway lighting. An additional charge is made for both cemeteries and footway lighting.***

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 3.2(f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 3.1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- (h) The amounts in Appendix 1 being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 3.2(f) and 3.2(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

4. The West Mercia Police Authority's precept for 2012/13 was set at its meeting on 14 February 2012. The following amounts were stated in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

| <u>Valuation Band</u> | <u>Amount</u> £ |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| A | 119.15 |
| B | 139.00 |
| C | 158.86 |
| D | 178.72 |
| E | 218.44 |
| F | 258.15 |
| G | 297.87 |
| H | 357.44 |

5. The Shropshire & Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority's precept for 2012/13 was set at its meeting on 13 February 2012. The following amounts were stated in

precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

| <u>Valuation</u> <u>Band</u> | <u>Amount</u> <u>£</u> |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| A | 57.95 |
| B | 67.61 |
| C | 77.27 |
| D | 86.93 |
| E | 106.25 |
| F | 125.57 |
| G | 144.88 |
| H | 173.86 |

6. That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 3.2(i) and 4 and 5 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, hereby sets the amounts in Appendix 2 as the amounts of council tax for the year 2012/13 for each of the categories of dwellings shown.

Prior to discussion of the following item Councillors C.B.A. Elliott and R.C. Evans returned to the room.

92. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOARDS & COMMITTEES

- i) Personnel Board 13 February 2012

Pay Policy Statement

The Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report of the Assistant Director: Customer & People Services (attached at Appendix F1) which sought approval for the content and format of the Council's first Pay Policy statement for publication on the Council's website on 1st April 2012, in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act.

The statement was required to detail the Council's policies in respect of remuneration of defined Senior Officers within the Council and pay comparisons with lower paid employees.

RESOLVED - That Council agree the content and format of the Council's first Pay Policy statement for publication on the Council's website on 1st April 2012, in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act.

ii) Council Constitution Committee 21 February 2012

Constitution Update

The Leader of the Council presented the report of the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection which sought approval for changes to the Council's constitution following completion of the senior management restructure. The changes related to Article 12 (designations of statutory officers), Part 4 Rules of Procedure (Officer Employment procedure rules) and to Part 11c (Responsibility for Functions list).

RESOLVED:-

The changes to Article 12 of the Constitution, designations of statutory officers, as shown in annex A of the report be approved;

The changes to Part 4 – Rules of Procedure – Section 1 Officer Employment Procedure Rules, as shown within Annex B of the report be approved;

The minor change to Part 11c – Responsibility for Functions List of Powers Exercisable by Officers, as shown in Annex C of the report be approved.

The Assistant Director, Law, Democracy and Public Protection as Monitoring Officer be delegated authority to update the constitution, deleting references to Heads of Service and replacing with Assistant Directors and to make any other minor administrative changes as required.

iii) Audit Committee 31 January 2012

Speak-Up Policy

The Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the revised Speak-Up Policy which served to support the Council's Anti-Fraud & Corruption Policy.

RESOLVED - That the Speak-Up Policy be approved

93. MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Council noted the resolved minutes of the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee 24 January, 2012

94. QUESTIONS

The following Questions were asked in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10:

a) Councillor K.R. Guy had submitted the following question:

“Can the Cabinet member for Resources & Service Delivery confirm when the main opposition group submitted their alternative budget for 2012/13 and what the process is for evaluating their proposals?”

Councillor W.A.M. McClements replied that the main opposition group had declined to submit an alternative budget

b) Councillor C.R. Turley had submitted the following question:

“Can the Deputy Leader of the Council explain the latest position on stabilisation work in The Gorge and whether we intend to write a blank cheque for the works to be carried out?”

Councillor R.A. Overton told Members that there was no blank cheque. The Council recognised the importance of the site and was working with DCLG to find a way forward.

c) Councillor S.A.W. Reynolds had submitted the following question:

“Can the Cabinet Member for Resources & Service Delivery state what is the true position on useable reserves?”

Councillor McClements that this was £3.7m, 3% of net budget and shown on page 2 of the budget report.

In response, Councillor Reynolds said the the leader of the opposition group had previously stated that £5m of reserves had been used, would the Cabinet Member confirm the correct figure?

Councillor McClements responded that £1.39m was the true figure.

d) Councillor A.S. Jhavar had submitted the following question:

“Can the Cabinet member for the co- operative council list the members of the opposition parties in the Council who are currently members of the co-operative commission?”

Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Co-operative Council & Partnerships, replied that formal and informal invitations had been extended no members of the Conservative group had accepted the invitations. He thanked Councillor W.L. Tomlinson, leader of the Liberal Democrat/Independent group for his support for the commission.

e) Councillor R.C. Evans had submitted the following question:

“Can the Cabinet member for Resources & Service Delivery explain what the true figure for the debt of the council will be for 2012/13 and 2013/14 and what it would have been had the administration implemented the plans of the opposition?”

Councillor McClements replied that the figure would have been £12m next year and £17m the following year.

f) Councillor M.G. Ion had submitted the following question:

“Can the Cabinet Member for Children Young people & Families tell us when the Director of Children's Services post will be advertised and when it is anticipated that an appointment will be made “

Councillor P.R. Watling replied that the role would be advertised nationally in the forthcoming week with a closing date for applications of 23 March.”

95. NOTICES OF MOTION

(a) Councillor I.T.W. Fletcher, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, moved the following Motion:

“This Council applauds the lead taken by Shropshire Council with their adoption of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and notes the benefits that would be gained by our own Authority and local communities that include:

- delivery of additional funding for T&W to carry out a wide range of infrastructure projects that support growth and benefit the local community.
- gives the local community flexibility and freedom to set their own priorities for what the money should be spent on.
- ensures greater transparency for local people who will be able to understand how new development is contributing to their community
- enables local authorities to allocate a share of the levy raised in a neighbourhood to deliver infrastructure the neighbourhood wants.

Consequently this Council resolves to adopt the CIL as a priority and further resolves that up to and including adoption, 50% of any Section 106 monies are allocated to projects determined in conjunction with the Local community in which development takes place.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor A.J. Eade.

The Mayor told Members that the subject matter of the motion came within the province of Cabinet or another committee, and that upon being moved and seconded, could be referred to Cabinet or the appropriate committee.

The Mayor, under procedure rule 11.6 of part 4 Rules of Procedure referred the motion to Cabinet without further debate.

It was:

RESOLVED – that the Motion be referred to Cabinet without further debate.

The meeting ended at 8.50 p.m.

Speaker:

Date:

MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS
21 FEBRUARY 2012 – 20 APRIL 2012

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|---|--|
| March | 3rd | M | Young Enterprise Trade Fair at Dean's Square, Telford |
| | 4th | DM | Lilleshall & Donnington Parish Council Civic Service at St Matthew's Road, Donnington |
| | | M | Service to Celebrate the Administration of Justice in the Black Country at St Peter's Collegiate Church, Wolverhampton |
| | 8th | M | West Mercia Ambulance Service Awards, Telford International Centre |
| | 9th | M | Wolverhampton Rhino's Basketball Tournament at Telford College of Arts and Technology |
| | 10th | DM | Wolverhampton Rhino's Basketball Tournament at Telford College of Arts and Technology |
| | 11th | M | Shropshire Council Chairman's Civic Service at Shrewsbury Abbey |
| | 14th | DM | Health Promotion for Young People at New College, Wellington |
| | | M | Telford and Wrekin Music Showcase |
| | 17th | M | Home-Start Telford and Wrekin Fundraising Event at Asda, Donnington |
| | 18th | M | High Sheriff's Lunch/Legal Service at Shrewsbury School, Shrewsbury |
| | 20th | M | The Best of Telford Awards at The Shropshire, Muxton |
| | 23rd | M | South Staffordshire Civic Dinner at Chillington Hall |
| | 24th | M | Shrewsbury Town Council Mayor's Charity Ball at Albright Hussey Manor Hotel |
| 26th | M | ASDA Funding Re-Launch "Community Life" at Telford town Centre, Telford | |
| 27th | M | Mayor of Wolverhampton's Charity Dining Experience at the Bilash, Wolverhampton | |

- 31st** **M** Ofsted Result Open Day and Celebration Event at Busy Bees Childcare, Priorslee
- DM** Mayor of Wellington's Charity Dinner and Dance at Telford College of Arts and Technology
- M** 150th Anniversary of Telford Orchestra – Celebratory Concert at Centenary Theatre, Wrekin College, Wellington
- April**
- 2nd** **M** Wellington, Hadley & Leegomery Churches Together "Frugal Lunch" at Wellington Methodist Church
- 5th** **M** University of Wolverhampton Spring Graduation Ceremony at the Grand Theatre, Wolverhampton
- 12th** **M** Official Opening of Much Wenlock Museum, High Street, Much Wenlock
- M** Age UK Grand Opening of Khusdil Day Centre, Hadley Sikh Temple, Hadley Park Road, Hadley
- 15th** **M** 100th Birthday Presentation to Jane Hitchin at The Horseshoes, Holyhead Road, Ketley
- M** RBL Jackfield Branch Annual Church Parade at St Mary's Church, Jackfield
- 17th** **M** Home Start Table Top Sale Fundraising Event at Jungleland, Trench Lock, Telford
- M** Photoshoot with Hadley Orpheus Choir at Elcocks Bus Depot, Wellington
- 18th** **DM** Sanctuary Housing "Promoting Health in the Community" Event at Hartshorne Court, Burton Street, Dawley
- M** South Staffordshire Chairman's Civic Luncheon at Dunsley Hall Hotel, Kinver
- 19th** **M** Wolverhampton City Council Charity Race Evening at Wolverhampton Racecourse
- 20th** **M** Telford & Shropshire Asian Business Association Launch Event at Holiday Inn, St Quentin Gate, Telford

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

COUNCIL – 3 MAY 2012

REPORT OF CABINET – FOR INFORMATION ONLY

MATTERS DETERMINED BY THE CABINET

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report sets out those matters determined by the Cabinet at its meetings on 23rd February 2012 and 29th March 2012.

2.0 CABINET BUSINESS

Matters that have been determined by Cabinet are listed below:

2.1 23rd February 2012

- 2.1.1 Financial Monitoring 2011/12
- 2.1.2 Service & Financial Planning 2012/13 to 2014/15
- 2.1.3 Six Month Performance Report
- 2.1.4 Family and Friends Policy
- 2.1.5 Waste Management Procurement Options Appraisal
- 2.1.6 School Organisation – Jigsaw School
- 2.1.7 Dawley Town Hall – Investment for Community Use
- 2.1.8 Co-operative Approach to Working with the Community
- 2.1.9 Sutton Hill Local Centre – Land Disposal

2.2 29th March 2012

- 2.2.1 Co-operative Council Commissions
- 2.2.2 Playing Pitch Strategy 2012
- 2.2.3 Adoption of the World Heritage Site Public Realm Guide
- 2.2.4 Amendment to the Article 4(2) Direction in the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site/Severn Gorge Conservation Area
- 2.2.5 Civic Offices Site – Update and Appropriation
- 2.2.6 NHS Transformation – Update
- 2.2.7 Public Health Update
- 2.2.8 LINK and Healthwatch Transition
- 2.2.9 Shadow Health & Wellbeing Board Governance
- 2.2.10 Adult Social Care Local Account
- 2.2.11 A new First Point Service in Libraries
- 2.2.12 Apprenticeships and Internships
- 2.2.13 Motion Referred from Council
- 2.2.14 Building Schools for the Future – Contractors' Framework Procurement Approval
- 2.2.15 Accommodation Investment and Acquisition of Property

3.0 DELEGATION OF POWERS GRANTED BY THE CABINET

| REPORT HEADING | DELEGATION GRANTED TO | DETAIL OF DELEGATION GRANTED |
|---|---|--|
| Service & Financial Planning 2012/13 to 2014/15 | Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing and Assistant Director: Environmental & Leisure Services | To delivery the planned programme of works within the Asset Management Plan To deliver the Highways and Transport capital investment programme in line with the approved budgets within any variations or changes to schemes in these programmes, that remain within overall approved budgets, after consultation with the appropriate Cabinet members. |
| Dawley Town Hall – Investment for Community Use | Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing and Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection | In consultation with the Cabinet Member: Environment, Co-operative Council & Partnerships, to negotiate and agree terms of an appropriate lease for Dawley Town Hall with the Dawley Regeneration Partnership or Dawley Town Hall Community Trust To execute any documents necessary to give effect to the above recommendations |
| Co-operative Approach to Working with the Community | Community Engagement, Equalities and Action Manager | In consultation with the relevant ward member, to approve and implement applications for funding from the Ward Co-operative Fund |
| Sutton Hill Local Centre – Land Disposal | Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection | In consultation with the Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development, to carry out all steps necessary to facilitate disposal of the sites and negotiate and finalise the terms of the transactions required To execute all legal documentation and take all steps necessary to give effect to the recommendations in this report. |

| REPORT HEADING | DELEGATION GRANTED TO | DETAIL OF DELEGATION GRANTED |
|--|--|--|
| Playing Pitch Strategy 2012 | Assistant Director: Environmental & Leisure Services | Following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Well-being, to progress the other individual recommendations and actions identified within the Strategy, seeking future Cabinet authority on individual projects as appropriate. |
| Amendment to the Article 4(2) Direction in the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site/Severn Gorge Conservation Area | Assistant Director: Planning Specialist | Following consultation with the Cabinet Member: Housing Regeneration & Economic Development, to amend, re-issue and confirm the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site Article 4(2) Direction. |
| LINK and Healthwatch Transition | Assistant Director: Care & Support | In consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member and the Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection, to award the contract in respect of the NHS Complaints Advocacy. |
| Building Schools for the Future – Contractors' Framework Procurement Approval | Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing | In consultation with the Cabinet Member: Children Young People & Families, to initiate conduct and complete the procurement process for a PfS Framework Contractor to construct schools as part of the Council's Building Schools for the Future project In consultation with the Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families, to initiate, progress and complete future schools' projects within the BSF programme provided they remain in line with the Council's approved plan |
| Accommodation Investment and Acquisition of Property | Assistant Director: Development, Business & Housing | In consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources & Service Delivery, to negotiate terms for the acquisition of Addenbrooke House as detailed in the report |

| REPORT HEADING | DELEGATION GRANTED TO | DETAIL OF DELEGATION GRANTED |
|--|--|---|
| | Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection | To execute all documentation to give effect to the recommendations above. |
| LEGAL COMMENT FINANCIAL COMMENT LINKS WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT EQUALITY & DIVERSITY WARD IMPLICATIONS | As described in each report considered by Cabinet. Copies of all reports have been previously circulated to all Members of the Council | |

Co-operative Council Commissions' Council Report



3 May 2012

As a Co-operative Council, we are committed to involving our employees, residents, partners and local organisations in shaping the future of the Council and the borough. That is why we set up the Co-operative Commission and the Council’s Employee Commission – to bring a fresh perspective to how we do things and to develop new ways of working together.

We are delighted that so many people have got involved with the Commissions, in many cases giving up their own time to take part. The recommendations are a testament to the wealth of skills and experience amongst our workforce and partners from across the borough.

On behalf of the Council, we would like to thank all those involved for their contributions and we look forward to taking forward the Commissions’ recommendations.



Leader of Telford & Wrekin Council



**Cabinet Member for Environment,
Co-operative Council and Partnerships**

Introduction

Telford & Wrekin Council is committed to becoming a Co-operative Council. This is about:

- Bringing more public services together;
- Involving employees and local people more in planning and running services and;
- Encouraging people to do more for themselves and their own communities.

The Council wants to build a relationship with the community where power and responsibility are more balanced. By establishing the Co-operative Commission for community and business leaders, and the Council Employee Commission, the Council has sought to involve a wide range of people and organisations in this partnership from the outset.

This has been a new way of working. Both of the Commissions, not the Council, have determined the priorities and set the agenda. As a result, this is not a traditional Council report – it is their own words and recommendations.

Co-operative Commission

The Co-operative Commission was established in September 2011 to involve partners in shaping and moving forward the delivery of a Co-operative Council. This opportunity was well received with 51 individuals joining the Commission.

The Commission prioritised five main themes to focus on:

- Employment, Skills and the Economy
- Commissioning Services and Procurement
- Volunteering
- Image of Telford & Wrekin
- Co-operative Values and Communication

Sub-groups, made up of volunteers from the Co-operative Commission were established to review each of the themes, discuss ideas and develop proposals to move them forward.

In December 2011, Rights & Fairness Telford ran a community forum to provide residents with the opportunity to identify and comment on the issues associated with each theme. In addition, in January 2012, the Employee Commission sent out a survey to all employees, this provided the opportunity for them to comment on the draft Co-operative values. The feedback from each of these activities has been used to inform the recommendations of the Co-operative Commission sub-groups.



The Commission met on Friday 2 March 2012 to discuss the recommendations and agree the future of the Commission. It was agreed that the Commission should meet again in six months time to learn about progress made in implementing their recommendations.

Employment, Skills and the Economy

There is a shared recognition that ‘employment, skills and the economy’ make a major contribution to life in the local community and are essential in underpinning the success and sustainability of the borough.

The Employment Skills and the Economy sub-group focussed on two main areas:

- **Attracting Businesses into the borough** – helping to boost the local economy through greater inward investment and more effective support for existing businesses.
- **Improving Employability** – by supporting employers through the provision of a highly skilled, adaptable workforce equipped for the modern economy and employment practices.

Recommendations

1. The Council and its partners need to develop a more effective focus on attracting inward investment and support for existing businesses to boost the local economy by:
 - Adopting a commercial approach to economic development through the development of an ‘Economic Development Board’ to aid information sharing, monitoring, transparency and accountability.
 - Telford and Wrekin Council promoting itself as a ‘Business Winning Council’.
2. Help support employers through the creation of a highly skilled, adaptable workforce equipped for the modern economy. As learning and skills are the key drivers of this, the emphasis should be to identify skills gaps, improve skills and boost employment in the private and third sectors, especially within Telford & Wrekin’s emerging industries.



Commissioning Services and Procurement

There is a recognition that commissioning and procurement carried out by the Council and other public sector organisations is important to local companies and the voluntary sector. Decisions and how they are made, can have a significant direct impact on the community and the local economy.

The Commissioning Services and Procurement sub-group focussed on two main areas:

- **Voluntary Sector Engagement** – That the Council increase engagement with and understanding of the voluntary sector’s role and to work co-operatively with them to exploit all commissioning/procurement opportunities through the voluntary sector to improve outcomes for the community.
- **Co-operative Procurement** – by simplifying the Council’s procurement process, ensuring that it is transparent to widen the pool of potential providers, thereby maximising opportunities for local businesses and increasing local choice.

Recommendations

1. To increase engagement and understanding of the voluntary sector’s role and to work co-operatively to better exploit commissioning/procurement opportunities through the voluntary sector, by:
 - Establishing a Voluntary Sector Engagement Group.
 - The Council undertaking a review of how and what it procures and commissions with the voluntary and community sector.
2. To simplify the procurement process and ensure that it is transparent to widen the pool of potential providers, thereby maximising opportunities and increasing local choice, by:
 - Using the freedoms and flexibilities within European and Best Value statutory guidance to maximise the **local** opportunities in terms of awarding contracts to local organisations and businesses and maximising the benefit to the local economy and community, including employment and training opportunities.
 - The Council considers looking at alternative service delivery models as appropriate.
 - The Council consider using the Co-operative Commission to hold the Council to account to ensure that the Co-operative values, once approved are embedded in all that it does – including procurement.

Volunteering

There is an agreed recognition that volunteering makes a major contribution to all aspects of life in the local community and supports the delivery of services in both the voluntary and public sector. Volunteering brings benefits to both the individuals that volunteer in relation to building confidence, developing skills and building social networks, and to the organisations that are supported by volunteers, many of which wouldn't be able to operate without the input of volunteers.

The agreed overarching vision for volunteering in Telford and Wrekin as agreed by the group is to ***develop and retain a diverse range of enthusiastic and motivated volunteers within Telford and Wrekin, who feel valued and are able to use and develop their skills through volunteering.***



The Volunteering sub-group focussed on:

- Promoting volunteering.
- Recognising and valuing volunteers.
- Promoting and sharing good practice.
- Reducing barriers to volunteering for individuals and organisations.

Recommendations

1. A more joined up strategic approach is taken in relation to developing and delivering volunteering activity within the borough and that a Strategic Volunteering Group with representatives from voluntary public and private sector organisations is established.
2. That the Strategic Volunteering Group has an initial focus on developing a coordinated approach to developing volunteering around four key areas;
 - Promoting volunteering
 - Recognising and valuing volunteers
 - Promoting and sharing good practice
 - Reducing barriers to volunteering
3. That the Strategic Volunteering Group considers ways in which the impact of the proposed actions and the work of the group is monitored and evaluated.
4. That Telford and Wrekin Council develops a Strategic Volunteering Policy across the organisation to ensure consistency for volunteers that support the delivery of Council services.
5. That the Council carry out CRB checks on behalf of small voluntary organisations at a reduced cost (£5). The Council currently carries out CRB checks on behalf of a range of organisations for a cost of £30, this current charge applies to both businesses and voluntary organisations.

Image of Telford and Wrekin

'Every action which supports the image and visitor economy per se, adds value to Telford and Wrekin's quality of life for residents and businesses and to inward investment prospects. An attractive and compelling offer, high quality public realm, transport which works and places which are authentic, individual and distinctive will create success for all' (A Draft Plan for Growth for Tourism and the Visitor Economy in Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford)

To improve the image of Telford and Wrekin, the sub-group felt that we need to develop a joined up offer that celebrates the borough as a place that people and businesses want to live, work, visit and invest in as an internationally important tourism destination.

The sub-group agreed the overarching vision for Image of Telford and Wrekin:

Improving the image of Telford and Wrekin, to enable the borough to be 'a good place to visit and therefore a good place to live'.



The key areas of focus for the sub-group were:

- Increasing visitors to Telford and Wrekin (Business and Leisure Tourism).
- Increasing business investment in Telford and Wrekin.
- Improving Civic Pride for residents of Telford and Wrekin.

Recommendations

1. That the Council, partners and community work together in new (co-operative) ways to enable **'Telford to become a Conference Town'**.
2. That Telford & Wrekin Council promotes itself as a 'Business winning Council' (link to the Employment, Skills and Economy Commission sub-group recommendations).
3. That the 'joined up' Tourism Offer in Telford and Wrekin should be improved together with the co-ordination of marketing, PR and visitor information across Telford and Wrekin.
4. That the Council, partners and the community build on existing events and festivals to exploit and promote the assets of Telford and Wrekin, leading to a culturally vibrant place to live, work and visit.
5. That the Council, partners and the community work together to promote Civic Pride for residents of Telford and Wrekin.

Co-operative Values and Communication

The Co-operative Values and Communication sub-group focussed on developing proposals for a set of co-operative values for both the Council, the wider community and partners.

Using the information they were provided with and their own direct knowledge and experience, the group worked together to agree six draft co-operative values. The group felt that having a clear set of co-operative values was fundamental to the Council becoming a Co-operative Council and in the longer term moving towards being a co-operative Borough. They recognised that people would need to be informed about the values and that embedding them would be a journey that would take time and effort.

The other major focus for the group was to consider how the Council communicates and consults with people and how this could be improved as it is important that people are involved in the decisions that affect their lives. This also empowers people with the skills they need to help themselves and their communities and are aware of the opportunities they available to get involved.

Recommendations

1. Adopt the following set of Co-operative values:

- **Ownership**

We will – be accountable for our own actions and empower people with the skills to help themselves.

We would like everyone to – take action and responsibility for themselves and their community to the best of their abilities.

- **Openness & Honesty**

We will – be open and honest in the way we work and make decisions and communicate in a clear, simple and timely way.

We would like everyone to – be open and honest about what they want to improve in their community.

- **Involvement**

We will – work together with the community, involve people in decisions that affect their lives and be prepared to listen and take on new ideas.

We would like everyone to – work with and support others, get involved and share their views to help us develop the way we do things.

- **Fairness & Respect**

We will – respond to people's needs in a fair and consistent way.

We will and would like everyone to – respect and care for themselves and others, value the different ideas and skills that people bring and treat each other as equals.

The group also considered how the Council communicates and consults with people and how this could be improved.

2. Recommendations for communication includes investigating the use of phone applications to report issues and also circulating information to existing contacts (e.g. flex card users) to raise awareness of new initiatives and projects.

3. Recommendations for consultation are:

- face to face interaction wherever possible
- publish and promote a forward plan of all upcoming consultations
- develop online progress tracking tool for consultations
- feedback to participants the progress of items they were consulted on.
- incentives for those who take part in consultations
- consolidated consultation – use one event to consult on various areas
- Councillors attend consultations alongside Council officers

4. A recommendation was also developed under the theme of ‘Co-operative Borough’ to recognise and develop recommendations whereby people are empowered with the skills they need to help themselves and their communities and are aware of the opportunities they available to get involved. These recommendations included:

- continuation of the Community Forum
- build on success of existing community groups

Council Employee Commission

As part of the Council's commitment to becoming a Co-operative Council, the Employee Commission was set up. This commission is employee-led, open to all and gives employees a new way to get involved in shaping the organisation.

The opportunity to get involved was well received with 87 employees joining the Employee Commission.

At the first meeting in October 2012, the Commission identified and prioritised five main themes to focus on:

- Financial Management
- Skills Planning and Development
- Employee Engagement and Communication
- Employee Volunteering
- Social Responsibility

Sub-groups made up of volunteers from the Employee Commission were established to review each of the themes and develop proposals and recommendations to move them forward.

Consultation with employees.

In January 2012, an Employee Commission survey was sent out to all employees to seek views on each of the themes and the sub-groups have used the results to help to develop their proposals.



Financial Management

The Financial Management sub-group has focussed on how employees could be more involved in financial management and business planning.

The group focussed on three main areas:

- **Raising employee awareness of Council spend** –

The group identified that there was a lack of employee knowledge about the Government's requirement for Councils to publicise its monthly list of spend above £500. The group felt that by publicising this list, employees would have a better understanding of Council costs.



- **Engaging employees in the development and delivery of financially and community focussed services** –

The group recognised that employees could be more involved in the development and delivery of services by engaging them in a simple yet effective business planning framework, which focuses areas including: financial management, team engagement and social responsibility.

- **Developing employee skills to effectively manage contracts and procurement** – The group requested that the Skills Planning and Development sub-group focus on procurement and contract management skills as part of a mentoring pilot.

Recommendations

1. Note that the sub-group's recommendation to raise the profile of the Council spend above £500 with council employees has been implemented.
2. Develop a business planning framework which includes a mechanism to engage employees in the development and delivery of financially and community focussed services.
3. That the Skills Planning and Development sub-group focus on procurement and contract management skills as part of their recommended mentor scheme.

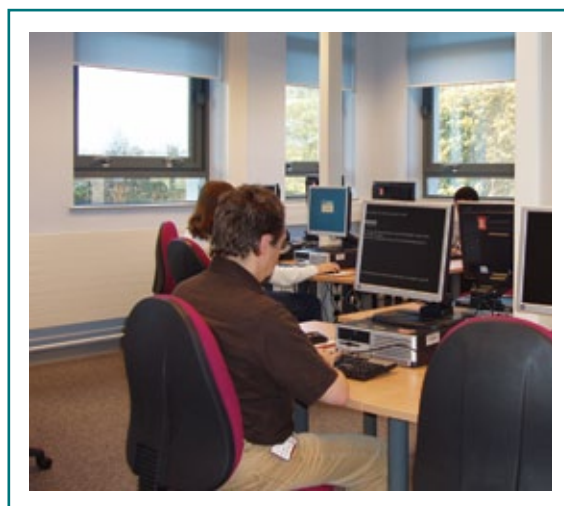
Skills Planning and Development

The Skills Planning and Development sub-group has focussed on how the Council can utilise the untapped potential and skills of its employees.

The group focussed on two main areas:

- **Ways of sharing knowledge and developing employees in changing or newly appointed roles** – The group identified that a mentor scheme would help to share knowledge between employees who have experience of different work areas. They also felt that it is important to develop employees who are changing roles or are newly appointed to the organisation, to support them through the change.

The Financial Management sub-group requested that the Skills Planning and Development sub-group focus on procurement and contract management skills as part of a mentoring pilot.



- **Introducing e-learning at the Council** – There was shared recognition that e-learning is becoming a widely used way for adults to learn, inside and outside of the workplace. A cost/benefit report for an e-learning system is already being developed and will be taken to Senior Management Team for approval. The group gave their views about the infrastructure and support needed to enable employees to use and benefit from e-learning and have suggested possible learning modules that could be included in a roll out of e-learning.

Recommendations

1. Seek council approval in principle to develop a mentoring scheme based on the sub-group's proposals, which can be costed and subject to available resources implemented.
2. Seek council agreement in principle to implement an e-learning system based the sub-group's priorities, which can be costed and implemented subject to available resources.

Employee Engagement & Communication

The Employee Engagement and Communication sub-group has focussed on how the Council currently communicates with its employees and how this can be improved.

The group focussed on four main areas:

- **How employees access information and mechanisms for communicating effectively**
 - The group identified three different groups of employees: those who have access to a work-based PC; those with occasional access and those who do not have access to a work-based PC.

The group identified that approximately 40% of employees do not have access to a work-based PC. They focussed on finding different ways to communicate and engage effectively with this group of employees.

- **Team briefings to communicate information with employees** – The group recognised that team briefings can be an effective way to communicate information. This was confirmed by the results of the Employee Commission survey, where, 84% of respondents indicated that they receive the majority of their information in this way.

The group acknowledged that briefings are handled in very different ways. They agreed that information should be relevant to the target audience and that there should be a range of communication mechanisms available for all employees regardless of where they are based.

- **Improving employee morale** – There was shared recognition that there is a need to improve employee morale in this difficult financial climate. The group identified that this could be achieved in a number of ways, including, celebrating success and achievement within teams and across the organisation.
- **The use of social media** – The group recognised the need to explore new avenues of communication. Whilst social media may not be accessible to all and it could be open to potential misuse, the group felt that this should not be discounted as a method of communicating with employees.

Recommendations

1. Develop, cost and seek approval to implement mechanisms to improve communication with employees who do not have access to a work-based PC.
2. Develop a guidance framework for team briefings for all employees.
3. Develop and implement ways of celebrating and recognising success and achievement.
4. Develop policies for the future use of social media (e.g. Online Communications System and e-me).

Employee Volunteering

The Employee Volunteering sub-group has focussed on developing outline proposals and options for an employer supported volunteering scheme at the Council.

The group focussed on four main areas:

- **Definition and benefits of volunteering** – There is no common national definition for ‘volunteering’; however, the sub-group has defined it as: ‘an activity where someone gives their time to help an organisation or group at no extra cost to the beneficiary’.

The group identified that employee volunteering can bring many benefits for:

- Organisations that provide volunteers – being more flexible and responsive to community needs, raising the Council’s profile and improving partnership working.
 - Employees who volunteers – learning new skills and knowledge, achieving work/life balance and building new relationships.
 - The community – gaining additional support, learning new skills, improving quality of life, building new relationships and community spirit.
- **Objectives for a volunteering scheme at the Council** – There was shared recognition that clear objectives are needed to help to develop proposals for a volunteering scheme that delivers outcomes for the Council, its employees and the community.
 - **Ways to deliver a volunteer scheme at the Council** – The group identified two elements to the scheme: special projects co-ordinated by the Council, providing opportunities for employees to take part in community projects and events and; signposting to other volunteering opportunities.

Following research into other organisations’ volunteering schemes and following feedback from employees, the group have recommended arrangements to support employees to volunteer. The group also discussed ways to raise awareness and promote volunteering opportunities.

Recommendations

1. Develop, cost and seek approval for a volunteering scheme based upon the sub-group’s proposals.
2. Develop a council volunteering policy across the organisation to ensure consistency for employees who volunteer.
3. The volunteering policy should include time to volunteer based on the following:
 - A limited amount of paid time e.g. two days for employees to take part in special projects that are co-ordinated by the council.
 - Unpaid time for employees to take part in other volunteering activities that link to the signposting element of the volunteering scheme.

Social Responsibility

The Social Responsibility sub-group has focussed on what social responsibility means and how it can be embedded at the Council.

The group focussed on three main areas:

- **What is social responsibility** – The group acknowledged that the concept of social responsibility is difficult to define. They agreed that it is easier to explain it by the results of acting socially responsible. For example, social responsibility can manifest itself in the helpful and responsible attitude and actions of individuals.
- **The importance of social responsibility** – There was shared recognition that being socially responsible holds significant value and the group felt that employees, the Council and the community have a social responsibility, each helping to benefit the other. This was confirmed by the results of the Employee Commission survey, where, 80% of respondents believed that social responsibility was an issue for the Council and 64% that it was also an issue for individual employees.

In addition 74% of respondents believed that social responsibility should be a core value of the council. Therefore the group discussed ways to help embed the principles of social responsibility through the proposed Co-operative values of 'fairness and respect, openness and honesty, involvement and ownership'.

- **The benefits of social responsibility** – The group identified that being socially responsible can have many benefits including, economic, environmental and social benefits. For example, currently 30% of households don't recycle their waste, if they did; this would save in the region of £1 million in landfill costs and taxes.

Recommendations

1. Raise member and employee awareness and understanding to embed social responsibility through the values of – 'Ownership, Involvement, Openness and Honesty and Fairness and Respect'.
2. Six months after social responsibility employee awareness campaigns, evaluate their success.
3. Incorporate the principles of the social responsibility model within a business planning framework (see financial management sub-group proposals).

Next steps

The Council's Cabinet will be considering the recommendations of the two Commissions on the 29 March 2012. They will decide which recommendations they wish to implement.

The Council and its partners will develop a programme to investigate the delivery of the approved recommendations. As part of this the Council will explore and address the financial and legal challenges that this may present.

Progress reports will be presented to Cabinet and participants of both Commissions.

Both the Co-operative and Employee Commissions will meet again in September 2012 to review progress against the approved recommendations.

For more information visit

www.telford.gov.uk/cooperativecommission

or contact the Co-operative Council Delivery Team on 01952 380131



TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL – 3rd MAY 2012

CHANGES TO THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

REPORT OF CHAIRMAN OF SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To report to Full Council changes to the Scrutiny Committee structure agreed by the Scrutiny Management Board to be implemented in the 2012/13 municipal year.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council notes the following changes to the Scrutiny Committee structure for the 2012/13 municipal year:

- 2.1 The merger of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committees into the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.2 That there will be eight elected Members on the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee.
- 2.3 That the Co-optees on the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committees will automatically become co-opted members of the Health & Adult Care Scrutiny Committee, and that the Co-opted members of the Health Scrutiny Committee who also sit on the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee will remain the same.
- 2.4 The establishment of a Housing, Economy & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee. The remit of the Committee will include scrutiny of matters relating to housing, economic development, regeneration, environment, transport and where appropriate planning.
- 2.5 That there will be eight elected Members appointed to the Housing, Economy & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee.

3.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 3.1 Scrutiny Management Board, 5th March 2012
Scrutiny Management Board, 18th April 2012

4.0 SUMMARY

- 4.1 The current scrutiny arrangements have been in place since Annual Council in May 2011. Five Scrutiny Committees were established for Adult Social Care, Budget & Finance, Children & Young People, Co-operative & Communities and Health with a Scrutiny Management Board responsible for the strategic management and delivery of the scrutiny function and work programme.
- 4.2 Throughout the year, the Scrutiny Management Board, Scrutiny Chairmen and Scrutiny Members have formally and informally evaluated the efficiency and effectiveness of the scrutiny committees. Two key areas were identified where improvements could be made:
 - 4.2.1 There was a clear duplication of work programmes and overlap of interests between the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committees. This had not made the most efficient use of Member or officer resources in the effective planning and delivery of the work programmes.
 - 4.2.2 Key areas of Council services (housing, economic development, regeneration, environment, transport and (where relevant) planning) did not fall within the remit of a Scrutiny Committee. Scrutiny of issues in these areas had been incorporated into the Scrutiny Management Board's work programme which had limited its capacity to play a full strategic role or to conduct reviews requiring in-depth or follow-up work.
- 4.3 On 5th March 2012, the Scrutiny Management Board agreed proposals aimed at addressing these issues for consultation with Scrutiny Assembly members. The proposals were:
 - 4.3.1 To merge the Health and the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committees into a Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee;
 - 4.3.2 To establish a Housing, Economy & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee. The remit of the Committee would include scrutiny of housing, economic development, regeneration, environment, transport and (where relevant) planning matters.
- 4.4 At the same meeting, proposals relating to the involvement of Town & Parish Councils with Scrutiny were agreed and are under consultation with Scrutiny members and Town & Parish Councils until 10th May 2012. The response to the consultation will be discussed by the Scrutiny Management Board on 14th May and a further report will be made to Council regarding any consequent changes to the Scrutiny arrangements.

5. **PROCESS FOR MAKING THE CHANGES**

- 5.1 The Council's Constitution sets out that there will be a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 6 Scrutiny Committees including the Scrutiny Management Board.
- 5.2 Subject to this provision, the Scrutiny Management Board may make changes to the scrutiny structure and processes after consulting with the Scrutiny Assembly. The Scrutiny Chairman will report changes to the next full Council meeting and the Scrutiny Handbook will be updated to reflect the changes. Appointments to the Scrutiny Committees will be made at Annual Council.
- 5.4 The proposed changes remained within the provisions of the Council's Constitution and the process for making the changes was as set out below:

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 th March 2012 | Scrutiny Management Board agrees the proposed changes for consultation, the method of consultation and consultees. |
| 12 th March – 16 th April | Consultation with Scrutiny Assembly Members |
| 29 th March – 16 th April | Consultation with Town & Parish Councils. This was in addition to consultation on the proposals to engage Town & Parish Councils with Scrutiny. |
| 18 th April | Scrutiny Management Board considers feedback on the proposals and agrees the scrutiny committee structure. |
| 19 th April | Scrutiny Assembly members and Town & Parish Councils informed of the decision. |
| 3 rd May | Scrutiny Chairman reports changes to Full Council. |
| 24 th May | Appointment of members to the Scrutiny Committees with immediate effect. |
| 24 th May onwards | Scrutiny Handbook updated by Scrutiny Officers for approval by Scrutiny Assembly members. |

- 5.5 The feedback from the consultation was all in agreement with the proposed changes.
- 5.6 The agreed structure is shown in Appendix 1 of this report.

6. **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

There are no equal opportunity issues arising from this report.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

There are no environmental impacts arising from this report.

8. LEGAL COMMENT

The Terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Management Board include the following provisions in relation to the decision which are for consideration in this report –

“Subject to the provision of Part 4, Section 5, paragraph 1.1 of the Council’s Constitution [there will be a Scrutiny Assembly, and a minimum of 2 and maximum of 6 Scrutiny Committees including a Scrutiny Management Board.], the Scrutiny Management Board may make changes to the scrutiny structure and processes after consulting with the Scrutiny Assembly. The Scrutiny Handbook will be updated to reflect the changes. Changes will be reported back to the next full Council meeting.

The Scrutiny Management Board may periodically review and make changes to the Policy for Co-opting Scrutiny Members.”

Section 21(10) of the Local Government Act 2000 provides that a Scrutiny Committee can include members who are not elected Members of the Authority. Such members cannot vote unless a scheme is made in accordance with Schedule 1 Paragraph 12 to the Act.

Officers will continue to monitor developments in relation to the enactment of the relevant provisions of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and update the Board in relation to any future changes that may need to be made to existing arrangements.

9. LINKS WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The changes relate to the Council’s scrutiny function.

10. OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

The changes present an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of scrutiny.

11. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct costs associated with the proposed Scrutiny Committee structure. As set out in the Council’s constitution, a special responsibility allowance of £7,139 p.a is paid to the Chairs of Scrutiny Committees and co-optees receive £260 p.a. There is a revenue budget to meet the costs of member allowances and the changes do not increase the allowances payable.

12. WARD IMPLICATIONS

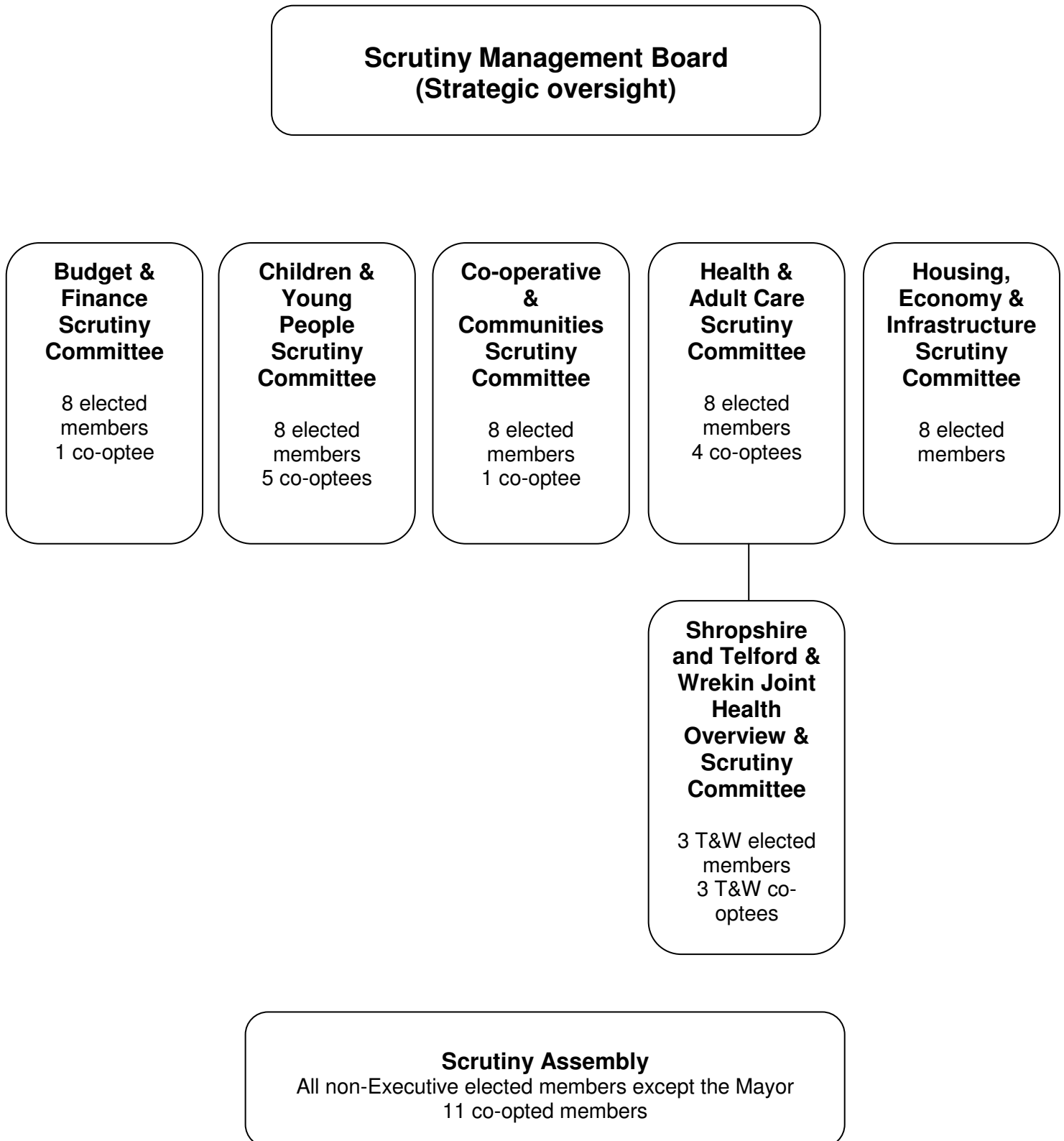
There are no ward specific implications arising from this report.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Report prepared by Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist 01952 383114

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE STRUCTURE 2012/13



TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL – 3rd MAY 2012

THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT AND THE NEW ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER AND ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: LAW, DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider recommendations from the Standards Committee about proposals for the new standards regime at Telford & Wrekin Council in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Council creates a politically balanced Standards Committee comprising of 7 members of the Council including at least one member of the Executive and a Hearings Sub Committee, (membership to be determined by the Standards Committee) (approving the terms of reference as set out in Appendix 1) which will come into effect on 1st July 2012 or as may otherwise be specified by regulation made pursuant to Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011;
- 2.2 Subject to 2.3 below that the Council approve the draft Code of Conduct for adoption (as attached at Appendix 2 of this report) as the Council's Code of Conduct which will come into effect on 1st July 2012 or as may otherwise be specified by regulation made pursuant to Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011;
- 2.3 That Council delegates to the Monitoring Officer authority to make necessary amendments to the Code of Conduct in consultation with the Deputy Leader to accommodate the provisions of Regulations that may be made pursuant to the Localism Act 2011; and
- 2.4 The appointment of the independent person is brought to the first Council meeting after completion of the recruitment process.

3. SUMMARY

- 3.1 The Localism Act 2011 and regulations made under it will replace the Council's existing standards regime. This report outlines the recommendations to Council made by the Standards Committee for new arrangements to be adopted including a new Standards Committee and a new Code of Conduct for members.

4. PREVIOUS MINUTES

Standards Committee 21st September 2011
Standards Committee 21st April 2009 (ST-39)
Standards Committee 18th June 2009

Standards Committee 17th June 2010
Standards Committee 16th June 2011
Standards Committee 8th December 2011
Standards Committee 8th February 2012

5. INFORMATION

5.1 The Localism Act 2011 (“the Act”) received royal assent on 15th November 2011 and makes significant changes to the Councillor Code of Conduct regime which can be summarised as follows.

5.2 Changes to the Standards Regime – A summary of the key points

When will it be implemented?

1st July 2012 is the stated date but we are still awaiting regulations to support the principle legislation and accordingly we should be prepared for the possibility of a further delay in the timetable.

What has gone?

In short, Standards for England has been abolished as have the model codes, Councillor undertakings to comply with the codes, Standards committees and Independent Members. This will end the current system of complaints for breaches of the code, referrals sub-committees, review hearings, investigations and hearings (either internally or by the First Tier Tribunal) to consider investigation reports.

When is this happening?

The changes are taking place now and we are currently in a transitional period where local authorities are expected to resolve all outstanding complaints and the current planned date for implementation of the new system is the 1st July 2012.

What is replacing it?

General principles

The Borough Council and Town and Parish Councils must continue to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members.

A new code

It is specifically required that such authorities must adopt a code of conduct which must be consistent with the seven principles of selflessness, integrity, honesty, objectivity, accountability, openness and leadership. It is up to each authority to adopt its own code and there is no guidance on what it should include.

Town and Parish Councils

Town and Parish Councils may choose to adopt the Borough’s Code of Conduct and so Town and Parish Council Clerks have been kept up to date with developments.

Breaches of the code

The Borough Council has to have in place arrangements for investigations and consideration of investigation reports for both complaints against its members and members of Town and Parish Council.

The role of the Independent member

This is going to change – the Borough Council has a duty to appoint an Independent Person and to consult them during an investigation. An Independent Person could also be consulted by the member who has been complained about. It is proposed that there is a joint appointment for this Council and the Combined Fire Authority (and possibly Shropshire Council) and representatives from each participating authority will be involved in the recruitment process

Interests

New pecuniary interests are created which must be disclosed within 28 days of taking office. Regulations will define what a disclosable pecuniary interest is. Note that they will apply both to the Councillor and his/ her spouse/ civil partner etc. Having this type of interest will prohibit the Councillor from participating or voting on the matter at the meeting but, unless it has not previously been disclosed it need not be disclosed at the meeting. It will be up to the individual authority to determine if the Councillor also has to leave the room. (The draft code before members for consideration today does include such a provision, a position that was supported by the Standards Committee) Obviously that Councillor cannot then be further involved in that matter. Dispensations can be secured in certain circumstances

The Register of Interests

The new interests' regime will require registration and disclosure of the defined pecuniary interests for both the Borough and Town and Parish Councils. The Register will be available for public inspection and will be published on the authority's (and the Town or Parish Council's) web-site.

Sanctions

There is nothing currently published that details the sanctions although it appears that naming and shaming is the only option available to the Council (removal from committees/ withdrawal of the Group Whip etc could only be carried out with the approval of the relevant Group Leader).

Offences

There are new criminal offences, failure to disclose defined pecuniary interests, providing false or misleading information about interests, taking part in decisions (debate or voting) and having further involvement in the matter. The maximum fine is £5,000 and up to 5 year disqualification. Such offences must be initiated by the Director of Public Prosecutions and there is a defence of reasonable excuse. This is a high bench mark and will mean that only the most serious offences are ever likely to be prosecuted.

5.3 Decisions for the Council

The changes detailed above require the Council to replace the current standards framework. The Standards Committee have looked at the new legislation and make the following suggestions to full Council:-

- A. That a Standards Committee is maintained to administer the standards framework and ensure that the Council complies with its statutory duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members. The Committee proposes that it is politically balanced with an elected member as Chairman and includes a member of the Executive on the Committee. The terms of reference proposed by the Standards Committee are attached to this report at

Appendix 1. This proposed new structure for the Committee does comply with the statutory provisions.

- B. That the Council adopt a new Code of Conduct which is compliant with the legislation and gives due consideration to the seven principles referred to at paragraph 5.2 above and is aligned to the Council's co-operative values. Also the Code sets out **draft** (subject to Regulations that have not yet been published) rules for members to observe when they have a disclosable pecuniary interest. The draft code recommended by the Standards Committee is attached to this report at Appendix 2. Members should note that on the 10th April 2012 the Local Government Association circulated a template code and guidance note. This has been reviewed and is not substantially different in form to the proposal in front of members for consideration today that has been considered and approved by the Standards Committee and is available as a background paper to this report.
- C. The appointment of the independent person is brought to the first Council meeting after completion of the recruitment process. The appointment must be approved by a majority of elected members and it is suggested that this is initially for a four year term.

Due to the possibility of regulations being released close to the implementation date, the Council is asked to consider allowing a delegation to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to allow him to make any changes required to ensure that the new code and structure are compliant with the legislation.

6. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

- 6.1 The draft code and arrangements have been subject to an equality impact assessment and the conclusion was that this Code and procedure are classed as low impact and accordingly a full impact assessment is not required

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 7.1 No implications.

8. **LEGAL COMMENT**

- 8.1 At present the regime for the assessment and determination of Code of Conduct complaints (as set out in the Local government Act 2000 (as amended) and associated legislation) is in a transitional phase. The current system at a local level remains in force without provision for referrals to Standards for England which has now been abolished. The published timetable envisages that the changes will take effect from 1st July 2012 at which point the current regime will cease completely and the new framework will come into force.

9. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The cost of standards investigations together with the management and administration of the Standards Committee are currently met from within the Legal Services revenue budget. The Chair of Standards Committee receives a Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) of £3,935 p.a. There are also 4 co-opted members who each receive £260 p.a. in accordance with the Members' Remuneration Scheme and as set out in the Constitution.
- 9.2 If an elected chair is appointed under the proposals there is the potential for a Special Responsibility Allowance (the value of which would have to be determined and if it is greater than the current SRA would be an additional cost to the Council). There will also be costs associated with the role of Independent Person;

the value will depend on the appointment made i.e. if a 'professional' person is appointed fees may be applicable. It is difficult to assess any further financial implications of the changes to the Standards Regime set out in the Localism Act 2011 at present as the detailed regulations are not yet available.

10. WARD IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Borough wide

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 The Localism Act 2011

11.2 Local Government Association template code of conduct and guidance note

End of Report

Report prepared by Jonathan Eatough, Assistant Director: Law, Democracy and Public Protection Tel: 01952 383200 and Matthew Cumberbatch, Legal Services Manager Tel: 01952 383255

FUNCTIONS, POWERS AND DUTIES OF**STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

1. To promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the Council.
2. To support Town and Parish Councils within the Borough to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the Council.
3. To recommend to Council the adoption of a code dealing with the conduct that is expected of members and co-opted members of the Authority.
4. To keep the code of conduct under review and recommend changes/ replacement to Council as appropriate.
5. To publicise the adoption, revision or replacement of the Council's Code of Conduct.
6. To oversee the process for the recruitment of an Independent Person (and 2 reserves) and make recommendations to Council for their appointment.
7. To receive quarterly reports from the Monitoring Officer about:-
 - 7.1 complaints;
 - 7.2 the progress and outcome of investigations; and
 - 7.3 the establishment and maintenance of the register of interests of members and co-opted members of the Borough and Town and Parish Councils within the Borough boundaries;
 - 7.4 dispensations granted to members and co-opted members of the Council

HEARINGS SUB COMMITTEE

1. To consider investigation reports in respect of Code of Conduct complaints that are referred to them by the Monitoring Officer.
2. To report its findings to the Borough Council, Town of Parish Council, as appropriate for information.
3. Where a breach is found. to make decisions about sanctions including:-
 - 3.1. To make recommendations to the relevant Group Leader regarding future membership of committees and sub committees;
 - 3.2. To make recommendation to Council regarding the removal of a non aligned member from membership of committee and sub-committees;
 - 3.3. To make recommendations to the Leader of the Council regarding the removal of a member from Cabinet, or the removal of portfolio responsibilities;
 - 3.4. To instruct the Monitoring Officer to arrange training for a Borough Council member;
 - 3.5. To remove a member from all outside appointments to which he/ she has been appointed or nominated by the Council; and
 - 3.6. To withdraw facilities provided to the member or exclude the member from defined premises (except as necessary for the member to attend formally

constituted council meetings).

4. To consider applications for dispensations where:-
 - 4.1. The dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Borough of Telford & Wrekin area; or
 - 4.2. It is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation.

Members’ Code of Conduct

Standards of Conduct

Members (including all voting co-opted members) of Telford & Wrekin Council will at all times promote and maintain high standards of conduct when they are acting in that capacity. To do this they will:-

| | |
|--|------------------------------|
| <p>✓ Members should serve only the public interest and should treat everyone that they deal with equally and with respect. <i>Link to Co-operative value of Fairness & Respect</i></p> | <p>Selflessness</p> |
| <p>✓ Members should not place themselves in a position where they either are or give the appearance that they are under any financial or other obligation to anyone that might seek to influence them in the performance of their duties as a Member. ✓ Members should only use the resources of the Authority in accordance with reasonable requirements set out for their use from time to time ✓ Members should declare their interests in accordance with the law and with the provisions of this Code of Conduct ✓ Members should declare gifts and hospitality that they receive in accordance with the Council’s Rules on Gifts and Hospitality <i>Link to Co-operative value of Fairness & Respect</i></p> | <p>Integrity</p> |
| <p>✓ Members should make decisions on merit and in the public interest, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits. <i>Link to Co-operative value of Fairness & Respect</i></p> | <p>Objectivity</p> |
| <p>✓ Members should be accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and should co-operate fully with any scrutiny appropriate to their particular role or office. <i>Link to Co-operative value of Ownership</i></p> | <p>Accountability</p> |
| <p>✓ Members should be as open as possible about their decisions and actions and should give reasons for their decisions and actions. They should not disclose information given to them which they can reasonably be expected to know was either exempt or confidential and is not to be disclosed to protect the wider public interest. <i>Link to Co-operative value of Openness and Involvement</i></p> | <p>Openness</p> |
| <p>✓ Members have a duty to declare any private interests that relate to their duties as a Member and do whatever is necessary to resolve any such conflict in a way that protects the public interest <i>Link to Co-operative value of Honesty</i></p> | <p>Honesty</p> |
| <p>✓ Members should promote and support these principles by leadership, and by example, and should act in a way that secures or preserves public confidence</p> | <p>Leadership</p> |

Members’ Code of Conduct

Pecuniary and Non- Pecuniary interests.

The Monitoring Officer of Telford & Wrekin Council will maintain a Register of Interests which can be found at [*insert link to Council web-site*] or viewed by appointment with the Monitoring Officer [*insert contact details*]

to be completed once we have seen the regulations but perhaps ...

| What | When | How | Impact on Meetings |
|--|---|---|--|
| Disclosable Pecuniary Interests | Within 28 days of election | In writing to the Monitoring Officer detailing the existence and nature of the interest | Member cannot participate in or vote on the matter |
| Previously undeclared Disclosable Pecuniary Interest | | | |
| Before a meeting | Within 28 days of the date of disclosure (hopefully defined in the regulations) | In writing to the Monitoring Officer detailing the existence and nature of the interest | Member cannot participate in or vote on the matter |
| During a meeting | As soon as the Member is aware that they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest | Verbally to the meeting detailing the existence and nature of the interest | Member cannot participate, participate further, vote or further vote on the matter |
| Sensitive Interests – ie those where the Monitoring Officer agrees with the Member that the disclosure of the interest could lead the Member being subject to violence of intimidation | As above | As above but detailing the existence but not the nature of the interest | As above |

Dispensations can be granted by the Monitoring Officer (for 1 & 2) / Hearings Sub Committee (for 3 & 4), if, after considering the relevant circumstances:-

1. The number of Members precluded from transacting the business is so great that it would impede the business of the Council, committee or Executive
2. The political balance is affected to the extent that it could affect the outcome of a vote relating to the business
3. The dispensation is in the interests of persons living in the Borough of Telford & Wrekin area
4. It is otherwise appropriate to grant a dispensation

ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 2nd
February 2012 at 2.00 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire.

PRESENT: Councillors C. Turley (Chairman), F. Bould, J. Greenaway, C. Mason, J. Seymour; Co-optee Maurice Viney.

Also Present: Cllr. V. Fletcher; J. Gulliver, Scrutiny Co-optee; Karen Kalinowski, Head of Care & Support; Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist.

ASCSC-18 MINUTES

Regarding the action point noted in ASCSC-15 the Scrutiny Group Specialist had contacted the CQC to request contact details for the designated CQC contact but there had been no response. The Head of Care & Support suggested contacting Helena Denett or Andy Davey at the CQC to confirm the correct contact.

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd November 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

ASCSC-19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. J. Loveridge.

ACSSC-20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

ASCSC-21 SHROPSHIRE AND TELFORD & WREKIN VULNERABLE ADULT SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11

The Head of Care & Support presented the report of the Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Board making the following points:

- The Board is joint with Shropshire because the partners involved work on a pan-Shropshire basis and there is a common referral process across both areas. Chairing is shared between authorities with Telford & Wrekin chairing in 2010/11.
- 2010/11 had been a challenging year with the restructure process taking place within the organisation. Adult safeguarding had remained separate from children's safeguarding following the recommendations in the Munro report

which meant that the focus on adults would be retained. The recent government announcement that Adult Safeguarding Boards would operate on a statutory basis was welcomed to give greater protection to vulnerable adults.

- There had been a year on year upward trend in the number of referrals until 2010/11 which had seen a reduction by 4%. The reduction would have been greater but for the large institutional investigations which had had an impact on referrals. The reduction was not considered a matter for concern at this stage; the CQC inspection in 2010 had identified that too many people were being referred into the Adult Protection process and various guidelines and measures had been introduced which had led to more early exits and lower numbers. This was and will continue to be closely monitored.
- The partnership had developed well over the last few years and was one of only two in the West Midlands rated as “performing well” by the inspectors. National data collection had been introduced so that performance could be benchmarked against other authorities with similar demographics in the future.
- A number of key achievements for the year were highlighted:
 - The formal adoption of the Safeguarding Strategy with the emphasis on prevention. The Action Plan arising from the Strategy had been consolidated with the post-CQC inspection action plan.
 - The establishment of a Training Sub-group which had developed a training strategy, competency framework and assessment tools.
 - There was on-going awareness training with VSAB partners and reaching into other organisations including the prison service, fire service, church groups and lay visitors to homes.
 - The endorsement of practice tools (Medication, Pressure Area and Disciplinary process) to aid decision making and ensure a proportionate service response based on the level of risk presenting.
 - A review of the existing Multi-Agency Adult Protection Policy and Procedure (MAAPP) had started in-line with the introduction of the Pan London procedure, and the West Midlands Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) had agreed that a regional policy would be developed to ensure a consistent approach across the region.
 - There had been no Serious Case Reviews during the period of the report.
 - The reduction in the number of referrals in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin was not a matter for concern as this was consistent with the introduction of the practice tools described above
 - The Dignity Network had become a sub-group of the VASB and various activities had been co-ordinated by partners as part of the Dignity Campaign. A Dignity Audit was being planned with partners to ensure compliance with guidelines.
 - There had been five separate institutional abuse investigations in Telford & Wrekin over the year focussed mainly on larger residential units. A pro-active approach had been taken to working with the homes to put action

- plans in place to address the issues.
- Migration to shared electronic social care records had been completed with rigorous access and security measures in place.
 - The Designated Persons for Safeguarding Network had been put in place across the authority with staff trained to deal with reported concerns.
 - There was joint responsibility between the NHS and local authority for Deprivation of Liberties Safeguarding (DoLS), but this was passing over to the local authority with a small sum for additional training. The demand for DoLS assessments was steady but lower than it might be from hospitals and more training for acute staff was planned and the position would be monitored.
 - There was only one remaining “red” indicator on the amalgamated action plan (7.6/7.7) which was about breaking down barriers with groups and communities who have little contact with mainstream safeguarding support.

Members asked a number of questions and were given the following further information:

- The guidance and tools issued to practitioners on when an incident was serious enough to be reported to safeguarding would see more consistent standards introduced. The high level of referrals in the past had resulted from some incidents being reported when they were unintentional mistakes which could be addressed through case management and were not safeguarding issues.
- Inspections of care homes were carried out at least once a year where there was a contractual relationship with the authority and unannounced visits were done where there were reasons for concern. Where there was no contractual arrangement, the authority had no right of inspection and this was within the remit of the CQC and there were pro-active links with the CQC with regard to visits. There was a good relationship with Shropshire Partners in Care (SPIC) who would alert the authority to potential problems and there was a good relationship with the majority of homes. The LINK may also carry out inspections of care homes where the authority has no contractual relationship. Homes with more than 3 residents must be registered. Day care does not have to be registered, but the Council has an accredited standard which providers are required to meet before care is purchased from them.
- Problems with people living in their own homes could be picked up by carers, family, friends or social workers. There was a high level of reports from carers. The VASB was trying to raise awareness of abuse of the elderly with the public and there had been a campaign within the Council. An action for the Board was to look at how to reach hard-to-reach groups. SPIC hosted a dedicated post to work with all providers and wider organisations such as pharmacists and the WI to raise awareness and this work was on-going. Members suggested that an awareness raising session could be held with the Senior Citizens’ Forum, possibly to coincide with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) and in conjunction with Age

Concern. **It was agreed the Scrutiny Officer would contact the Senior Citizens' Forum to discuss this. Members further suggested that awareness raising could also be done with Town & Parish Councils.**

- People have a right to make their own decisions and refuse help. Unlike for children, there is no legislative framework to take people to a place of safety unless incapacity can legally be shown.
- The low level of referrals from GP s was a concern and the VSAB were looking at strategies to engage GP s including through the Clinical Commissioning Groups. The Board Action Plan would feature the issue of GP referrals. Members agreed that the engagement of GP s was vital as they were well positioned to pick up issues and suggested that ancillary staff, particularly receptionists, should be trained.
- There had been a low level of referrals from SSSHFT and a lot of work had gone into staff awareness training to enhance the response. **Members requested further information on the thematic review of children and adult safeguarding undertaken by the Trust.**
- West Mercia Police were on the Board and were very committed. National guidance documents had been circulated to forces and it was vital for the police to understand mental health and ALD issues to identify problems. Members asked whether training extended to CSOs as they have good local contacts. **This would be checked and reported back to the committee.**
- The reporting system was being cleaned up to make the source of referral information more accurate. Often, practitioners make referrals to the social workers who then record the incident on the system which can skew the data.
- The VASB had welcomed the government announcement that Adult Safeguarding Boards would operate on a statutory basis, and further guidance was awaited. No further funding would be available to accompany the statutory duties.
- Malicious referrals are very rare, and tend to happen in relation to financial abuse. These are investigated to uncover unfounded allegations.
- Links into ethnic groups with English as a second language were being explored and this was an outstanding action in the Action Plan for further work. Work was being done with the Cohesion team and links had been made with Connecting Communities through Board membership.
- A report on feedback from service users was being collated for the Board, although this had to be handled sensitively and in a non-intrusive way as people do not always want to reflect back on a traumatic incident.

- Records of people moving in or out of the borough could only be shared with the individual's permission. Information sharing protocols were in place between partners, but personal data covered by Data Protection could not be shared.
- Members were very pleased to hear about the work of the Dignity Network and felt strongly that this should be given emphasis. Jean Gulliver informed the committee that the LINK carries out unannounced ward visits at the hospital and issues, such as with food and drink, are reported and dealt with.
- Members noted that the figures on p. 18 did not show the number of staff trained as a % of the work force. **This would be reported back with a view to including this in future reports.**
- Investigations of the cases of institutional abuse were on-going. The take-over position of St. George's Park Care Centre was being closely monitored. No further admissions were being made until the new management were satisfied that the issues had been sorted out.

RESOLVED

- **That the 2011/12 VASB Report would be brought to the Committee in September.**
- **That the Scrutiny Officer would contact the Senior Citizen's Forum to discuss setting up an awareness raising event.**

ASCSC-22 IMPACT OF THE WITHDRAWAL OF CONTINUING HEALTH CARE FUNDING ON ADULT SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

The Head of Care & Support informed members that there had been very positive discussions with the PCT about the budget for Continuing Health Care (CHC). The cluster was looking at increasing the level of CHC funding in Telford & Wrekin to the national level. The PCT had agreed to an independent review of the assessment criteria for CHC funding. A one-off payment for 2011/12 by the PCT to the authority to off-set the additional costs incurred by the withdrawal of CHC funding was being discussed. The Committee welcomed news of the positive discussions.

ASCSC-17 FORWARD PLAN

A date for the next meeting would be agreed by e-mail. The agenda would include an update on the Rehabilitation and Re-ablement Strategy, and the CQC would be invited to discuss inspections of care homes.

The Chairman advised members that the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee would be considering budget issues relating to Supporting People at a future meeting and members of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee would be welcome to

attend. Details would be provided in the weekly bulletin of future scrutiny meetings. The Chairman reported that the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee had looked at funding for the Meals on Wheels service as part of scrutinising the 2012/13 budget proposals, and had suggested that the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee include the review of options for the service in its work programme.

RESOLVED

That the review of the options for Meals on Wheels would be included in the work programme.

The meeting ended at 4.00 p.m.

Chairman:

Date:

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on Tuesday, 27th March 2012 at 6.00 pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors R K Austin (Vice-Chair in the Chair), I T W Fletcher, R J Sloan, W L Tomlinson and C R Turley.

Officers: J Marriott (Audit & Assurance Manager) and J Clarke (Democratic Services Officer).

AUC-42 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 27th March 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

AUC-43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor D Davies

AUC-44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

AUC-45 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2012/13 AND STRATEGY AND INFORMATION GOVERNANCE WORK PROGRAMME 2012/13

The Audit and Assurance Manager presented a report on the Internal Audit Plan 2012/13 and Strategy and the Information Governance Work Programme 2012/13.

The report was set out in three parts:

Internal Audit Plan – The draft Plan set out the internal resource and the proposed work of the IT Audit Specialists for the year 2012/13. The plan also included a 10% contingency, due to the continued re-structure and ongoing changes within the organisation, in order to cover the key risk areas.

Internal Audit Strategy - The internal audit team's objectives were to support the whole Council as it became a Co-operative Council and to deliver an economic, efficient and effective internal audit service in order to support the achievement of the Council's priorities and objectives.

Information Governance Work Programme 2012/13 – The Information Governance Team's work programme was presented. This sets out the work required to support the Council's information governance framework and the administration of the Council's responses to FOI, EIR and DPA requests. The Report gave a summary of the ongoing work and completion times.

A discussion took place including:

- Reduction in hours and skill levels
- Internal Audit opportunities to offer training services to other Local Authorities
- The Auditing of Abraham Darby Leisure Centre
- IG Training and Awareness Programme

- Transfer of Public Health to the Council

RESOLVED –

- a) that the Internal Audit Plan and Strategy for 2012/13 be approved; and**
- b) that the Information Governance Work Programme 2012/13 be noted.**

AUC-46 RESULTS OF THE SURVEYS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE AND THE SKILLS OF AUDIT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Audit and Assurance Manager presented a report on the results of the surveys completed to review the effectiveness of the Audit Committee and the skills of the Audit Committee Members.

There had been lower responses in 2012 compared to previous years. Only 6 of the 17 surveys that were sent out had been received. Officers had responded to say that they had only attended one meeting and they did not have enough knowledge to contribute to the survey. In some areas scores were lower than previous years but in four of the areas the scoring was well over 3. Members were asked to put forward suggestions as to how these scores could be improved.

With regard to the skills survey of Members the results were that the Members felt competent or developing their skill levels. Training was given on the final accounts in September 2011 and it was hoped in the near future to give training on IG Work Programme.

A discussion took place including:

- The recipients of the Effectiveness of the Audit Committee Survey
- Training for any new Members of the Audit Committee

RESOLVED –

- a) that the results of the effectiveness survey be noted; and**
- b) that the results of the skills survey be noted.**

Members were asked to note the dates of the future meetings.

The meeting ended at 6.18 p.m.

Chairman:

Date:

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Audit Committee held on Tuesday, 31st January 2012 at 6.00 pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors R K Austin (Vice-Chair in the Chair), S Burrell, I T W Fletcher, R J Sloan, W L Tomlinson and C R Turley.

Officers: K Clarke (Head of Finance), P Harris (Finance Manager), J Marriott (Audit & Assurance Manager), B Morris (Finance Team Leader), D Sidaway (Head of Property & ICT), K King (ICT Service Delivery Manager), C Jones (Head of Family & Community Services), K Perry (Interim Head of Safeguarding) and J Clarke (Democratic Services Officer).

Also Present: M McDonagh and A. Cardoza – KPMG External Auditors.

AUC-31 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 1st November 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

AUC-32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor D Davies

AUC-33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

AUC-34 KPMG – THE COUNCIL’S EXTERNAL AUDITORS

a) Annual Audit Letter 2010/11

M McDonagh gave a brief summary of the Annual Audit Letter 2010/11 which was a requirement of the Audit Commission. This looked back at the year 2010/11, all of which had previously been reported to the Audit Committee. It was the opinion of the external Auditors that the Authority was giving value for money. KPMG gave an unqualified opinion on the Council’s Financial Statements on 29th September 2011 which met the Audit Commission’s deadline. There was a good working relationship between the external Auditors and the Council. No adjustments were required to the Annual Governance Statement. During 2009/10 there had been 4 elector questions and objections. Since writing the report the Auditors had now finalised these questions and although there were some areas the Authority could learn from, these were not significant enough to take any further action. The Audit for the years 2009/10 and 2010/11 had now been closed off and certificates issued. This had been a positive year for the Authority but there were significant challenges on the horizon due to the financial settlements.

RESOLVED – that the contents and conclusions contained within the KPMG Annual Audit Letter 2010/11 be noted.

b) Certification of Grants and Returns 2010/11

M McDonagh gave a brief summary of the Certification of Grants and Returns 2010/11. The external Auditors have to report even minor amendments required and one was reported in respect of the Housing and Council Tax benefit claim on page 4 (1) of the Report. KPMG had issued 4 unqualified certificates and 1 qualified certificate. The fees had come down significantly since 2009/10 although it was pointed out that the total fee for 2010/11 was now a revised figure of £35,250. There were no immediate concerns regarding the grants and returns but there was always room for improvement and one minor recommendation had been made.

RESOLVED – that the Certification of Grants and Returns 2010/11 be noted.

c) External Audit Plan 2011/12

M McDonagh gave a brief summary of the External Audit Plan which was an annual document that sets out the external Auditors statutory responsibilities, the Team involved in working with the Authority and the Fees. The statutory responsibilities included the financial statements and use of resources (including making sure arrangements were in place for the Authority to deliver value for money). The external Auditors had a good relationship with the Authority which enabled constructive open dialogue on challenging issues. The External Auditors would be looking forward to the 2012/13 and 2013/14 savings programmes in order to be reassured that these were being delivered. The External Auditors would use their professional scepticism to take a fresh look at the Authority and to meet regularly with the Finance and Audit teams. The current team of External Auditors from KPMG would continue to work with the Authority in order to keep consistency. At the year end the External Auditors would look at the manual adjustments. The External Auditors had not experienced any issues with Management from the Authority and this allowed them to be objective and independent.

A discussion took place regarding the Council's 20% savings. KPMG said that there would need to be a fundamental change to the way the Authority looked at value for money and savings in the future. The challenge was to prioritise appropriately using a mature approach, intelligent auditing and logic. There was no set template for Local Authorities to use as each Local Authority would be considered individually.

RESOLVED – that the External Audit Plan 2011/12 be noted.

AUC-35 UPDATE ON ICT BACK-UP AND RECOVERY

The Head of ICT and the ICT Service Delivery Manager gave a joint update on ICT Back-up and Recovery following a request at the last meeting. Following a Management restructure in January 2011 the Head of ICT had identified that the foundations and infrastructure within ICT needed to be developed further and changes made to priorities. Business Continuity Plans had been reviewed any appropriate action had or would be undertaken.

A discussion took place including:

- Insurance
- Moving of Equipment
- Mirror Imaging
- Hardware replacement
- Power failure

Members were re-assured that the appropriate safeguards had now been put in place and a further update would be given at the June 2012 meeting.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

AUC-36 UPDATE OF CHILDREN'S PLACEMENT COSTS

The Head of Family & Community Services and The Interim Head of Safeguarding gave a joint update on Children's Placement Costs following a request at the last meeting. There had been further progress on the key issues identified and the status had been upgraded to Yellow. The restructure was now confirmed and in place and the recruitment ongoing and the hard work would continue once the new team were in place. Once the restructure was complete a further report would be given and this would be brought to the June 2012 meeting.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

AUC-37 2012/13 TREASURY STRATEGY & TREASURY UPDATE REPORT

The Finance Manager gave a report on the Treasury Management activities during 2011/12. The treasury portfolio at the end of December showed an overall net indebtedness of £68m. Base rates had been at 0.5% all year and the latest information suggested that further movement would not take place until 2015. Where possible the Council would use maturing investments to reduce the level of additional borrowing. Two PWLB Loans had matured and one entered into to take advantage of the favourable interest rates. Short term borrowing had been used to fund short-term cash flow requirements. The average return on internal investments at the end of December was 3.3% compared to the benchmark figure of 0.45% for the period. The funds had now been received back from Dexia Bank as was recommended at a previous Audit Committee. The Treasury Strategy was currently in draft form and subject to change due to finalisation of the budget. The final Strategy would be taken to Cabinet on 23rd February and then on to Council on the 1st March. The revised strategy had adopted the new Ethical Investment Framework which meant that the Council would not knowingly directly invest in organisations whose activities include practices which directly pose a risk of serious harm to individuals or groups. The Council would also take full responsibility for proper management of risk and safeguarding the investments by ensuring that organisations were credit assessed.

The Head of Finance asked whether members wished to see a final version of the report with the updated final figures prior to its despatch for Cabinet but Members did not consider this necessary.

A discussion took place including:

- Capital receipts
- Prudential Indicators
- Gearing
- Reduction in Investments

RESOLVED – that the Treasury Management activities for the 2011/12 be noted and that the proposed Draft Management Strategy for 2012/13 be noted and that the Cabinet recommend its approval by the Council.

AUC-38 REVIEW AND UPDATE TO THE SPEAK UP POLICY

The Audit & Assurance Manager gave an update on the Speak up Policy. The changes to the Policy reflect best practice from other local authorities, Public Concern at Work and the Council's revised senior management arrangements. The Policy was now a more structured and user-friendly document. The aims of the Policy were to encourage people to raise issues within the organisation rather than going externally, for example to the Shropshire Star. The Policy would be promoted both internally and externally and an item would be put onto the Council's intranet after approval by the Council.

A delegation to the Monitoring Officer was included in the report to make any changes required from further guidance on the members Code of Conduct arising from the Localism Act.

RESOLVED –

- TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the Speak up Policy be approved incorporating the changes outlined in paragraph 5.4 of the report;**
- that delegated authority be given to the Monitoring Officer as set out in paragraph 5.6 of the report;**

AUC-39 INFORMATION GOVERNANCE UPDATE REPORT 1ST APRIL – 31ST DECEMBER 2011

The Head of Governance gave an update on the Council's Information Governance activities during the period 1st April to 31st December 2011. The Audit & Assurance Team had carried out a programme of work, including the training of officers, to address the important issue of data breaches. There had been an average of 60-70 Fol requests per month during the period. A Publication Scheme has been put in place in order to make as much information as possible freely available and to increase the efficiency of the council by reducing the number of individual Fol requests that need to be managed. An updated Contract Register was now published online. Big Brother Watch issued a report in November 2011 and although

the headlines started negatively actually the public were in the end re-assured that this level of reporting showed that the Council were actively managing its information. The current work programme involved a review of the Corporate Information Security Policy (CISP) and the online training programme which had proved very useful and was being rolled out across the Council. The Safeguarding Review was still ongoing. New Information Security advice had been produced for Members which was hoped would be more user friendly and contained guidance and tips.

A discussion took place including:

- Encryption of Laptops and USB Memory Sticks
- FOI requests
- Leaving process for Officers and the protection of data

It was agreed that the Annual Report for 11/12 would include the final 3 month update following the 9 month update and would be brought to the June meeting. Further reporting was agreed as a 5 month update to the September Meeting and the remaining 7 month update as part of the 12/13 Annual report to the June 2013 meeting. Any appropriate information would be reported back to the Committee in between.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

AUC-40 INTERNAL AUDIT QUARTER 3 2011/12 UPDATE REPORT

The Audit and Assurance Manager presented the quarterly update report for Quarter 3 from October to December 2011. The focus during this period had been on fundamental audits and included general ledger, purchase ledger, sales ledger and benefits. A total of 13 final reports had been issued during this time. There had been 4 Amber Reports on Car Parking, Children's Placement Costs, ICT and Abacus but two of these – Children's Placement's and ICT had moved to yellow and the Committee had received updates already at the meeting. The Car Parking and Abacus areas would be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

AUC-41 REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE 2011/12 AND SKILLS AUDIT

The Audit and Assurance Manager presented a report regarding a survey to measure the effectiveness of the Audit Committee. This was an annual survey and was based on surveys taken in previous years. Members were asked to consider if a non-elected member or co-optee was required to add additional expertise and resources to improve effectiveness. A review of skills was also to be undertaken in order to develop a Training Programme for Members. The results of the Surveys would be reported back to the March meeting.

A discussion took place and it was suggested that the survey could be used as a basis to assess other Committees within the Council as a good practice exercise.

Concern was expressed that the Survey should be taken to identify any gaps or expertise needed and then take the decision to see if a non-elected member or co-optee was required. It was agreed that this question would be deleted from the survey before it was circulated.

RESOLVED –

- a) that the Survey, Appendix A to the Report, would be circulated as outlined in paragraph 5.2 subject to the question regarding the co-optees being deleted;
- b) that the Committee would complete the skills survey, Appendix B to the Report;
- c) that the results of the effectiveness survey and skills audit be presented to the March meeting.

The meeting ended at 7.56 p.m.

Chairman:

Date:

BUDGET AND FINANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget and Finance Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 5th January 2012 at 6.00 pm in the Scrutiny Meeting Room, Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors R Sloan (Chairman), K Austin, R Evans, A Lawrence, C Mollett, S Reynolds, A Stanton, C Turley and R Williams (Co-optee), A England, N England, G Green, A McClements and W McClements.

Officers: K Clarke (Head of Finance), K Kalinowski (Head of Performance and Standards), J Rowe (Head of Commissioning), P Taylor (Head of Adult Social Care Delivery), S Jones (Scrutiny Officer), T Clarke (Scrutiny Officer) and J Clarke (Democratic Services Officer).

BFSC-22 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Finance Scrutiny Committee held on 15th November 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

BFSC-23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

BFSC-24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

BFSC-25 FINANCIAL MONITORING 2011/12

The Head of finance presented a report on the 2011/12 financial monitoring.

The Revenue spending for the year is projected to be within budget at year end, this is after 2.145m had been set aside in order to support the 2012/13 budget. There were significant pressures in the budget for the current year which were identified as:

- Adult Social Care purchasing – projected £0.9m overspend
- Children in Care Placements including Safeguarding Service and Legal Costs – combined overspend of £1.4m
- Specialist Education - £0.54m
- Income shortfalls from PIP rentals (£200k) and planning (£115k), building control (£180k) and licensing fees (£75k) totalling £0.57m

Although the Council faced a challenging position during the next year there were some benefits:

- Treasury Management £750k

- New Homes Bonus Grant £615K
- Insurance renewal process £250k

This enabled £2.145m of efficiency savings to be delivered early. At the time the Report was written ¼ of the budget had been spent. This figure currently stood at 37% and it was usual that the bulk of the budget was spent at the end of the financial year. It was proposed that any further underspend would be carried forward to supplement the one-off contingency for 2012/13.

Collection levels for Council Tax were ahead of target whilst the NNDR collection and Sales Ledger Debt were slightly behind target. This was being closely monitored.

Question

In the current climate/recession have the benefit claims gone up?

Answer

This year had the highest record of new cases and was worse than 2007. The current spend on benefit claims was 2.8m higher than last year and the Council was only given 95% back in grants. This system would be changing from 1st April 2013 whereby the grant would given in the form of a lump sum but this would have been cut by 10%. It would be up to the Council have its own Council Tax Benefit Scheme in place. Member Information Seminars were being put in place to outline the new changes and it was hoped that Members would attend.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

BFSC-26 SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING STRATEGY 2012/13-2014/15

The Council's Service & Financial Planning Strategy for the period 2011/12–2013/14 was approved at full Council on 3rd March 2011 and was the most challenging ever faced. The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) cuts for local government over this 4 year period were 27% as compared with other Government Departments who averaged a cut of 8.3%. The scale of these reductions and the front-loading were much greater than expected and it was hoped to use the current year's budget and £9.1m of one-off resources to limit the impact on front line services. The outlook was not improving and it was expected that there would be a further squeeze on public spending for 2014/2015 and the following two years after. Pressures on the budget were:

- PIP Rentals – Vacant properties
- Funding of Benefit cases
- Older People – PCT Continuing heal care cases

In real terms the cash cut equated to £40m.

The Government are currently reviewing the Local Government Framework and no details were available except that the control of business rates would revert back to the Local Authority. This made projections for 2012/13 very difficult. Damping would

continue and would be in the sum of £2m. There was an underestimation of the population by 7,000 which equated to £2.8m, but the data from the Census had been frozen and was not included in the 2012/13 budget. The reductions in the Grant limited the scope for any new investments as additional demands had been placed on the Council's Adult Social Care Services and investment into Brookside. A savings package totalling around £18m was set out and included:

- Senior Management Restructure – 50% cut over 3 years
- Reductions in pay for Senior Officers
- Service Review Programme
- Staff reductions through re-structure (excluding Safeguarding)

The Government had offered a one-off Grant to freeze Council Tax for the period 2012/13 and the Council was in the process of seeking views from the community of whether Council Tax should be frozen in 2012/13 or whether it should be increased to protect services. The three consultation options could be found in the Report.

New investment would need to be found to meet increasing budget demands of adult social care including £1.3m towards Continuing Health Care (CHC). After heated discussions with the PCT an initial offer had been made and discussions would be ongoing.

Balances and one-off benefits for 2012/13 would be carried forward including:

- Savings proposals including additional income - £8.046m
- Savings from staff restructure - £7.933m
- Single Status provision - £2m

together with one-off resources towards the £21,987 budget Gap. These figures could be found at Appendix 8 of the Report.

Council Tax for Telford & Wrekin in 2011/12 was the lowest in the Midlands by approximately 14%, this made the Council £10m worse off, this would bring down the funding gap from £22m down to £12m.

Due to Capital Programmes being squeezed down the debt was being paid out of the revenue budget. Projections were:

Debt Repayments - £172m
Council Tax Taken - £56m

Capital is a problem that has to be addressed.

There were some positives:

- £0.6m income increases
- £3.3m operational efficiencies
- £2.18m procurement savings

A note containing questions asked in advance of the meeting was tabled together with the answers. In addition to the information provided in the note the following information was given:

- Single Status
 - The climate had changed since 2007 but the same % had been used
 - Negotiations would be entered into with Unions on single status costs
 - More people could lose pay than may have lost pay previously
 - People who have left could lodge a claim and would be entitled to the increase. The Council would have to pay. The £11m in general fund money should be sufficient to cover any payments necessary
 - £12m invested and should be classed as a reserve. Auditors decide if the decisions taken are right. The best use of reserves must be made in order to retain services.
- Capital Receipts
 - Capital Receipts were on the conservative side and were better than at first thought
- Treasury
 - Audit Committee receives regular updates
 - Projections were 4.5% in June of this year and this figure was significant for debt repayments
- Contingencies
 - Ironbridge Gorge
 - Government Offered 60% up to £20m (approx £12m) with the Council contributing the rest (approx £8m)
 - The money should not be turned down if at all possible, but it needed to be borne in mind that the total costs could be as much as £80m – could the Council afford this
 - Any new work should compliment previous work undertaken
 - There may always be some kind of spend on the Gorge, but this must be undertaken in proper stages
 - Tourism ie Museums – how much revenue and how many visitors come into the Gorge?
 - There was currently no clear cut deadline but this will be looked at and a response brought back to a future meeting but it was envisaged that a decision would need to be taken in the next 4-6 months
- Landfill
 - There had been no announcement as yet that the cost of landfill tax would go above £80 per tonne
- Food Waste
 - Waste Collection was due to go out to tender and there was to be a lot of changes. There would be a need to specify exactly what was required to meet the requirements needed and be as cost effective as possible
 - A report would be taken to cabinet in the next few months
- Council Tax Comparison Figures
 - A disposable income comparison from National Statistics was requested together with an comparison of average earnings
- Shared Services

- There was currently no real scope to share services. Services with neighbouring authorities/partners were potentially more expensive and there may be more travelling costs involved outweighing any possible costs savings.
- Council Tax Consultation
 - The budget was set on the worse case scenario. The Council needed to make the most informed choice possible. A decision would be made once the consultation period was completed. Further discussions would take place at the planned meetings on 24th January and 1st February 2012
- Capital Costs Programme
 - A Breakdown of the Capital Costs Programme would be brought to the next meeting

It was advised that if any further clarification was needed or any questions from the meeting arose to contact Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Officer.

The Head of Adult and Social Care gave a verbal update. Adult Social Care is a large area with significant pressures including older people needing support with a complexity of cases and the survival of younger people into adult life. Work was to be progressed over the next 3 years and it was recognised nationally that community care is unsustainable in its current form. There may previously have been an over-subscribing of care and there were proposals to design a more personalised model with the same level of services at a lower cost. Savings could be made on Continuing Health Care through re-enablement and personal budgets. There were also plans to reduce the transitions costs of children's packages. £20m was spent on care and it was important that the budget was spent wisely. The proposal could deliver savings through better procurement of domiciliary care through the reduction of costs paid per unit of service and by assessing the cost of care provision for residential and nursing homes for younger adults. Some of the proposals put forward may in reality could potentially lead to a reduction in service or a higher cost to individuals. A low level preventative service may delay or reduce the need for expensive care. Some subsidised care cost had been increased but the individuals were still willing to pay for the services and it was hoped through this that the service be as cost neutral as possible as people liked the backing of the Council.

The low level prevention service cost made to individuals above the eligibility threshold would be increased from £8 to £12 but this is still below the national average of £13/£14. It was suggested that there were individuals who have higher levels of income and may be able to pay more taking into account the full level of disability benefits received towards their care. It was proposed to consult Service Users and allow them sufficient notice, if changes were to be made, to opt out of the scheme. This may have a slight impact in achieving the full amount of fees.

The Council was working with the supporting people services which provided low level housing related support ie maintaining tenancies. The old system had been based on housing provision and not on the needs of the individual and it had been identified that not every individual's needs are the same. It was hoped to change to a needs led scheme rather than giving all individuals in the housing scheme the

same services, which often were not required. Further information would be reported back to the meeting proposed for the 24th January 2012.

Assisted technology had made advances and was a solution used to help some individuals with their home care but was not designed to replace care. It was used most effectively with re-ablement packages with families seeing the benefits and choosing to pay for the service on an ongoing basis, which helped to reduce care costs. ALD Schemes had successfully replaced the waking night duty staff with assisted technology which helped reduce staff costs.

The Head of Policy and Performance gave a verbal update on the work that was being undertaken to have preventative measures put in place at an early stage to relieve budget pressures. There was a big push towards prevention in the service design. It was important with family connect to have contact with the right place initially and make sure that any actions are followed up. Early intervention was there to help from early signs and it was following the children's centre concept. Cohesion used dedicated workers to help with the complex needs of children on the edge of care or who had gone into care with the aim of helping them back to their families if appropriate. The service was at the beginning of its restructure but had already achieved some success. Children had not been taken into care or have been returned to the family sooner than expected. It was aimed to provide better early intervention by close working arrangement and working together at every level. Some prevention measures were:

- Placing someone into the family instead of putting children in care
- Cohesion Service
- Daily Support
- Respite not only for the disabled but for other families too
- Family Group Conferences to include extended family members and friends who could provide support

The package was give families ideas of how they could help themselves and learn from other ideas and places and by re-designing the service to bring down the number of children in care and only place the children in care who need to be there. A reduction in costs could be reduced by:

- Better support
- Fostering
- Looking at placement costs and not going out to the more expensive agencies

A question was raised as to whether more people had become interested in fostering due to the recession. A free advertising campaign was currently running on Beacon Radio. Where expressions of interest had been made the standards still needed to be met. If applicants had been expressing an interest for financial gain only this would be picked up on.

The strategies were beginning now and would build momentum during the next 6 months. Once everything was in place it would continue to build over the next 12-18 months.

There were no significant budget pressures with larger families moving in or out of the Borough, it was children with extremely complex needs ie disability or teenagers that were the most expensive and less predictable cases as there was no special provision locally and the services had to be brought in.

There was no separate contingency for safeguarding or care. The funds were kept centrally and needed to be flexible but there was enough funding for meet corporate pressures next year.

The Head of Commissioning presented a report on the savings proposals for Environmental Services. There were a lot of proposals and there were some difficult decisions ahead as £4.5m needed to be saved on top of the staff savings. Changes had been made last year to the cleansing and road sweeping and grass cutting services. The largest area of spending was the TWS Contracts and negotiations were currently taking place to make contractual changes and to do things differently. The efficiency savings were through procurement and would not directly affect residents.

A question was raised regarding saving 205 and the closing of the Newport CRC and closing the remaining sites for 2 days a week on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. It was clarified that sites will always be open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays together with Bank Holidays and weekends. The sites were only to be closed on Mondays and Fridays on a rotational basis and there would always be one site open. It was suggested that this was made easy and clear to understand during the consultation process. The alternative sites, although a short distance away, were situated quite well no more than 15 minutes away and on a good road network and were easy routes. To use the CRC you had to be mobile and there was a lot of inward movement for work purposes and it may not necessarily mean special journeys.

A question was raised regarding the site of the Tetra Pak recycling which had been re-located to the CRC Site. It was asked if this could be re-located to another site in Newport. This would be brought back to the meeting on 24th January.

Regarding fly-tipping there was no intelligence to suggest that closing the CRC Site in Newport would encourage fly-tipping and occurrences were not anticipated. This would be monitored.

A report would be taken to Cabinet during the next 2 months in order for consultation to begin although some soft market testing and consultation had been sought from the public. Recycling needed to be as simple as possible and this would be fed into the procurement process in order to get recycling targets up. It was hoped that this would begin in April-May and a Members Information Seminar would be arranged.

Funding to continue the food waste trial could not be found as it would have cost between £0.5-£1m to implement. This would be looked at again if the Government changed the rules. This would be a feature of the procurement of waste management. There were opportunities to use good local businesses within the Borough in the future. Marketing for behavioural change was being targeted with the pilot scheme in Woodside and there was scope for encouraging re-cycling without

too much effort. This would include visiting schools and PR with Parish Councils to improve re-cycling activity.

RESOLVED – that the report be noted.

BFSC-27 FORWARD PLAN

A discussion then took place on the following items:

- National Deaf Children's Society - FoI requests
 - Not to be included on work programme
- Homestart
 - Budget & Finance to ask for further information before a decision was made
- Re-Cycling Proposals
 - Budget and Finance to look at the proposals

A programme of consultation events was tabled at the meeting and Members were asked to confirm whether they intended to attend at any of the events prior to them taking place.

The following items were to be reported back to future meetings of the Committee:

- Ironbridge Gorge Funding Deadline
- Economic Benefits – Statistics
- Average Earnings Regionally for Council Tax comparisons
- Disposable Income figures
- Breakdown of Capital Costs
- Siting of the Tetra Pak location and Fly Tipping
- Overspending figures for Looked after Children over the last 8-10 years
- Overspending figures for Adult Social Care over the last 8-10 years

If Members had any further queries or questions it was asked if they would contact Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Officer.

RESOLVED – that the Forward Plan be noted and the date of the next meeting be agreed as Tuesday 24th January 2012 at 6.30pm

The meeting ended at 8.52 p.m.

Chairman:

Date:

BUDGET AND FINANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Budget and Finance Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 1st February 2012 at 6.30pm in the Scrutiny Meeting Room, Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors R. Sloan (Chairman), K. Austin, A. Lawrence, C. Mollett, A. Stanton, C. Turley and R. Williams (Co-optee).

Also attending: Cllr. A. McClements; J. Gulliver, Scrutiny Co-optee; K. Perry, Head of Safeguarding; Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist.

BFSC-34 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Finance Scrutiny Committee held on 24th January 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

BFSC-35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs. R. Evans, S. Reynolds.

BFSC-36 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs. R. Evans and C. Mollett declared an interest as Ironbridge Parking Permit holders.

BFSC-37 SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING STRATEGY 2012/13-2014/15

The main purpose of the meeting was for the Committee to agree its response to the budget proposals, but first received further information requested at the meeting on 5th January regarding the costs of children in care placements. The Head of Safeguarding gave a presentation referring to tabled documents. The documents showed budgeted and actual expenditure for looked after children placements between 2007/08 and 2011/12, the numbers of children by care placements and information on investment in children in care placements.

The upward trajectory was due to an increase in the number of children and complex cases coming into care, although the latest figures for January had shown that the number of children in care, and usage of agency foster carers, had reduced.

Following the presentation a number of points were discussed:

- Members asked whether the increase in the number of children coming into care following Baby P was due to risk aversion by social workers. The Head of

Safeguarding replied that the increase was more due to greater awareness and sophistication in recognising potential harm.

- A question about the pipeline of foster carers was raised. The number of internal foster carers had increased in proportion to a reduction of external foster carers. The target of 14 new foster carers had been exceeded.
- Members acknowledged that it was difficult to budget for care placements because the numbers coming into care and the complexity of need was uncontrolled, but that there was a need to ensure that care was provided in the most cost effective way. The Head of Safeguarding replied that the Cohesion Team was responding quickly to problems and was working to prevent admissions, but the authority had a legal duty to find a placement if a child needed one.
- External residential care was the most expensive type of care for children with very complex needs. Members questioned whether alternative models of provision had been fully explored that would enable provision to be delivered locally and at a lower cost, for example small scale provision within the borough or the recruitment of “super” foster carers skilled to deal with complex needs. The Head of Safeguarding replied that there was a group of children for whom fostering and a family set up was not suitable, and who need residential care packages which include specialist support such as education or health care. Regulatory requirements also needed to be considered. With regard to small scale provision in the borough, there was an issue with there being a sufficient critical mass of children within the borough to make this cost-effective.
- Members asked whether there was capacity within Jigsaw to house more children in care. Current provision is 6 residential beds and 5 were occupied. The other houses at Jigsaw were being used. Jigsaw provision was being reviewed to see whether the best use was being made of the provision.

The Chairman remarked that prevention and early intervention were long-term strategies that would take time to have an impact but that he hoped would offer better value for money and outcomes in the long run. The Head of Safeguarding was thanked and left the meeting.

There were no further questions arising from items discussed at the previous meeting. Following the last meeting, members had requested a breakdown of supporting people costs and the unit cost of Meals on Wheels and this information was tabled or provided verbally by the scrutiny officer. Officers from the relevant service areas had not been invited to the meeting to present the information and it was agreed that further discussion was needed on both items. It had been recommended at the previous meeting that the Meals on Wheels service would be referred to the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee to review, taking the social aspects of the service into account, and subject to agreement by the relevant scrutiny committee members. It was further agreed that the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee would review supporting people from a value for money perspective at a future meeting. Members wanted to explore the cost effectiveness of providing very small amount of support to a large number of people.

A report showing the number of people participating in each method of budget consultation was tabled for information. Members noted the overall number of people who had engaged in the process (approximately 7,442) and commented on the high number of people responding to the “Your Voice” cut out compared to those using social media.

Members discussed the comments that they would like to make in response to the budget proposals. The comments would be presented to the Cabinet on 23rd February so that they could be taken into account before the final proposals are finalised. Members made the following comments to formulate the Committee’s response:

1. The Committee acknowledged the effort that had gone into engaging members of the public in the budget consultation process.
2. Members were concerned about the risk of depending on realising £100m of capital receipts for the investment programme in the current market, and the additional pressure that the cost of any extra borrowing would put on the revenue budget. Members recommend that capital receipts continue to be very closely monitored, and the Committee will continue to monitor this as part of its on-going work.
3. The Committee was mindful that the target of around £2.18m savings from procurement is ambitious and that the savings must continue to be very closely monitored. The Committee will continue to monitor this as part of its on-going work.
4. Members were reassured to hear that that the savings proposals in children and family services that were looked at in more detail (Youth Initiatives, Teen Pregnancy Services, Domestic Violence provision) would be made mainly from efficiency savings and that it was not anticipated that there would be a significant impact on services.
5. If the closure of the CRC in Newport goes ahead, members recommended that a Tetra Pak recycling bank, currently located at the CRC site, should remain in Newport.
6. If CRC facilities are reduced, members of the public must be made aware of which sites are open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays so they do not waste time visiting a CRC which is closed.
7. Members remained sceptical that marketing strategies such as social media aimed at changing the behaviour of households who do not recycle would produce the projected level of savings, and felt that improved recycling rates could only be achieved in conjunction with a review of containers and collection cycles.
8. The Committee was concerned about the consistent overspend on children in care placements and recommended that fresh ideas are sought from outside the

authority to find alternative delivery models to look after children better but for less money, recognising that the children must come first. Members agreed with the early intervention approach, but were concerned whether this would generate the necessary savings in the short term (during 2012/13), and that costs should continue to be closely monitored. The Committee will continue to monitor costs.

9. The Committee emphasised the need to follow due process for consulting on changes to adult social care services – to ensure changes are communicated to service users, that the impact of changes can be mitigated as far as possible and to minimise the risk of challenge/judicial review.
10. Members recognised the work involved in the negotiations with the PCT about the impact on the adult care budget of the withdrawal of CHC funding, and welcome the positive approach of the PCT.
11. The Committee recognised the difficult position facing the Council in making a decision on Council Tax and were mindful of the impact an increase would have on households affected by the recession.
12. Given the significance of the Gorge to the local economy the Committee were hopeful that ongoing negotiations with the government about funding for stability work would produce a positive outcome.
13. The Committee commended the work of the Street Pastors and welcomed the Council's further investment in the project for 2012/13 and hoped that funding would be sustained in future years

Members further agreed further scrutiny work arising from scrutiny of the proposals subject to agreement by the relevant scrutiny committee members:

- The Budget & Finance Budget Scrutiny Committee would continue to monitor savings on procurement, costs of children in care placements and capital receipts.
- The Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee would review Supporting People costs from a value for money perspective at a future meeting.
- The Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee would review proposals relating to changes to the Meals on Wheels service.
- The Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee would review Jigsaw provision as part of the wider review of SEN provision, and the options for the Jigsaw houses.

It was agreed that further comments would be added regarding the challenge of setting the budget in the face of the size of the cuts to the Council's grant settlement, and highlighting the fact that that with the large number of savings proposals it had not been possible for the Committee to carry out a comprehensive review of each proposal; the Committee had therefore focussed on a number of items of particular interest to members. Members also recognised the fact that efforts had been made

to make savings through efficiencies and to minimise the impact on services wherever possible.

RESOLVED that the Committee's response be drafted by the Scrutiny Group Specialist in the terms set out above and circulated to members for comment prior to its presentation to Cabinet.

BFSC-38 FORWARD PLAN

It was agreed that given the number of meetings held in the past month, no meetings would be held in February and that the Committee would reconvene in March to review Supporting People provision. Potential dates would be circulated by the Scrutiny Group Specialist for agreement with members.

The meeting ended at 8.15 p.m.

Chairman:.....

Date:.....

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Monday 26th March 2012 at 6.00 pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors G Green (Chair), S Burrell, J Greenaway, C Turley and Paul Watling (Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Families) .

Co-optees: Dr S Ali, Mr A Atkinson

Officers: J Collins (Assistant Director: Education, Culture & Skills), V McKay (Group Manager for Procurement, Placements and Commissioning), T Clarke (Scrutiny Officer) and J Clarke (Democratic Services Officer).

CYPSC-39 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 29th February 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

CYPSC-40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor A Mackenzie, M Ion and J Loveridge
Co-optee: Ms M Ward and Ms E Ofori

CYPSC-41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CYPSC-42 SHORT BREAKS FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

The Group Manager for Procurement, Placements and Commissioning gave a verbal update on the short breaks for disabled children.

The service was very well regarded and there were no gaps in the service but there were areas for development ie disabled facilities in the Town Park. Capital funding had been received enabling development to take place in the Town Park and Southwater Way. A tender was due to go out shortly for bucket swings and adapted “springies” and wheelchair accessible big play equipment that both a child and a parent/carer could access together. Accessible toilet facilities alongside the Oakengates Track were also proposed.

Activities engaging with the children to identify what activities they would like to access would take place shortly.

During the first half of the year (April – September) 756 children had attended at a variety of services. Some of these services had been funded by the PCT and the Local Authority had also pulled in data from the Children Centres to gather a more comprehensive picture of disabled children attending services. A gap in services for

younger children in the 5-8 year old group had been raised as a need by parents and this is being reviewed to see whether that gap is actually the case.

Unfortunately the Blue Eyed Soul Group's funding had dried up and was going out of business. This was a very well attended dance group and would be missed. It was hoped that an offer to seek alternative dance provision could be put out if the children still identified dance as an activity they wished to continue.

Members asked a number of questions, including:

89 participants used the Agency, what was the Agency?

This provision was for children who needed one-to-one support in the home or the community. Numerous and various care agencies are contracted to provide this care.

Are all disabled children engaged in activities?

Some children won't want to be engaged. Where possible disabled children are encouraged to engage in mainstream activities and the workforce development in mainstream services for example officers have been trained in ASD and challenging behaviour. There are no waiting list for attendance at events.

Would the attendance figures at Abraham Darby Swimming pool be higher at the next report and would the children from Newport pool transfer to Abraham Darby?

Consultation has been undertaken with children in sport and leisure services using coloured stickers for the children to choose the events they would like to take part in and further engagement with parents has taken place. The intention is that activities would be organised in the areas where they are needed. There were a lot of activities in South Telford and no reason why the specific group from Newport Pool would move to Abraham Darby.

Why was there a zero take up at Jigsaw School?

The activities at Jigsaw were go-karts and bikes, there was no real take up of these activities and no arrangements were therefore made.

Arthog is now doing a bit more for disabled children, but is there anything in the Borough where the children in the less urban areas can get access to and if so do they attend?

Arthog is used by whole families of children with visual and hearing impairments. There are also two groups who run outdoor activities in the local area:

- Cannock
- Tickwood Farm

How do they get there?

Support is provided by outreach staff and community support staff as well as parents transporting children to access services. The service is currently looking at accessible services in the community.

Are go-kart / 3 wheeler wheelchairs used?

Yes, there is 1 all-terrain wheelchair at Arthog and 1 smaller all terrain wheelchair which is going to be placed at Telford town Park. Families can borrow the wheelchair and this will be advertised.

How much do these wheelchairs cost?

The approximate cost of the wheelchair was £5,000, but it was bought a few years ago. One of the wheelchairs is currently not used enough so it will be taken to the Town Park and Community Centres to enable the children to have a go with it.

Geographically would a child be fairly isolated?

That would not be a problem in the Borough as the area is not too big. There are more activities in the areas of deprivation. Following on from consultation it has been identified that there may need to be more activities in the North, although this could prove quite a challenge. Revolution is used as a base at Stafford Park but transport links are poor and although it has a lot space it is tricky to get to.

The Authority has to have a short breaks statement by law and has to publish this. This went to last October's Cabinet could the members have a copy?

There were two versions of the Statement one for adults and one for children. These were published on the Council's website. Copies of the Statement would be sent to members.

Charging for Activities

It was proposed to introduce small subsidiary charges for activities. Parents were keen to implement this to sustain services. The charges would be between £2.00-£4.00. Charges will encourage attendance as people who have paid for events are more likely to turn up.

Raising the profile of disabled children with other children in magazines/school newsletters

Most schools have a role for promoting positive images. Schools are good at celebrating young children's success and achievements.

Ethnicity / Traveller Engagement

There are currently no traveller children attending activities. Children are encamped on the sites and are difficult to engage with. The figures were quite telling on ethnicity and there was a job to do on highlighting that services are available to everyone. It was suggested that the School Liaison may be the place to seek advice with regard to engagement.

RESOLVED

That Members would receive copies of the two versions of the Short Break Statement.

CYPSC-43 SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND ACADEMIES

The Assistant Director for Education, Culture & Skills tabled a report and gave a verbal overview of the Schools Governance Service.

The service had recently undergone a re-structure and was being managed by Sally Noble, Service Delivery Manager, Leadership and Management.

Most schools had given good feedback and the service was valuable and effective. Although some Grant Maintained Schools had chosen to provide their own services, most other Schools within the Borough had chosen to “buy back” the services from the Council.

Within the Schools who had Academy Status a reduction on the buy back had been noted. Abraham Darby Academy, Madeley Academy, Adams Grammar School and Priorslee had opted out of the Council’s services. Newport Girls High School was the only academy still subscribing, but this was currently under review.

The service had a free information and support telephone line and officers dealt with enquiries there and then if possible or returned the calls as soon as they were able. The Service was also able to give support to the head teacher recruitment process and appointments.

A comprehensive training programme was run annually with bespoke training for all abilities. This was currently being reviewed to look at the strengths and any developments which could be made in the future.

The clerking service which was offered was professional and of high quality and the comprehensive training programme included Heads and Chairs briefings and Clerks briefings and training. The next briefing, to include training, was to be held on 19th April 2012. Mick Adams had been invited to give an update to Clerks and Governors at this session in order to keep everyone abreast of all education developments.

A new Service Level Agreement had been issued. The forms were currently being returned, but early indications were that the buy-back of services was at a similar level to previous years.

All Schools, including Academies, were required by law to allow access to copies of the Governing Body Minutes, once they have been ratified. It was proposed that a central record of Academy Governing Body Minutes was kept in order for the Authority to keep abreast of any decisions that are being taken.

Members asked a number of questions, including:

The Clerks provided by the School Governance Service had a deep knowledge of procedure. For those Schools who choose to use their own Clerks did they have the same depth of training as the Local Authority Clerks?

No, although the training was offered to everyone it was not always taken up. The Heads do use their PA’s to act as Clerks to the Governing Bodies. Although there was an emerging disparity, in the Local Authority’s favour there were currently not many Academies. The Academies still had a good working relationship with the Local Authority and had agreed to provide figures and information to the Council although they were not obliged to do this. Nationally it was almost impossible to retain central management of this service.

Although the relationships were reasonable, had the Academies chosen to go their own route because they wanted to be independent or because they wanted a better deal?

The Service was not cheap but it was a good quality service. The core package cost around £970 per annum for a secondary school, the core plus package cost approximately £1,500 per annum and the enhanced package about £2,000 per annum. This may well have been an issue in their decision.

Could an Academy call on the service ie for a dismissal?

No, this is not something that is encouraged as long as the vast majority buy in to the service. In principle if an Academy rang in for a service they would be given a quote but this would be on a full cost recovery basis.

Governance is not always on the same cycle as the Local Authority and there is also concern that there was no local representation on the governing body of some schools. Should there be a local elected member on the governing body?

There was no obligation for an elected member to be on the governing body. Some Academies still have elected representatives ie Abraham Darby and Madeley Academy. It had been difficult in the past to fill all of the places on a Governing Body. If someone was interested in taking a vacant place on the governing body, once all of the checks had been made, they were welcome to stand. If this person was elected for 4 years it would not be possible for them to be asked to step down in order for an elected member to take their place. If a vacancy did arise then the local elected member would be approached first. It did help with local issues if you had a locally elected member who knows the area ie on parking.

Could the length of time that a person serves as Local Authority representative on a Governing Body be varied, ie could this be an annual appointment?

This would need to be looked into to see if it was allowed by law. This would be reported back to a future meeting.

How could schools engage more with elected members?

Some schools had very good engagement with the elected members and others didn't. Suggestions were made that schools could ie sing carols to pensioners or attend at a Remembrance Day Parade where there was the presence of elected members. Most of the new schools would be academies and it must be ensured that the right kind of engagement is made in order that the relationship and trusted partnership is kept. This could be done by new way of working with school clusters. This needed to be monitored and reported back to a future meeting.

How confident were the Local Authority that the Governing Bodies would look after children in care in their schools, as some schools have less experience than others?

The service tried its best to link with the schools and their children in care designated person. If there was no designated person within the school the Head would normally attend at the meetings. There was a level of support within schools and the treatment of children in care should be the same, although some schools were more familiar with the challenges than others. All schools should also have a designated

children in care governor. Schools should be reminded of this in terms of Corporate Parenting. A copy of the minutes from the meetings would be obtained in order to try and check that there was a designated person and governor for children in care for each of the schools.

Had all schools, including the Academies, received a copy of the Bereavement Policy and would this be taken up?

Yes, a copy of the Policy went to all schools and academies and it was hoped that it would be taken up.

RESOLVED

That the Assistant Director for Education, Culture & Skills provides an update to the Committee in 6 months time.

CYPSC-44 FORWARD PLAN

The next meeting was scheduled for 19th April 2012 and the topics were to be Child Poverty and BSF.

The subject for the May meeting would be Autism Strategy as a general issue and not as individual cases.

A question was raised as to whether the Council was to take part in the Corporate Safeguarding Peer Review. This would be looked at and brought back to a future meeting.

The meeting ended at 7.09p.m.

Chairman:

Date:

CO-OPERATIVE & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting of the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny
Committee held on Thursday, 2nd February, 2012 at 6.00 p.m. in the Civic
Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors A. McClements, (Chairman), S. Bentley, N. England, K. Guy, T. Hope, A. Jhawar, Scrutiny Co-optee L. Baker-Oliver.

Also Present: Cllr Arnold England, Cabinet Member Leisure & Wellbeing; Cllr Shaun Davies, Cabinet Member Environment, Co-operative Council & Partnerships; Stuart Davidson, Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager; Rachael Jones, Community Engagement Equalities and Action Manager; Wendy Tonge, Priority Action, Parish Liaison Manager; Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist; Tracy Clarke, Scrutiny Officer.

CCSC-21 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee held on the 1st December 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

CCSC - 22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors J. Loveridge, K. Tomlinson.

CCSC-23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CCSC-24 MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY CENTRES

The Chairman reminded members that the purpose of the meeting was to scope the review of the Management of Community Centres. Two Scrutiny Suggestions had been received to review this topic, including one from the Chairman. The aim of the meeting was to provide background information about the topic to inform members' decisions about the method and scope of the review.

Copies of the presentation, information on the community centres and the scoping meeting template were tabled at the meeting.

A presentation was made by the Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager to provide background information, budget information, a breakdown of usage, typical programmes, current initiatives and future opportunities. The following points were highlighted:

- During 2003/04 ten community centres had been transferred to other providers leaving the Council to manage five community centres including Donnington, Brookside, Watling Street, Leegomery and Sutton Hill, which were retained for their strategic importance in terms of the communities they served.

- Until the end of 2008/09 the management of the community centres sat in the Neighbourhood & Communities team but as part of the service review and restructure moved to Leisure Services from April 2009. This meant staffing levels, policies and procedures had been reviewed with the intention of making £25,000 worth of savings.
- Priorslee Community Centre which was originally outsourced has returned to Council management. The Council therefore manages six community centres.
- As part of the restructuring process, it has now been proposed to move the management of the community centres to the Priority Action Team. The Community Engagement Equalities and Action Manager explained the rationale which would be that the team was out working with, and supporting, communities and had the skills and resources to support the management of the centres and to help people to help themselves. The scrutiny review would assist in determining the direction of future work.
- The Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager summarised the facilities available at the Council managed community centres and Members received a copy of the programme for each community centre.
- Following the start of the new administration there has been an increased recognition that the community centre is a vital part of the Co-operative Council.
- The current budget for the Community Centres is £230,000 a year including £10,500 allocated to Woodside Park Lane Centre. This covered the cost of the repair and maintenance of the centres, the operating licences, insurance and administration costs.
- Proposed savings of £14,000 would be generated from an increase in hire charges from April 2012.
- The presentation highlighted suggested areas that scrutiny may wish to look at as part of the review, including:
 - Alternative management vehicles – one size unlikely to fit all
 - Social Enterprise (individual or collective)
 - Parish Council Partnership
 - CVS Partnership
 - Co-operative pilot in Brookside
 - Watling Street expression of interest
 - Proposed transfer to Priority Action Team

Members and officers had a discussion regarding the management of the Council community centres and the models of management that could be considered.

- The Chairman said that from her own experience the management of the community centres concentrated on the physical management of the centres rather than the development of the centres' programme and the needs of the community.
- A Member asked how long the crèche at Donnington had been vacant for. The Priority Action, Parish Liaison Manager said that the crèche had been vacant for two months and had folded due to a lack of interest. However, interest in the space had been raised by St. Matthew's Church who did not have a community hall and were considering the community centre as a possible option.

- Members raised the issue that there was a lot of reliance on TCAT as a partner and asked how this is funded. The Officers explained that those adults using the facilities who are able to pay will do so.
- Members discussed the possibility of the Council exploring the transfer of community centres to local Town and Parish Councils and raised this as a model of management that they would like to consider. It was recognised by Members that the programme at Hollinswood and Randlay Community Centre had been improved by understanding what the local community needed.
- Members agreed that the needs of the communities are very different and there is not one single model of management that would suit all community centres.
- The Priority Action, Parish Liaison Manager said the aim is to support the community to ensure that the community centres work for them.

The Cabinet Members arrived at 6.35pm

- Members continued to discuss the issue of the Town and Parish Councils and said that the transfer of assets needed to be considered and where there is no loss of income to capital holdings the transfer of assets gave the parish more than just a building.
- The Cabinet Member for Leisure & Wellbeing highlighted that the Park Lane Centre is an excellent model of how things could be done differently by including the commercial sector and having an appropriate pricing structure to ensure that groups offering support that benefits the community are not deterred by the high costs of hiring the facilities.
- Members raised concerns about the access to community facilities that are joint use . This concern was echoed by the Cabinet Member for Leisure & Wellbeing who said the Council needed to ensure that it is involved in the negotiations for joint use for all new school/ community centres. Members agreed that the importance of the community centres could not be underestimated, for example Sutton Hill Community Centre has groups that have broken down the barriers to isolation.
- The Cabinet Member for Environment, Co-operative Council & Partnerships; reiterated that the community needed to take ownership of the centre with key holders and community deposits to ensure affordable access is available for all groups.
- The Community Engagement Equalities and Action Manager suggested Members should consider the role of the community centre and whether the management focus should be on making a profit or community benefit.

Following the discussion, members considered the scope for the review and agreed:

- That the review would be carried out as an in-depth review
- That the objective for the review would be to identify the range of management models and make recommendations to Cabinet on suitable options for consideration for the Council run centres.
- Members decided that they would like to visit all six Council run community centres. Members discussed the possibility of recommending a suitable model for each community centre but dismissed this due to the time constraints of the review.

- The Chairman suggested that the Members also look at some of the surveys and information collated about the community centres, including any information on the pilot scheme in Brookside. Members agreed that this was an option to be considered as well as engaging with the Brookside Improvement Group .
- Members felt it was Important to consider how the rural community centres work and look at the success they have by knowing their communities.
- Members agreed that the Parish and Town Councils know their own communities and that they would like to visit some of the Parish Councils that are successfully managing their community facilities. Cllr Bentley raised that without the Town and Parishes intervention at Ketley the Community centre would not have survived.
- The Members decided to follow the Cabinet Members recommendation that the Committee looked at an example of a charity managed community centres.
- As The Community Engagement Equalities and Action Manager had raised the question on the role of the community centre Members discussed the feasibility of considering other facilities in the area and having access to the community centres business plans and financial information. It was felt that this would be helpful in considering suitable models.
- Members decided that because Telford College of Arts & Technology was a partner providing a number of courses across the Boroughs community centres that they should be invited to a meeting with the Committee.
- The Cabinet Member for Leisure & Wellbeing recommended that the Committee invited Members of the Neighbourhood team to a meeting to discuss the value of the Community Centres from their perspective.

The Cabinet Members and Officers were thanked and left the meeting at 7.06pm

RESOLVED

- **That the review would be carried out as an In-depth review**
- **That the Scrutiny Officer would draft the terms of reference for the review for circulation to members for agreement.**

CCSC-25 NEW SCRUTINY SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

At the meeting on 5th December 2011, the Scrutiny Management Board had considered two Scrutiny Suggestions which had been referred to the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee for consideration for the Committee's work programme.

The first suggestion related to the application of Section 106 Agreements and the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in Telford & Wrekin. The Scrutiny Management Board had recommended the inclusion of this suggestion in the work programme. Members discussed the suggestion and agreed that a report on the development of the CIL would be requested as an agenda item at a meeting later in the year. It was agreed that the Scrutiny Officer and Chairman would liaise with the service area to determine the appropriate time for this to come to scrutiny.

The second suggestion related to communication with Town & Parish Councils regarding the sale of Council assets. There was a discussion about the suggestion and the Members agreed that they did not want to include the suggestion in the work programme at this stage when the Neighbourhood Planning pilots were underway.

RESOLVED

- **That a report on the CIL would be brought as an agenda item to a future meeting of the Committee.**
- **That the second suggestion would not be included in the Forward Plan at this time.**

CCSC- 26 FORWARD PLAN

The Chairmen drew members' attention to a report on the Co-operative Council which was due to go to Cabinet on 29th March. Members agreed that this report should be included in the Committee's work programme and that the Scrutiny Officer would liaise with the Cabinet member and senior officers to request that the report is brought to scrutiny prior to Cabinet. A meeting would then be arranged accordingly.

RESOLVED

That an additional meeting of the Committee would be held to review the Co-operative Council Cabinet report and dates would be agreed by e-mail.

The meeting ended at 7.23pm

Chairman:

Date:

CO-OPERATIVE & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting of the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny
Committee held on Wednesday 21st March 2012 at 6.00 pm in the
Scrutiny Room, Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors A McClements (Chairman), S Bentley, K Guy and A Jhawar.

Also Present: Cllr A England - Cabinet Member Leisure & Wellbeing, Cllr S Davies - Cabinet Member Environment, Co-operative Council & Partnerships, Cllr Rae Evans, Mike Vout – Urban Townscape Officer, Jules Millington – Information Officer, Delivery & Planning, Roger Lewis – Information Officer, Delivery & Planning, Debrah Byle – Projects Specialist, Jon Power – Delivery & Planning Manager, Paul Shuttleworth – Radio Presenter, Beverley Howard – T & W Volunteer Centre (CVS), Tracy Clarke - Scrutiny Officer and Wendy Buckley – Democratic Services Support Officer.

CCSC-27 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee held on the 2nd February 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

CCSC - 28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors N England, J Loveridge, K Tomlinson and Scrutiny Co-optee L Baker-Oliver.

CCSC-29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CCSC – 30 THE CO-OPERATIVE EMPLOYEE COMMISSION

Various reports were presented by Debrah Byle – Projects Specialist, which provided information on how Telford & Wrekin employees believe the organisation should be working and could work better. 87 employees had expressed an interest to form a working party looking particularly at 5 priority areas which were:

- Employee engagement & communication
- Financial management
- Employee volunteering
- Social responsibility
- Skills development and management

Skills planning and management – The sub group focused on how the council can liberate the untapped potential and unused skills of its employees with the following recommendations:

- Seek council agreement in principle to develop a mentoring scheme based on the sub-group's proposals, which can be costed and implemented subject to available resources.
- Seek council agreement in principle to implement an e-learning system based upon the sub-group's priorities, which can be costed and implemented subject to available resources.

Debrah Byle advised that one objective was to look at skills employees have but are not used particularly recently with restructures and changing roles. It was also explained that a mentoring scheme would help to transfer skills across the council. The mentor pilot scheme was due to start in procurement and contract management. It was hoped that the e-learning could be rolled out to all staff to upskill and support the workforce. This would be via a phased approach which would be knowledge based learning and would run alongside existing training. Newly appointed apprentices would also begin a mentor scheme in leisure starting in April. It was also expressed that all staff would have basic standards and competences from the e-learning based training.

Financial management – The sub-group focused on how employees could be more involved in financial management and business planning. The recommendations were to:

- Raise the profile of the Council spend above £500 with council employees.
- Develop a business planning framework which includes a mechanism to engage employees in the development and delivery of financially and community focussed services.
- The Skills Planning and Development sub-group focus on procurement and contract management skills as part of their recommended mentoring scheme.

In November the group implemented a list to raise awareness of cost and how Telford & Wrekin spend money. Employees were more aware of costs and could check what the employees particular service area were spending when the amounts were above £500 although any service area could also be checked. It was agreed that it was very important that employees could see this document and that there would be no costs involved to implement this.

Employee engagement and communication – The sub-group focussed on how the Council currently communicates with its employees and how this can be improved. The recommendations from this sub-group were:

- Develop, cost and seek approval to implement mechanisms to improve communication with employees who do not have access to a work-based PC.
- Develop a guidance framework for team briefings for all employees.
- Develop and implement ways of celebrating and recognising success and achievement.
- Develop policies for the future use of Social Media (e.g. Online Communication System and e-me).

Councillors were surprised that 40% of employees did not have access to a p.c. It was hoped to develop access to a computer with the I.T department looking into costings and the possibility of the use of the Stirchley Learning & Development Centre as use as a p.c drop in centre. To maximise use of notice boards, messages on payslips and the use of employee 'champions'.

It was discovered that Team Briefs were very different across the organisation. A guidance framework for employees was required to be developed regardless of where employees were based. Morale was particularly low across the Council and it was hoped that this could be raised by celebrating successes. One idea was to do this via employee morale days to recognise the good work that it being done across the Council. Councillor Guy would like to see an achievement award presented by the Mayor to improve staff morale and to celebrate good work.

Employee volunteering – The sub-group focussed on developing outline proposals and options for an employer supported volunteer scheme at the Council. The recommendations were:

- Develop, cost and seek approval for a volunteering scheme based upon the sub-group's proposals.
- Develop a council volunteering policy across the organisation to ensure consistency for employees who volunteer.
- The volunteering policy should include time to volunteer based on the following:
 - a. A limited amount of paid time e.g. 2 days for employees to take part in special projects that are co-ordinated by the Council.
 - b. Unpaid time for employees to take part in other volunteering activities that links to the signposting element of the volunteering scheme.

The options discussed for employee volunteering were to either agree limited paid time for example 2 days leave or a scheme whereby 1 day would be paid and the other would be unpaid. National volunteering week was due to be held in June which would be a good opportunity to begin the council scheme. It was also hoped that this would increase morale of staff.

It was suggested that employees that have large workloads may struggle to obtain 2 days off work by volunteering. Roger Lewis replied that it was on a volunteer basis and that it would increase morale. Telford & Wrekin already assist companies with volunteer projects but would coordinate the project for Telford & Wrekin volunteers.

Social Responsibility - The Sub-group focussed what social responsibility means and how it can be embedded at the Council. The recommendations were:

- Raise member and employee awareness and understanding to embed social responsibility through the Co-operative values of: Ownership; Involvement; Openness and Honesty and Fairness; and Respect.
- Six months after the social responsibility employee awareness campaigns, evaluate their success.

- Incorporate the principles of the social responsibility model within a business planning framework.

It was advised that social responsibility was an important issue as it effects all the priority areas of the employee commission and everyone should take responsibility for their own actions.

Councillor Guy expressed a wish that the data could be transferred to the Council newsletter where a wider audience could be made aware of the issue.

RESOLVED: That the Council develop a work programme to implement the recommendations of the 5 priority areas to be discussed at the next Cabinet meeting on 29th March.

CCSC – 31 THE CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL COMMISSION

The Commission was established in September 2011 to involve partners in shaping and moving forward the delivery of a Co-operative Council. Reports were presented by Jon Power – Delivery & Planning Manager who advised that the commission prioritised five main themes to focus on which were:

- Employment, skills and the economy
- Co-operative values
- Volunteering
- Procurement and commissioning
- The image of Telford & Wrekin

The community forum inputted into the themes in December and reported back their findings with recommendations on 2nd March. Cabinet would then consider the recommendations on 29th March.

Employment, skills & the economy - The council and its partners need to develop a more effective focus on attracting inward investment and support for existing businesses to boost the local economy by:

1. Adopting a more commercial approach to economic development through the development of an Economic Development Board to aid information sharing, monitoring, transparency and accountability.
2. Telford and Wrekin Council promotes itself as a Business Winning Council.
3. Support employers through the creation of a highly skilled, adaptable workforce equipped for the modern economy through better, more co-ordinated working between education providers, businesses and the workforce.

After a discussion it was agreed that this board should not be council led but a partnership between the council and public which would be set up by the council and supported. It was also agreed that it was crucial who was elected to the board so that they could drive forward their proposals. It was hoped that local colleges and employers could work together with the board to bring long term employment possibilities and skills to create better job satisfaction.

Procurement & Commissioning – To increase engagement and understanding of the voluntary sector's role and to work co-operatively to better exploit commissioning/procurement opportunities through the voluntary sector, by:

- 1 Establishing a Voluntary Sector Engagement Group.
- 2 The Council undertaking a review of how and what it procures and commissions with the voluntary and community sector.

Simplifying the procurement process and ensuring that the process is transparent, maximising the benefit to the local economy and community including employment and training opportunities. The council considers looking at alternative service delivery models as appropriate. That the council consider using the Co-operative commission to hold the Council to account to ensure that the Co-operative values, once approved are embedded in all that it does – including procurement. It was suggested that the list of £500 spend had a further column attached to it which gave the name of the supplier of the goods/service.

Volunteering – A strategic volunteering group with representatives from voluntary, public and private sector organisations is established with an initial focus on developing a coordinated approach to developing volunteering around four key areas:

- Promoting volunteering
- Recognising and valuing volunteers
- Promoting and sharing good practice
- Reducing barriers to volunteering

That the strategic volunteering group considers ways in which the impact of the proposed actions and the work of the group is monitored and evaluated. That Telford & Wrekin Council develops a strategic volunteering policy across the organisation to ensure consistency for volunteers that support the delivery of council services. That the council carry out CRB checks on behalf of small voluntary organisations at a reduced cost.

It was agreed that barriers and red tape needed to be broken down to assist with the recruitment of volunteers. A volunteers week would be held in June 2012 to find out what is available for volunteers within Telford & Wrekin.

Image of Telford & Wrekin – An overarching vision for the image of Telford and Wrekin is adopted as 'improving the image of Telford and Wrekin' to enable the borough to be 'a good place to visit and therefore a good place to live'. The recommendations are:

- The Council, partners and community work together in new (co-operative) ways to enable Telford to become a Conference Town.
- The Council promotes itself as a 'Business winning Council'.
- That the 'joined up' tourism offer in Telford and Wrekin should be improved together with the co-ordination of marketing, PR and visitor information across Telford and Wrekin.

- The council, partners and the community build on existing events and festivals to exploit and promote the assets of Telford and Wrekin, leading to a culturally vibrant place to live, work and visit.
- That Council, partners and the community should work together to promote Civic Pride for residents of Telford and Wrekin.

It was agreed that Telford & Wrekin required good quality hotels with integrated transport to bring in more visitors and conference business. The local taxis and Telford railway station required upgrading to win both business to Telford and residents pride in the town. It was hoped that once visitor numbers increased in Telford then the smaller market towns would also benefit. It was also agreed that there was a lack of nightlife in Telford which was required for conference users.

Co-operative values – The council values were to:

- Be accountable for own actions and empower people with the skills to help themselves.
- Be open and honest in the way we work and make decisions and communicate in a clear, simple and timely way.
- Work together with the community, involve people in decisions that affect their lives and be prepared to listen and take on new ideas.
- Respond to people's needs in a fair and consistent way.

The Council would like the community to:

- Take action and responsibility for themselves and their community to the best of their abilities.
- Be open and honest about what they want to improve in their community.
- Work with and support others, get involved and share their views to help the Council develop the way things are done.
- Respect and care for themselves and others, value the different ideas and skills that people bring and treat each other as equals.

RESOLVED - that the council develop a work programme to implement the recommendations of the 5 main themes to shape and move forward the delivery of a Co-operative Council to be brought to the next Cabinet meeting on 29th March.

CCSC – 32 FORWARD PLAN

Members agreed to finalise the recommendations from both the Employee and Council Co-operative Commissions.

It was suggested that the Employee Commission was monitored to maintain momentum and be placed on the forward plan.

RESOLVED – that the Employee Commission be placed on the forward plan.

The meeting ended at 8.07pm

**Chairman:
Date:**

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on Tuesday 13th March 2012 at 6.00 pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT

Councillors: C Mason (Chair), L Murray, R Picken, R Scammell, J Seymour and K Tomlinson.

Officers in attendance: Jonathan Eatough – Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection, Ian Mercer – Public Protection Service Delivery Manager, Suzanne Fisher – Public Protection Team Leader, Tina Street – Solicitor and Wendy Buckley - Democratic Services Support Officer.

LC-16 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meetings of the Licensing Committee held on the 29th November 2011 and 12th December 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

LC-17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors T Hope and J Thompson.

LC-18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor K Tomlinson declared a personal interest as being a neighbour to a Private Hire Operator licensed in the Borough.

LC-19 HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENCE FEES REVIEW

The Public Protection Team Leader presented a report of the Service Delivery Manager for Members to consider an increase in the level of Licence Fees and charges affecting the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trades which were last reviewed in 2009/2010 and implemented on 1st March 2011.

Following Members request, Appendix C was clarified by the Public Protection Team Leader regarding the comparison of charges and fees to be implemented for the financial year 2012/13 for Telford & Wrekin in comparison with all other local Councils. It was also explained that loss of trade to Telford & Wrekin had led to an inevitable loss of income. If the increase would have been excessive there could have been a potential loss of licensing trade from Telford & Wrekin and the comparison against other local Councils would not have been favourable.

Members were further advised that once the notice of the fee increase was displayed in the local press there would be 28 days for representations to be made. If no representations were made, the change to the charging structure would be implemented from 1st April 2012.

The Chair stated that an excellent job had been achieved by Officers with regard to the potential increase in Licence Fees during this time of economic instability. The amounts were reasonable and effective for cost recovery.

Having considered the information in the report it was:

RESOLVED – that the proposed licence fees and charges for the financial year 2012/13, as shown at Column E of Appendix A, be approved with effect from a specified date not less than 28 days from the date on which a notice is published in the press.

LC – 20 LICENSING POLICY – PRIVATE HIRE CONDITION REVIEW

The Public Protection Team Leader presented the above report and stated that at the Licensing Committee meeting on 29th November 2011 Members resolved to introduce an ‘exceptional condition’ criteria for Hackney Carriages in relation to age limits on vehicles. For the purposes of consistency and following a Taxi Forum meeting on 25th January 2012, Members were asked to consider introducing a similar criteria for Private Hire Vehicles. A copy of the Council’s ‘exceptional condition’ criteria was appended to the report.

The Public Protection Team Leader advised that following consultation with the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Associations in relation to ‘exceptional condition’ criteria there had been no response.

Following a general discussion with regard to vehicle makes and the inspection standards made by the testing officers at Telford & Wrekin Services it was:

RESOLVED – by unanimous vote –

- (a) that following a consultation with the Trade on an amendment to condition 3.6 of the council’s condition of licence for Private Hire Vehicles, to state that the Council may waive the age restriction where an ‘exceptional condition’ criteria is met so that a vehicle continues to be licensed over the 7 year age limit of the vehicle with 6 monthly compliance tests, a further report be brought back to the Committee.
- (b) that the contents of the ‘exceptional condition’ criteria for Hackney Carriages is also included in the consultation proposed as in (a) above.

Meeting closed at 6.50 pm.

Chairman:

Date:

PLANS BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 28 March 2012 at 6.00pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire

PRESENT: Councillors J C Minor (Chairman), N A Dugmore, I T W Fletcher, V A Fletcher (as substitute for Councillor R T Kiernan), A S Jhawar, J Loveridge, S A W Reynolds, B J Thompson (as substitute for Councillor K R Guy) and C R Turley

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors M B Hosken (for planning application TWC/2012/0069) M G Ion (for planning application TWC/2012/0069) and A D McClements (for planning application TWC/2012/0069)

PB-092 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on 7 March 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman

PB-000 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors K R Guy and R T Kiernan

PB-093 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

PB-094 DEFERRED/WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED – that planning application TWC/2012/0053 be deferred for consideration at a later date.

PB-095 SITE VISITS

None.

PB-096 PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION

Members had received a schedule of planning applications to be determined by the Board and fully considered each report and the supplementary information tabled at the meeting regarding planning applications TWC/2011/0632, TWC/2012/0069, TWC/2012/0053, TWC/2012/0081, and TWC/2012/0085.

(a) TWC/2011/0632 Land At Audley Avenue, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 7BX

This was an application subject of an appeal to the Secretary of State against the failure of the Council to reach a decision within the statutory time period. The Council was, therefore, invited to express a view on the proposals, which would then be put to the Inspector at the appeal inquiry.

A new and near identical (twin-tracked) application had been lodged with the Council to allow the developer to obtain a decision from both the Council acting as Local Planning Authority and the Planning Inspectorate. That application would be presented to the Board at a later date.

This application was expressed in outline form but included a request for approval of Reserved Matters relating to access, layout and scale. It was proposed to demolish existing employment related buildings and replace them with a retail food store incorporating a café together with associated access, servicing and parking and highway improvements. There was no named food retailer behind the application.

A lengthy update report was tabled at the meeting, which included a comprehensive review of the impact of the newly announced National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Members took some time to read this in detail as well as receiving a verbal summary from the Planning Officer. In addition to summarising the content of the report and update report, the Planning Officer reminded Members of the site visit undertaken on 22 February 2012 which encompassed possible locations for development including Audley Avenue and Station Road.

Councillor T Nelson spoke, on behalf of Newport Town Council, in opposition to the application in terms of the proposals having a detrimental effect on the High Street. He challenged whether there was a need for the proposed supermarket and indicated local preference for a small discount store. He reminded the Board of Newport's designation as a conservation area due to its unique character and stated his belief that an additional supermarket would reduce footfall in the vibrant High Street, increasing the number of empty shops from one in ten to one in five. He considered that his objections were equally applicable to the Station Road site, which the report indicated was sequentially preferable, and he believed that the alleged merits of that site formed the basis of the officer's recommendation for refusal of this application.

Mr S McGrath, the applicant's agent spoke in support of the application in terms of need, job creation and the regeneration of the site which would shortly be vacated. He claimed that the proposals would not have any significant adverse impact upon Newport town centre and would provide greater consumer choice and competition. Referring to the report's conclusion that a sequentially preferable site was available at Station Road, he opined that the walk to Audley Avenue was better and that the sites were equal in terms of accessibility. He argued that the new NPPF favoured the Audley Avenue site above the Station Road site since planning policy preference was to build upon Brownfield sites, as opposed to Greenfield sites. He concluded that the Audley Avenue site was economically and environmentally preferable.

The Planning Officer advised Members of the implications of the NPPF with the emphasis on achieving sustainable economic growth and that the sequential test remained paramount and that the town centre first policy had been retained. He also advised that retail consultants had been commissioned to guide the Council on the retail assessment lodged by the applicants. He addressed the issue of retail capacity and expenditure leakage from Newport but advised that the application proposal would not provide the step change necessary to encourage local people to shop at Newport. He advised that a competing superstore proposal at Station Road

would be likely to come forward imminently, which was both sequentially preferable and of a scale that would help reduce retail expenditure leakage. He expressed confidence that outstanding issues to that application would be overcome sufficient to enable Members to reach a decision on site preference, particularly for the size of store proposed by the applicant. He considered that the fact that Audley Avenue was located on Brownfield land was an insufficient argument to overcome other disadvantages of the site and outlined the significant Highway and transport improvements that would be required if the proposals were approved. He summarized the advantages and disadvantages of the application site but that the proposals for Audley Avenue could not be reconciled with NPPF, the Regional Spatial Strategy and the Core Strategy as the site was considered to be a relatively inaccessible out of centre location that would not encourage alternative sustainable modes of travel or linked shopping trips.

Members expressed concern regarding a number of issues presented by this application. Councillor A S Jhavar considered that whilst a store was undoubtedly needed to prevent retail leakage, despite being Brownfield land, this site did not offer sustainable transport options. Councillor V A Fletcher agreed with the sentiment that residents would not undertake their bulk shopping from the proposed store on foot or by bicycle and, therefore, car travel would prevail. She considered that a small discount retailer would better complement existing supermarket provision on the High Street and added that the proposals would have a significant adverse affect on the specialist shops located in the High Street. Councillor I T W Fletcher considered that the proposals conflicted with Core Strategy Policies CS6 and CS9 and also referred to the findings of sequential testing. He referred to his understanding of the NPPF's requirement to consider sustainable development and the inter-relation with the Local Development Framework. Referring to the Retail Planning Considerations set out in the report, Councillor I T W Fletcher, considered that the site would have a detrimental effect on the High Street. Councillor N A Dugmore also referred to Policy CS6 the Retail Impact Assessment and the impact of the NPPF but considered that retail leakage would be difficult to address. He also referred to Policy S9 regarding retailing from employment areas, the comments of Natural England and the extensive Highways improvements that would be required if the application was granted as the site was relatively inaccessible. Although Councillor Dugmore considered that some improvements could be made to the reasoning in the Officer's recommendation, on being put to the vote, all Members were in favour of the recommendation in the update report.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0632 the Inspector be informed that the Council will oppose the appeal proposals and invite that outline planning permission be withheld for the following Reasons:

1. It is considered that there is a sequentially preferable location which could accommodate the proposed development. The development would therefore be contrary to the Spatial Development Strategy for the Borough as set out in the Core Strategy. The proposal conflicts with Policies CS6 and CS9 of the adopted Core Strategy and with the sequential assessment requirements of paragraph 24 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

2. In the opinion of the local planning authority the proposal involves development that cannot be reconciled with the National Planning Policy Framework, Regional Spatial Strategy Policy T2 and Core Strategy Policy CS 9 in that the site is located in a relatively inaccessible out-of-centre location and fails to make the best possible use of opportunities to reduce reliance on the private car.

(b) TWC/2012/0069 Erccall Wood Technology College, Golf Links Lane, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 2DT

This Council application was an outline application for the redevelopment of land at and adjacent to Erccall Wood Technology College, Wellington to create a new 900 place secondary school, community sports facility, two sites for residential development for approx 130 dwellings, associated accesses, car parking and works.

The proposals also involved the demolition of the existing school buildings on the site in a phased development, as well as an engineering operation to level out the land adjacent to the existing school for new sports pitches. This outline application related to the principle of development with consideration of access alone, all other matters were reserved.

Councillor M B Hosken spoke, as Borough Ward Councillor for Erccall, to oppose the proposals. He stated his opinion that the school could be altered and modernised without the loss of the playing field, and considered there would be a significant rise in the flow of traffic and parking along the road which would exacerbate dangerous conditions at the junction between Golf Links Lane and Holyhead Road. He further considered that the development would affect the quality of life of local residents and supported their objections.

Councillor A D McClements spoke, as Borough Ward Councillor for Arleston, in support of the proposals. Councillor McClements welcomed the proposals which she believed would create a better educational environment, praised the proposed location closer to Shortwood School and the extra recreational space to be created which would ensure that the school could be more proactive to community needs. To address traffic issues, she encouraged more active promotion of car sharing and walking to school, alongside a workable traffic management strategy. Referring to the additional consultation comments set out in the update report, she considered that the suggestions made by Councillor R Aveley regarding traffic management were unworkable.

Councillor M G Ion, as Borough Ward Councillor for College, also spoke in support of the application which he considered to be a once in a generation opportunity due to the current economic climate. He acknowledged the concerns of local residents but urged the Committee to seek a balance between the competing priorities and views set out in the report.

Mr J Kearns, a local resident spoke against the proposals regarding the loss of Green Network and open space, the resulting increase in the size of the community, traffic impacts and the perception of a detrimental affect on the wellbeing of residents.

Mr R Pagett, also a local resident spoke against the proposals in terms of sustainability and he also considered the development to be an inappropriate development of the Green Network.

In addition, Mr G Smith, another local resident, spoke against the proposals seeking protection for the Green Network, increased traffic and the effect on safety at the junction of Holyhead Road and Golf Links Lane, the loss of the School's character and the quality of life of local residents.

Mr G Kershaw, the Project Director for the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Project, spoke in support of the application which he considered represented a wonderful opportunity for local children, the community and residents alike. He noted that the school was in poor physical condition and would be replaced by a modern building with improved disabled access. He drew attention to the increased access to sports facilities that this would provide and improvements to traffic access. He explained that whilst the project was funded by central government, additional funding was required from the land sale to complete the development. He advised that refurbishment, as opposed to rebuilding, would be costly, significantly disrupt the operation of the school for up to four years and would not deliver the improvements required or offer any relief to traffic congestion in the area.

The Planning Officer then drew Members' attention to the update report tabled at the meeting which related the application to the principles of the NPPF and highlighted the Planning Considerations set out in the report

During the ensuing debate, Councillor N A Dugmore raised concerns regarding increased traffic and congestion, the likely success of sustainable transport initiatives and the reduced contribution for Affordable Housing. He considered that the application should be deferred to further clarify the traffic implications. Councillor V A Fletcher echoed these concerns and added her concerns regarding the use of Green Network, loss of playing fields and whether a developer for the proposals had been identified. Councillor I T W Fletcher also raised the issue of the loss of playing fields and traffic congestion.

In response to questioning by Councillor S A W Reynolds, the Planning Officer confirmed his understanding that the proposals would result in increased parking provision and a dedicated drop-off and collection point within the site. He further advised that the Highways Engineer had suggested that a Traffic Regulation Order could be sought to restrict waiting in Golf Links Lane at the start and end of the school day to further alleviate congestion. In addition, he confirmed that the anticipated capacity of the school roll would be 900 places whether the school was rebuilt or refurbished.

The Assistant Director: Planning Specialist advised Members that this was a significant educational opportunity and the housing development would not only contribute to local housing needs but also make the proposed scheme possible. The level of Affordable Housing was considered to be viable and appropriate. He confirmed that the capacity of the school upon rebuilding or refurbishment would be 900 pupils but the proposals to rebuild included improved access and layout to assist

in traffic management at the site which would not be available through refurbishment. He advised that the Highways Authority was satisfied with the proposals. He further advised that Officers considered the use of open space was acceptable and conformed to guidance. He concluded that the change had significant benefits and, although there were concerns regarding the proposals, each had been addressed and, where necessary, could be mitigated by condition.

Councillor N A Dugmore proposed, seconded by Councillor V A Fletcher, that the application should be deferred to further consider traffic implications but, on being put to the vote, this was not agreed.

During the continued debate, whilst some Members continued to express their opposition to elements of the application and noted local opposition to it, the majority of Members considered that the proposals represented an excellent educational opportunity, supported by the School Governors, and which would mirror other opportunities and building elsewhere in the Borough. Noting that the rebuilding of the school and the associated development had to be considered together for successful implementation, the majority of Members supported the Planning Officer's recommendation.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0069, subject to the signing of a Section 106 Agreement for 15% affordable housing and further subject to the Council as landowner agreeing to provide a satisfactory Memorandum from the Assistant Director: Development, Business and Housing agreeing that the Council as landowner will provide 15% affordable housing and will pay the commuted sums for maintenance of LEAP, allotments and TRO works, either upon the sale of any of the development land or upon commencement of the development whichever is the sooner to authorise the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist to grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in the update report.

(c) TWC/2012/0081 Overdale Playing Field, Rock Road, Overdale, Shropshire, TF3 5BX

This was a Council proposal for a replacement children's equipped play facility (designed to Fields In Trust, Local Equipped Area of Play standard) to be used by local children (predominately aged between 3 -15). An update report was tabled at the meeting which highlighted the implications of the NPPF.

Members welcomed the proposals.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0081 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(d) TWC/2012/0085 Telford Ice Rink, St Quentin Gate, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 4JQ

This was a Council application for the refurbishment and extension of the existing Telford Ice Rink building to be a mixed use facility and erection of a new single

storey restaurant/bar building in front of the existing Bowling and Bingo premises. An update report was tabled at the meeting which addressed the implications of the NPPF.

The Planning Officer noted objections from the Tenpin Bowling Alley which stated that the proposal would obscure the building's frontage and further limit the scope for customers to locate their facilities. However, the Planning Officer considered that the proposed restaurants and hotel in the nearby vicinity would greatly enhance footfall in the area and mitigate this. He advised that the proposal was generally in accord with the Masterplan previously adopted for Southwater and also with CTAAP.

Whilst Members understood the concerns of Tenpin, which were supported by Councillor V A Fletcher, the majority were minded to agree that increased footfall in the area would negate these concerns. Councillor B J Thompson was delighted that the Ice Rink remained in the ownership of the Council but considered that improvements to wheelchair access should be made and Councillor S A W Reynolds encouraged the use of adequate signage to facilities in the area. The majority of Members were, therefore, able to support the proposals.

RESOLVED – that subject to receiving a satisfactory memo from the Assistant Director: Development, Business and Housing dealing with financial contributions in respect of the provision of a sum of monies comprising a contribution of £45,269.62 for highway works and £5,000 for Travel Plan monitoring either upon the sale of any of the development land or upon commencement of the development in respect of the highway sums or occupation in respect of the other sums whichever is the sooner, to authorise the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist to grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in the report.

The meeting ended at 9.00pm

Chairman:

Date:

PLANS BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 18 January 2012 at 6.00pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire

PRESENT: Councillors J C Minor (Chairman), N A Dugmore, K R Guy, A S Jhawar, R T Kiernan, A A Meredith, L A Murray (as substitute for Councillor J Loveridge), S A W Reynolds and C R Turley

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor C F Smith (for planning application TWC/2011/1083)

PB-074 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor J Loveridge

PB-075 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor K R Guy declared a personal and prejudicial interest in planning application TWC/2011/0985 and indicated that he would leave the room during determination thereof.

Councillor S A W Reynolds declared a personal interest in planning application TWC/2011/1083 as she was one of the Borough Ward Members.

PB-076 DEFERRED/WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED – that planning application TWC/2011/1087 be withdrawn and that planning application TWC/2011/0816 be withdrawn for consideration at a later date.

PB-077 SITE VISITS

None.

PB-078 TREE PRESERVATION ORDER 2011

The report of the Head of Governance informed the Board that on 9 August 2011 a provisional Tree Preservation Order was made in respect of one Lime Tree located on land at Woodside Local Centre, Park Lane, Woodside and identified as T1 on the map appended to the report. A letter of objection had been received from the landowner where the Lime Tree was situated. A copy of the objection letter was appended to the report, together with the Trees and Woodlands Officer's response.

Members noted that the scheme of development on the land had been revised to accommodate the location of the tree and that this had resulted in the landowner seeking for the lapse of the Order. Members noted that the Trees and Woodlands Officer believed the tree to be a healthy, well-established specimen and, in the circumstances of impending development, Members were supportive of the Tree Preservation Order.

RESOLVED – that the Borough of Telford & Wrekin (Land at Woodside Local Centre, Park Lane, Woodside, Telford) Tree Preservation Order 2011 be confirmed without modification

PB-079 PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION

Members had received a schedule of planning applications to be determined by the Board and fully considered each report and the supplementary information tabled at the meeting regarding planning applications TWC/2011/0949, TWC/2011/0951, TWC/2011/0953 and TWC/2011/1083.

- (a) TWC/2011/0878 Faccenda Factory, Hortonwood 60, Hortonwood, Telford, Shropshire

This was a full application for the erection of a 13,490 sqm extension to the existing 6258sqm factory at Hortonwood 60, including additional office and factory space, plant rooms, parking, improved HGV circulation routes, electricity output for refrigerated lorries, acoustic fencing and landscaping. The main report set out full details of the application.

The Applicant's Agent, Mr P Brown, spoke in support of the application, drawing attention to the related economic and environmental benefits.

Members welcomed the application and, following clarification regarding the recent Tree Preservation Order, were fully supportive of the proposals.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0878 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

- (b) TWC/2011/0949 Gladstone House, Hadley, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 5NF

This was a Council application which sought outline planning permission to erect 24 dwellings to replace the units lost in the demolition of Gladstone House and replacement commercial premises as detailed in full application TWC/2011/0953. All matters except access were reserved for future determination. The proposals were fully detailed in the main report and were considered in conjunction with application reference TWC/2011/0953. Issues regarding the potential for noise pollution were addressed in the update report.

Members expressed disappointment that the proposals did not include provision for affordable housing. However, Members welcomed the review mechanism to reconsider the issue of affordable housing at regular intervals over the course of the phased development since this presented the opportunity to change the level of provision if any improvements in the market or other financial changes occurred. The first review would take place in three years and then every two years until the commencement of works.

RESOLVED – that subject to receiving a satisfactory memo from the Head of Asset and Property dealing with financial contributions for education, leisure and monitoring and fees and acknowledging the affordable housing position to authorise the Head of Housing and Planning to grant outline planning permission subject to the conditions set out in the report and an additional noise condition as detailed in the update report.

(Councillor L A Murray was absent from the room during determination of the following application.)

- (c) TWC/2011/0951 Former Toybox Creche, Southwater Way, Telford Town Centre, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 4HS

This proposal included the demolition of the existing building which was formerly used as a children's crèche followed by the erection of a 698 sqm retail unit (use class A1). The proposal included the reconfiguration of car parking spaces in the adjacent car park (Brown Elm) and demotion of the existing canopy to shopping centre entrance and remedial works following removal. The proposals were fully detailed in the main report and the update report set out the position relating to hard and soft landscaping design details.

Members generally welcomed the improvement to the site that this proposal represented.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0951 the Head of Housing & Planning be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the applicants entering into a Section 106 Agreement for financial contributions of £12182.59 for highways improvements, £1000 for off site cycle provision, £750 for travel plan monitoring and £1000 for planning and financial monitoring and further subject to the conditions as set out in the update report.

- (d) TWC/2011/0953 Gladstone House, Hadley, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 5NF

This was a Council application for the redevelopment of Hadley District Centre to include the erection of a new foodstore (371sqm) use class A1, 8 other shop units a mix of A1, A2, A3 and A5 uses, a vets use class D1 and creation of 70 car parking space and associated infrastructure, landscaping and public realm following demolition of existing structures, including 24 residential properties. The proposals, which were detailed in the main report and supplemented by an update giving information from the applicant regarding the maintenance and management of the district centre, were part of a wider scheme. There was a separate application for replacement residential units (TWC/2011/0949), which was considered in conjunction with this application.

Members sought clarification of the phasing for the scheme and how this would affect local businesses, particularly the veterinary surgery. The Head of Housing and Planning agreed to consult with colleagues to ensure that local businesses were given the correct information regarding provision for the retention of their business activities during development.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0953 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the update report.

(In accordance with his declaration of interest Councillor K R Guy left the room during determination of the following application.)

- (e) TWC/2011/0985 Rough Park House, Woodside Avenue, Woodside, Telford, Shropshire, TF7 5PG

This proposal sought outline planning consent for the erection of a new sheltered housing development. The indicative proposals included the conversion of the existing Grade II Listed Building house with two large 3 storey wings to be erected either side, connected to the main house by single storey extensions. The main report detailed the proposals in full together with details of the objections received during consultation.

During the debate, Members received a verbal report of the Compulsory Purchase Order process and the repair works completed by the applicant to date.

Members expressed concern that insufficient information was available regarding this application and, more importantly, that the design was not aesthetically pleasing and did not take account of the significance of the Listed Building to the heritage of the area. Therefore, Members did not feel that they could support the proposals.

RESOLVED – that planning application TWC/2011/0985 be refused on the following grounds:

- (a) The Local Planning Authority considers that insufficient details have been provided to enable the Local Planning Authority to fully consider the full implications of the proposed development on Rough Park House, a Grade II Listed Building; these details include existing elevations, sectional drawings, areas of demolition and internal alterations. Furthermore insufficient justification has been given to the significance of the proposed works on the Listed Building and its setting. Consequently the proposal is contrary to policies saved in the Wrekin Local Plan HE15, HE16, Core Strategy CS14 and national guidance PPS5.**
- (b) The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposed development will have an overbearing impact on the Listed Building, by virtue of its design, scale, mass, materials and detailing. The proposal also fails to provide a positive contribution to the sense of local distinctiveness nor sustain or enhance the character of the Listed Building or its setting. Accordingly the proposal fails to address policies saved in the Wrekin Local Plan H6, UD2 HE16, Core Strategy CS14, CS15 and national guidance PPS5.**
- (c) The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposed application has been inadequately justified against the significant harm caused to the Listed Building and its setting. Accordingly it is considered that the proposal has failed to meet the objectives contained within national guidance PPS5, saved local plan policy HE16, and Core Strategy policy CS14.**
- (d) The Local Planning Authority considers that inadequate information has been submitted to support this Sheltered Housing scheme to ensure this development is appropriate in this location. Furthermore the proposal offers limited communal facilities to the detriment of proposed residential amenities. Consequently the proposal is contrary to saved local plan policies H6 and national guidance PPS3.**

- (f) TWC/2011/0997 Stoney Hill Field, Ironbridge Bypass, Coalbrookdale, Telford, Shropshire, TF4 3QE

This was a Council proposal to construct a new park and ride facility encompassing the current Gorge Connect service, incorporating 250 car parking spaces (including 16 disabled spaces) and welfare facilities (Gorge Connect Park and Ride). Full details of the proposal were set out in the report.

Members noted the revised hours of operation being 0800-1900 from Monday to Friday as well as at weekends, during summer school holiday periods, special events and bank holidays.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0997 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

- (g) TWC/2011/1083 Highway Verge, Gibbons Road, Trench, Telford, Shropshire

This was an application for a determination as to whether prior approval would be required in relation to the siting and appearance of a 12.5 metre high slim line telecommunications monopole along Gibbons Road in Trench, with a new equipment cabinet at its base. Full details of the application were set out in the report.

Councillor C F Smith, Borough Ward Member, had submitted objections to the proposal which were outlined in the update report together with details of other objections including those of the local MP and the Parish Council. The update report also gave details of 11 letters/emails from local residents, a 24 signature petition and an additional 102 duplicate letters of objection.

Councillor C F Smith spoke to oppose the application, pointing out that the proposed site was in close proximity to both a school playing field and an infants school, he considered that the size of the equipment cabinet would have a detrimental visual effect on the street scene which, other than lamp posts, was largely devoid of street furniture. He further considered that the size of the equipment cabinet would obstruct the pathway when it was open and this could impede young pedestrians along the safe route to school.

Mrs L Bailey, a local resident, also spoke in opposition to the application on amenity grounds, the impact upon local wildlife (particularly buzzards) and also the potential health risks to future generations.

Members were mindful that whilst there was much public concern regarding the possible adverse health impacts of telecommunication development, consideration of this application should follow the advice given in PPG8, paragraph 98, which detailed the Government's view that the planning system was not the place for determining health safeguards. Subsequent to this, the main report confirmed that the requisite ICNIRP certificate had been submitted with the application which confirmed that the site and the proposed emissions would comply with the appropriate guidelines.

The Chairman referred to the last meeting of the Board and asked whether a letter had been drafted to the government regarding the consideration of health issues in the planning process. The Head of Housing and Planning advised that the letter would not

be finalised without input from the Chairman to confirm that it appropriately reflected the views of the Board.

The Chairman reminded Members that the decision whether to give or refuse prior approval had to be based on the siting and appearance of the installation and he further commented to Members that whilst it was necessary to adopt a consistent approach, it was equally imperative to consider each application on its own merits.

Several Members expressed concerns that this proposed site was in a predominantly residential street setting and, unlike other residential sites where prior approval had been given in the past, in this case there was little other street furniture or trees to offset its presence. In addition, several Members had concerns regarding the size of the equipment cabinet which could obstruct this particular pathway which had been identified as forming part of the safe route to school. The site was also in close proximity to a school field and Members familiar with the area considered that there were other more suitable locations available.

Following the debate on the application, the majority of Members were minded not to support the officer recommendation and it was, therefore, proposed and seconded that prior approval not be given.

DETERMINATION:

The Local Planning Authority considered that the proposed 12.5 metre high slim line telecommunications monopole and its equipment would be unacceptable by reason of being visually intrusive in this location and alternative sites had not been fully explored. Members had particular concerns about the cabinet style equipment blocking the footpath. Prior approval was therefore not given.

The meeting ended at 7.20pm

Chairman:

Date:

PLANS BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Tuesday, 10 January 2012 at 6.00pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire

PRESENT: Councillors J C Minor (Chairman), A J Eade (as substitute for Councillor N A Dugmore), K R Guy, A S Jhawar, R T Kiernan, A A Meredith, L A Murray (as substitute for Councillor C R Turley), S A W Reynolds, and B J Thompson (as substitute for Councillor J Loveridge).

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor I T W Fletcher

PB-068 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 14 December 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

PB-069 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors N A Dugmore, J Loveridge and C R Turley

PB-070 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

PB-071 **DEFERRED/WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS**

None.

PB-072 **SITE VISITS**

None.

PB-073 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION**

(a) TWC/2011/1026 Highway Verge, Castle Farm Way, Priorslee, Telford, Shropshire

Members had received a report setting out the details of this application which sought determination as to whether prior approval was required in relation to the siting and appearance of a 12.5 metre high slim line telecommunications monopole along Castle Farm Way in Priorslee. The application was submitted to seek to find an alternative location following the refusal of a 14.8 metre high monopole mast on Priorslee Avenue (planning application reference TWC/2010/0745) earlier in 2011. The applicants had submitted additional information in support of their application which was detailed in the report.

Councillor I T W Fletcher had requested that the determination should be considered by the Plans Board. He had submitted objections to the proposal which were outlined in the report together with details of the Parish Council's objections, 67 letters of objection and a 174 signature petition which had also been received. The update report, tabled at the meeting detailed a further 24 objections received.

Councillor B Richards representing St Georges and Priorslee Parish Council spoke to oppose the application on the grounds that the location would be a safety hazard to motorists and would have an adverse visual impact. The Parish Council also considered that

the mast was in too close proximity to Redhill Primary School and had concerns regarding the potential impact upon the health of local residents. Councillor Richards also expressed concern about the limited consultation afforded to the Parish Council.

Councillor I T W Fletcher, Ward Member, spoke against the application and highlighted disagreements regarding the grid reference used and the distance of the proposed mast from the school grounds, nearby residences and footpath. He had submitted a photograph to illustrate the short distance to the closest residence. He further expressed the concerns of local residents that the proposed mast would be a visually intrusive structure which would impact upon residents amenity. Councillor Fletcher also considered that the application site was in contravention of PPG8 guidelines due to its proximity to nearby school grounds. Whilst Councillor Fletcher accepted that the Plans Board was restricted by government guidance relating to health concerns, he drew attention to Dutch studies which concluded that possible risks to health posed by radio frequencies could not be ruled out.

Mr M Hood, a local resident, spoke against the application, reiterating the comments of the Parish Council and Borough Ward Councillor. In addition, he lamented the potential loss of amenity to local residents and questioned whether there was a need for the mast in this area.

In response, the Planning Officer explained the purpose of the grid reference as a behind the scenes tool only, explained the consultation process, advised that the authority's own measurements did not show that the school buildings fell within the requisite 200m distance from the mast, and indicated an understanding that the need for the mast was presented by changing mobile technology and usage.

Whilst there was much public concern concerning the possible adverse health impacts of telecommunication development, Members were advised that consideration of this application should follow the advice given in PPG8, paragraph 98, which detailed the Government's view that the planning system was not the place for determining health safeguards. Subsequent to this, the main report confirmed that the requisite ICNIRP certificate had been submitted with the application which confirmed that the site and the proposed emissions would comply with the appropriate guidelines.

Members were also reminded that the decision whether to give or refuse prior approval had to be based on the siting and appearance of the installation. The Head of Housing & Planning advised Members that they needed to decide if the proposed site was suitable and whether the design was appropriate. He reminded Members that if they did not make a decision at the meeting, the application would automatically succeed. However, if they decided to reject the application, the applicant had the choice of either going to appeal again or submitting an alternative proposal.

Members expressed concerns that the Plans Board was unable to consider the results of other studies regarding the health implications of telecommunications developments in their decision making and agreed that the Council should write to the relevant Government minister appealing for local authorities to be released from such restraints.

During their deliberations, Members considered the visual intrusion presented by the proposals in the context of the street furniture already in place and the surrounding trees, the disputed distances provided particularly regarding the proximity of Redhill Primary School, the possibility of proliferation and other masts in the local area and the level of consultation afforded by the applicant over the festive period. Members also raised the possibility of appeal and associated costs but were advised that such considerations should not form part of their deliberation.

Following the debate on the application, a majority of Members were minded to support the officer recommendation that prior approval be given.

DETERMINATION:

Prior approval is given for the proposed 12.5 metre high slim line telecommunications installation and its permitted development rights are hereby confirmed.

The meeting ended at 6.48pm

Chairman:

Date:

PLANS BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 22 February 2012 at 6.00pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire

PRESENT: Councillors J C Minor (Chairman), N A Dugmore, K R Guy, I T W Fletcher, V A Fletcher (as substitute for Councillor R T Kiernan), J Loveridge, S A W Reynolds, C R Turley

PB-080 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meetings of the Plans Board held on 10 January 2012 and 18 January 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

PB-081 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor R T Kiernan

PB-082 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

PB-083 DEFERRED/WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED – that planning application TWC/2011/0984 be withdrawn.

PB-084 SITE VISITS

RESOLVED – that the following applications be deferred for Site Visits to take place on Wednesday, 7 March 2012:

3.30pm – TWC/2011/0746 – Riverview, 27 Stars Lane, Cold Hatton, Telford, Shropshire, TF6 6PZ; and

4.15pm – TWC/2011/1090 – Ironstone Square, Lawley, Telford, Shropshire

PB-085 PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION

Members had received a schedule of planning applications to be determined by the Board and fully considered each report and the supplementary information tabled at the meeting regarding planning applications TWC/2011/0690, TWC/2011/0746, TWC/2011/0884 and TWC/2011/1090. Members also received a copy of the Planning Inspector's Appeal Decision relating to planning application TWC/2010/0688 which had been omitted from the main report.

(a) TWC/2010/0111 Former Ibstock Brickworks, Brick Kiln Bank, Lightmoor, Telford, Shropshire, TF7 5LH

This was an application for an extension of time under Section 73 for the erection of approximately 100 dwellings, associated works and access.

Members were extremely disappointed at the demolition of the chimney and, to compensate for this, were keen that any replacement public art should reflect the former use of the site. Members were also concerned regarding the walking distance and access to the closest schools and were advised that these were issues addressed during the previous determination. Councillor K R Guy advised that Woodside Regeneration Committee had been involved in the development of a walking bus which could be recommended to extend to this estate. The majority of Members were, therefore, satisfied with the proposals.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2010/0111 the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the applicants entering into a Section 106 Agreement for planning contributions as previously agreed plus an additional £25,000 toward public art reflecting the heritage of the site and further subject to the conditions as set out in the original permission.

(b) TWC/2010/0620 Doseley Works, Doseley, Telford, Shropshire, TF4 3BX

This was a request for a deed of variation to alter the affordable housing obligations by dwelling type and tenure.

Members were pleased that no change to the overall provision of affordable housing was proposed and were, therefore, content with the proposed variation.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2010/00620 the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist be authorised to vary the existing Section 106 Agreement to amend the tenure type from 8 no. to 9 no. social rented units and from 6 no. to 5 no. shared ownership units respectively in line with the dwelling mix as set out in the report.

(c) TWC/2010/0688 Land Adjacent to, 53 Maslan Crescent, Tibberton, Shropshire, TF10 8PB

This application for a 4 bedroomed dwelling was deferred at Plans Board on 1 June 2011 to allow the agent to reduce the footprint of the proposed dwelling.

Outline planning permission for a 3 bedroomed dwelling on the site had previously been approved by the Planning Inspector in 2009 and, therefore, the principle of a dwelling on the site had already been established. The dimensions shown on the indicative block plan approved by the Planning Inspector were a footprint measuring 6.5m x 9.0m and a ridge height of approximately 7.5m. The proposed dwelling as now amended had a footprint of 6.23m x 8.32m (having an internal arrangement comprising 4 bedrooms; 2 of which were double and 2 single), and was smaller than the 3 bedroomed dwelling which was previously approved by the Planning Inspector.

The Majority of Members were satisfied that the number of rooms did not impact on the external footprint and, referring to the Appeal Decision, considered the proposal to be appropriate in terms of siting, design and scale.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2010/0688 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(d) TWC/2011/0642 The Croft, Sunnyside Road, Ketley Bank, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 0AA

This application related to the erection of a detached house on land adjoining The Croft, Sunnyside Road, Ketley Bank.

Ketley and Oakengates Parish Council had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

The Applicant spoke in support of his application to address concerns regarding the felling of trees and erection of fencing which had been raised by neighbours and also commented upon the vehicular access.

Members were concerned by the visual impact of the current fencing but sympathetic to the reasons for its erection and were satisfied that it would be replaced as part of the proposals.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0642 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report but including reference to hedge planting in the landscape condition.

(e) TWC/2011/0690 Gwenlas, Walcot, Shropshire, TF6 5ER

This application sought planning permission to demolish the existing 3 bedroom property and erect a detached 6 bedroom dwelling and detached triple garage with accommodation above. An update report was submitted to the Board outlining the comments of the Highways Engineer.

Members were concerned regarding the potential future use of the proposed garage as a separate business unit and were advised that this was to be controlled through conditions as set out in the original report.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0690 the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the applicants entering into a Section 106 Agreement to ensure that the original dwelling is demolished and the garage is not used as a separate residential unit and further subject to the conditions set out in the update report.

(f) TWC/2011/0712 The Valley Hotel, Buildwas Road, Ironbridge, Telford, Shropshire, TF8 7DW

This was a proposal for the erection of a 27 bed extension linked to the main hotel, restaurant extension, and staffroom and workshop area.

The application was considered in conjunction with application reference TWC/2011/0713.

Mr W Smart, Highways Consultant for Morgan Tucker Ltd on behalf of the Applicant spoke to address concerns regarding access and highway safety. Mr Castle then also spoke on behalf of the Applicant in favour of the application primarily regarding economic benefits to the World Heritage Site.

Members broadly welcomed the application but some concerns were raised about the appearance of the proposed materials, lack of car parking and “Y” distance visibility splay at the access

The Planning Officer gave a visual demonstration of the access and the potential views of the proposed building from the road and also referred to the Car Parking Study which had been undertaken that concluded that current provision was under utilised. Members also raised concerns with regard to the lighting of the route from the Dale End Car Park. Members were, therefore, of the opinion that the benefits of the proposed development to the local economy and the viability of the hotel in the World Heritage Site, outweighed these concerns.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0712 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(g) TWC/2011/0713 The Valley Hotel, Buildwas Road, Ironbridge, Telford, Shropshire, TF8 7DW

This application sought listed building consent for erection of a 27 bed extension linked to the main hotel, restaurant extension, and staffroom and workshop area.

The application was considered in conjunction with application reference TWC/2011/0712 above.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0713 listed building consent be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(h) TWC/2011/0746 Riverview, 27 Stars Lane, Cold Hatton, Telford, Shropshire, TF6 6PZ

This application sought planning permission for the erection of a 4-bedroomed two-storey detached dwelling and detached garage with games room above following demolition of the existing modern bungalow, Riverview. An update report was submitted with revised plans.

Waters Upton Parish Council had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

Ms K Baker, representing Waters Upton Parish Council, spoke in opposition to the application, drawing attention to concerns regarding the size, height and position of

the proposal, the impact upon drainage and reduction in light to neighbouring properties. Ms Baker suggested that Members undertake a site visit.

Members considered that a site visit would provide some context to the scale and design of the proposals.

RESOLVED – that determination of planning application TWC/2011/0746 be deferred to allow the Board Members to make a Site Visit.

- (i) TWC/2011/0884 Walker Institute, Hartsbridge Road, Oakengates, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 6BA

This was a full application for the retention and conversion of the existing principle Walker Institute building formerly known as Telford College of Arts and Technology to create 14 two & three bedroomed residential apartments and associated amenities, including an indoor gym and pool, residents parking and amenity space to the rear and visitor parking and soft landscaping to the fore. The existing wall to the front of the site was to be removed to open up the site and provide views of this impressive building. An update report was submitted with amended drawings enlarging the visitor parking spaces at the front of the building.

This application was considered in conjunction with planning application reference TWC/2011/1037.

Members were delighted with the proposed retention of the Walker Institute building and welcomed proposals to bring this popular building back into meaningful use.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0884 the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the applicants entering into a Section 106 Agreement for financial contributions of £8,400 for recreational facilities at Hartshill Park and further subject to the conditions set out in the report.

- (j) TWC/2011/0971 Unit 1, Fitchett (Redland) Industrial , Station Hill, St Georges, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 9JX

This was an application seeking retrospective planning permission for change of use of this light industrial building and its site to a car sales and repair workshop. Consent was also sought for the hours of operation for the car sales area/office between 09:00 and 18:00 Mondays to Fridays, between 09:00 – 17:00 on Saturdays and between 11:00- 16:00 on Sundays in addition to hours of operation at the workshop Mondays to Fridays between 09:00 – 18:00 (remaining closed Saturdays and Sundays).

St Georges and Priorslee Parish Council had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

Members were broadly satisfied with this retrospective application subject to a specific stipulation in the hours condition that the car workshop shall not open on Saturdays, Sundays or bank holidays.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0971 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report and a stipulation in the hours condition that the Car Workshop be closed on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays.

(k) TWC/2011/1037 The Walker Institute, Hartsbridge Road, Oakengates, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 6BA

This application related to the erection of 14 detached dwellings within the grounds of the former Walker Institute Building, known as the Telford College of Arts and Technology.

In conjunction with planning application reference TWC/2011/1037, Members welcomed proposals to bring this site into use.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/1037 the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the applicants entering into a Section 106 Agreement for financial contributions of £8,400 for recreational facilities at Hartshill Park and £22,557 towards primary education and £13,799 towards secondary education and further subject to the conditions set out in the report.

(l) TWC/2011/1090 Ironstone Square, Lawley, Telford, Shropshire

This application was for a four storey Extra Care facility with 60 assisted living apartments comprising 32 one bedroom apartments and 28 two bedroom apartments over 4 storeys. The application formed part of the proposed local centre for Lawley Sustainable Urban Extension and lay to the south of West Centre Way. It was part of a larger scheme for the development of a new local centre at the junction of West Centre Way and Lawley Drive in Lawley. An update report was submitted detailing suggested conditions from the Highways Officer.

Councillor D Blackburn, representing Lawley and Overdale Parish Council, spoke in opposition to the application. The Parish Council were disappointed in the lack of consultation afforded to them, had concerns regarding the realignment of West Centre Way, access/egress at Lawley Medical Centre, parking provision, the overall design and suitability of the development for the mix of residents.

Whilst Members were very welcoming of the care provision represented by these proposals, they were apprehensive regarding the design, and were particularly critical of the lack of parking provision and the proximity of the development to the highway.

Members were advised that there was some discussion taking place between the Doctor's Surgery and HCA regarding an extension of the surgery which would include car parking and Members requested more information in this regard.

RESOLVED – that determination of planning application TWC/2011/1090 be deferred to allow the Board Members to make a Site Visit.

- (m) TWC/2011/1093 Land at Junction of Victoria Road/West Car Park, Wellington Civic & Leisure Centre, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire

This application sought planning consent for the erection of a free standing double sided sign, located on the corner between junctions at Wrekin Road and Victoria Road, advertising the location of Wellington Civic & Leisure Centre, its café, library, register office and Wellington Town Council offices.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/1093 advertising consent be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

The meeting ended at 7.53pm.

Chairman:

Date:

PLANS BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 7 March 2012 at 6.00pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire

PRESENT: Councillors J C Minor (Chairman), N A Dugmore, K R Guy, I T W Fletcher, V A Fletcher (as substitute for Councillor R T Kiernan), J Loveridge, S A W Reynolds and C R Turley

PB-086 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on 22 February 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

PB-087 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor R T Kiernan

PB-088 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor I T W Fletcher declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest in planning application TWC/2011/1077.

PB-089 DEFERRED/WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

None

PB-090 SITE VISITS

The Development Control Manager advised Members that an application relating to proposals for Ercall Wood Technology College was scheduled for consideration at the next meeting of the Plans Board and it would be prudent to undertake a site visit at that location in order to avoid unnecessary delay in determining the application.

RESOLVED that –

(a) a Site Visit takes place on Wednesday, 28 March 2012 at 4.00pm in respect of planning application TWC/2012/0069 – Ercall Wood Technology College, Golf Links Lane, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 2DT; and

(b) determination of planning application TWC/2011/1027 be deferred to allow the Board Members to make a Site Visit when all relevant applications pertaining to the site are before the Board.

PB-91 PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION

Members had received a schedule of planning applications to be determined by the Board and fully considered each report together with the supplementary information tabled at the meeting regarding planning applications TWC/2011/1090, TWC/2011/0746, TWC/2012/0008, TWC/2012/0065 and TWC/2012/0086.

- (a) TWC/2011/0746 Riverview, 27 Stars Lane, Cold Hatton, Telford, Shropshire, TF6 6PZ

This application had been deferred at Plans Board on 22 February 2012 to enable Board Members to undertake a site visit.

The application sought planning permission for the erection of a 4-bedroomed two-storey detached dwelling and detached garage with games room above following demolition of the existing modern bungalow, Riverview. Waters Upton Parish Council had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board. The update report tabled at the meeting included amended plans and site photographs together with additional consultation comments.

Ms K Baker, representing the Parish Council, spoke in opposition to the application. Ms Baker asked Members to consider the points which she had raised at the previous meeting and in addition she advised that the Parish Council considered that the plans still did not reflect the size of the development. She indicated that the Parish Council had taken a consistent view of similar applications in the area and asked the Board to consider conditions to monitor construction to ensure the appropriate size of the garage and drainage at the site, and requested a S106 legal agreement to ensure the garage did not become an independent dwelling within the rural area.

Addressing the Parish Council's concerns, the officer advised Members that a S106 agreement would appropriately control the use of the garage if they had concerns over its future use; this would be a similar agreement to that which had been approved by members at the last plans board meeting on a larger garage within the rural area.

Having been to visit the site, Members were concerned with the height of the proposed garage and were further concerned that the use of the garage should be controlled so that it did not become a separate residential unit or a commercial business. Members were advised by the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist and the Solicitor regarding enforcement procedures relating to breach of condition or a breach of a Section 106 Agreement.

Councillor I T W Fletcher considered the proposed height of the building was acceptable, as a precedent had been set on the adjacent neighbouring property which was of a similar scale and design; subsequently Cllr I T W Fletcher, proposed the Planning Officer's recommendation with condition D04 suitably worded to limit the use of the garage. This was seconded by Councillor V A Fletcher but, on being put to the vote, this was not agreed.

Having received advice from the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist, Members were minded to defer consideration of this application to a future meeting to give the Planning Authority an opportunity to seek to negotiate with the applicant to reach a viable solution to the Board's concerns.

RESOLVED – that determination of planning application TWC/2011/0746 be deferred to allow the Planning Authority to negotiate with the applicant regarding a reduction in the size of the garage to a single storey building.

- (b) TWC/2011/0816 St Matthews C of E Primary School, Church Road, Donnington, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 7PZ

This application had been deferred at Plans Board on 18 January 2012 to consider an amended scheme to overcome an objection from Sport England.

The application, for a classroom extension, had been amended to overcome Sport England's objection that the location of the original classroom extension would result in a loss of available sporting pitch and would have an impact on the potential of the playing field to be used for different sporting activities and hence have a detrimental impact on the flexible use of the playing field to meet changing sporting needs, now and in the future. In response, the application now proposed a freestanding structure in front of the existing classroom and would no longer encroach into the playing area of the school. The amendment had resulted in Sport England removing their objection.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0816 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

- (c) TWC/2011/0879 Greenfields Farm Shop, Station Road, Donnington, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 8JY

This application related to the erection of a replacement farm shop on land adjacent to an existing temporary farm shop in Station Road, Donnington. During the outline of the proposals, the Planning Officer advised that it was considered that the recommendation should be amended to delete condition A08 regarding personal permission.

Members welcomed the proposals and unanimously supported the development.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0879 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report except that condition A08 be deleted.

- (d) TWC/2011/1027 Kynnersley House Farm, Kynnersley, Telford, Shropshire, TF6 6DX

This was a retrospective application for the removal of Condition 4 of Planning Application W2006/0128 which stated that the development (an L-shaped loose box range with hay store and 4 no. loose boxes for private equestrian use purposes) should only be used for animals kept for the personal enjoyment of the occupant of Kynnersley House Farm and should not be used for any commercial purposes including livery. Due to a change in the applicant's circumstances and in order to utilise the building, the applicant had taken in horses which belonged to private individuals (liveries) for a fee in return for the use of the stables, grazing and

facilities. This situation was in breach of the previous planning permission and this application had been submitted to regularise the matter.

Cllr J Edge, Parish Councillor spoke to support the application. He conveyed the outcome of a public meeting which took place in the village on 19 December 2011 to consider the issue and also provided some context regarding the diversification of the rural business.

Mr P Heritage-Redpath, from a neighbouring property, spoke against the application. He considered that the report was incorrect to state that no complaints had been received during the period over which the livery facility had been available as he understood that the application had come forward as a result of a complaint and subsequent enforcement. He, therefore, asked that condition 4 remain with an amendment to the wording so that the development was not used for any commercial purposes except livery. To support this, he pointed out that there were other applications for the site due before the Board relating to lighting for the ménage and the siting of a horse lorry.

The Applicant, Mr P Plant, spoke in favour of the application. He advised that the livery facility supported diversification of a small beef farm and that the proposed number of horses which could be stabled as part of a livery business was very small in comparison to the number of horses which could be stabled for personal enjoyment. He considered that the amended condition proposed by Mr Heritage-Redpath was too restrictive to equine stock and suggested that a more suitable alternative would be to restrict use to cover agricultural farming activity.

The Planning Officer responded to the comments made by the speakers and suggested that if members were minded to amend the condition to limit activity some further consideration would be required to consider the subtleties involved.

Noting that there were other pending applications for planning permission at this site, Members considered that it would be prudent to consider all applications together.

RESOLVED – that determination of planning application TWC//2011/1027 be deferred to allow the Board Members to make a Site Visit when all relevant applications pertaining to the site are before the Board.

(e) TWC/2011/1058 Land off, Dalefield Drive, Admaston, Telford, Shropshire, TF5 0DP

This application sought full planning permission for the erection of 6 detached dwellings with associated parking and amenity space, and creation of a new access road from Dalefield Drive. The proposal would create 5no. 4-bedroom units and 1no. 5-bedroom unit. Both Ward Councillors, Councillors R T Kiernan and J M Seymour, had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

Councillor J Seymour, Ward Councillor, spoke against the application on behalf of neighbouring residents, Mrs Hunt and Mr and Mrs Langford. She sought flexibility in the position of plot 4 and the associated garage to retain amenity for Mrs Hunt, and for the orientation of plot 3 to afford privacy to the new development at Bostock

Close for which Mr and Mrs Langford had recently been granted planning permission.

Mr A Orrell, local resident, also spoke against the application on the grounds of overlooking, density, sustainability, loss of wildlife, loss of open space, unresolved boundary disputes and opined that the consultees had not had time to reply to amended plans. He also considered the site should be considered for a sheltered housing scheme.

The Planning Officer responded to comments made by the speakers, assuring Members that consideration to current and proposed future development in the vicinity had been afforded and that each relevant application had not been considered on a standalone basis. The officer confirmed the delegated approval of the dwelling adjoining the site, and demonstrated the relationship of the amended footprint with this proposal, clarifying the conditions attached to both applications which also ensure privacy afforded to both development sites, in addition to the protection of the existing hedge and maintenance of the adjoining ditch. Members' attention was drawn to the fact that no objections to the application had been made by the Council's Drainage or Ecology Officers and that a Tree Preservation Order was in place.

Councillor V A Fletcher proposed that determination of this application be deferred to allow Members to undertake a site visit. This was seconded by Councillor N A Dugmore but, on being put to the vote, this was not agreed.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/1058 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(f) TWC/2011/1077 Abraham Darby School, Ironbridge Road, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire, TF7 5HX

This was a proposal to vary condition 29 on planning permission W2009/1005 specifying approved plans to alter the design to the support structure for the canopy on the Abraham Darby Academy building from a skylon and truss to a colonnade of seven columns. The canopy itself remained unchanged from the original permission and the support structure was designed following extensive public consultation.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/1077 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the approval for planning application W2009/1005.

(g) TWC/2011/1090 Ironstone Square, Lawley, Telford, Shropshire

This application had been deferred at Plans Board on 22 February 2012 to enable Board Members to undertake a site visit.

The application was for a four storey Extra Care facility with 60 assisted living apartments comprising 32 one bedroom apartments and 28 two bedroom apartments over 4 storeys. The application formed part of the proposed local centre

for Lawley Sustainable Urban Extension and lay to the south of West Centre Way. It was part of a larger scheme for the development of a new local centre at the junction of West Centre Way and Lawley Drive in Lawley.

Cllr D Blackburn, of Lawley & Overdale Parish Council, spoke against the application. He raised concerns regarding parking provision and fears that congestion noted in other areas of Lawley would be repeated. He also raised issues regarding the realignment of the highway, the design, impact upon the area, road layout and access/egress to the pharmacy. Generally the Parish Council supported the development but with the proviso that dialogue with the Parish Council continued since the Parish Council considered that further debate was needed upon the terms of the Section 106 Agreement and bus routes in the area.

Mr D Williams representing Sanctuary Housing Association, the company which would manage the facility, spoke in favour of the application, addressing concerns regarding parking provision at the site and at the adjoining medical centre. He also conveyed the benefits of the roof garden, and indicated that the applicant was undertaking an acoustic survey to mitigate against any noise.

The Planning Officer reminded Members of the site visit undertaken earlier in the day which demonstrated the extent of any parking issues and he drew their attention to the contents of the update report tabled at the meeting, which addressed concerns raised at the previous meeting including parking at the adjoining medical centre, parking provision for the site, protection for the roof garden, noise and the external levels of the site particularly in relation to Main Street.

Whilst it was generally agreed that this was a welcome development, some Members remained concerned regarding the issue of parking provision. Councillor I T W Fletcher raised concerns for individuals using the community parking spaces who would then need to cross the carriageway to access the extra care facility. However, after receiving advice from the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist that the Planning Authority and Highways Authority were satisfied with the parking provision and, further, that the application was compliant with the development framework, design codes and the Council's Housing Care and Support Strategy, the majority of Members considered the development was acceptable.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/1090 planning permission for reserved matters be granted subject to the conditions set out in the update report tabled at the meeting.

(h) TWC/2011/1103 Rushmoor Sewage Treatment Works, Rushmoor Lane, Rushmoor, Shropshire, TF6 5EF

The Ward Councillor, Councillor J M Seymour had requested that this application be determined by the Plans Board. The proposals sought a minor material amendment to the approved plans subject of the previous application TWC/2010/0772.

Councillor J Seymour, Ward Councillor, spoke against the application. Councillor Seymour requested the need for Severn Trent Water to release their long terms plans for the site and suggested that it would be prudent to set up a Liaison

Committee for the site through conditions, that the hours for switching off lighting should be extended to 7pm to 6am and considered that the implementation of a Section 106 Agreement to mitigate the effects of development upon the highway and landscaping would not be unreasonable.

Mr P Maxted, a local resident, spoke against the application on behalf of residents directly affected by this application. He sought greater transparency for the applicant's long-term plans as he believed there to be an incremental development at the site and he also raised the issue of light pollution.

Mr A Hardwick, the Applicant's Agent, spoke in favour of the proposals which he maintained would bring a net benefit to local residents and the environment. He indicated that the applicants would have no objection to extending the hours that the lighting was switched off, subject to emergency access, and would raise the issue of creating a Liaison Committee with the applicant.

The officer advised members that the application was a minor amendment to a recently approved application; which was previously considered by members including a site visit. Members previously approved that application without a S106 agreement as this was unwarranted, and as such this application did not require any contributions.

Members endorsed the agreed reduction in the time that the lighting would be switched on and, noting that a Liaison Committee could not be subject to condition, welcomed Mr Hardwick's agreement to extend this suggestion to the applicant.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/1103 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report and subject to an amended condition for lighting to be switched off between 1900 hours and 0600 hours except for call out access.

(i) TWC/2012/0008 Southwater, Telford Shopping Centre, Telford, Shropshire

These proposals were for the demolition of existing buildings (library and fairshare) and redevelopment of the site to provide: 11 screen cinema; 82 bed hotel; three class A3/4 units of 372. sqm; four class A3/A4 units of 325 sqm; multi storey car park providing 604 spaces; a new class A1/A2/A3/B1 of 186 sqm within the multi storey car park; replacement surface level car park; public realm improvements and associated highway works. A new library was proposed elsewhere within Southwater as part of the new community focussed building (Community Hub) and a temporary library was to be provided for the period between demolition of the existing library and the expected opening of the Community Hub and library facility in 2014. Full details of these proposals were detailed in the report and an update report which detailed the obligations being sought by the Council as part of any planning agreement and the mechanism for delivery.

Members considered that this was a very exciting scheme which would positively impact upon the Borough's night-time economy and provide a leisure offer for all age groups. Following the debate, during which Members considered the adequacy of the temporary library provision, parking provision, the current availability of public

transport and employment generation, Members were generally satisfied that the proposals were acceptable.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0008, subject to the Council as landowner agreeing to provide a Memorandum signed by the Assistant Director Development Business and Housing agreeing that the Council as landowner will pay the sums detailed in the report and update report tabled at the meeting namely £428,131 for highway works, £10,000 for Travel Plan Monitoring and £10,000 for planning/financial monitoring either upon the sale of any of the development land or upon commencement of the development in respect of the highway sums or occupation in respect of the other sums whichever is the sooner, to authorise the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist to grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in the main report.

(j) TWC/2012/0042 Newport Town Lock, Water Lane, Newport, Shropshire

Members welcomed this Council application for the construction of a short length of pavement, the demolition and reconstruction of a section of short retaining wall, the construction of steps and the resurfacing of an area of paving at Newport Town Lock.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0042 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(k) TWC/2012/0065 Land at Former Pigeon Box Inn, Priorslee Road, Priorslee, Telford, Shropshire

The Ward Councillor, Councillor I T W Fletcher, had requested that this application be determined by the Plans Board.

This was an application seeking consent for works to a Sycamore tree which was subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). The applicant wished to crown lift the lower branches of the tree and to thin its canopy by approximately 20%. The proposed tree works also included removing the dead wood and any crossing or rubbing limbs. The update report, tabled at the meeting, detailed comments from the Council's Arboricultural Officer regarding the benefits of crown-thinning and the status of the applicants as an Arboricultural Association Approved Contractor. The Planning Officer also advised Members that the local resident was now supportive of the works but a boundary issue, which was not relevant to the consideration of these works, had come to light.

Councillor I T W Fletcher addressed the Board to object to the tree works which he considered were only necessary due to the way the layout at this development had been planned. He further considered that the works were inappropriate at this time and not required.

After seeking clarification of the process for applying to undertake works to a protected tree and noting that the resident who had initially objected to the works

was now in agreement that the works should proceed, the majority of Members were in favour of the works taking place.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0065 consent for tree works to a Sycamore tree subject to a Tree Preservation Order be granted subject to the conditions and informatives set out in the report.

- (l) TWC/2012/0086 Newdale County Primary School, Marlborough Way, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 5HA

This was a Council application for the erection of a three class base extension with office, toilets and storeroom along with the provision of extended car parking for staff. The update report tabled at the meeting detailed proposed tree protection measures agreed by the applicant with the Council’s Arboricultural Officer.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0086 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the update report tabled at the meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.58pm

Chairman:

Date:

PLANS BOARD

Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 11 April 2012 at 6.00pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire

PRESENT: Councillors J C Minor (Chairman), N A Dugmore, K R Guy, A S Jhawar, R T Kiernan J Loveridge, C P R Mollett (as substitute for Councillor I T W Fletcher), S A W Reynolds and C R Turley

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor J M Seymour (for planning application TWC/2011/0959)

PB-098 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on 28 March 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman

PB-099 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors I T W Fletcher

PB-100 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

PB-101 DEFERRED/WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS

None

PB-102 SITE VISITS

None

PB-103 PLANNING APPLICATIONS FOR DETERMINATION

Members had received a schedule of planning applications to be determined by the Board and fully considered each report.

- (a) TWC/2011/0746 Riverview, 27 Stars Lane, Cold Hatton, Telford, Shropshire, TF6 6PZ

This application, which had been deferred at Plans Board on 7 March 2012, sought planning permission for the erection of a 4-bedroomed two-storey detached dwelling and detached garage with games room above following demolition of the existing modern bungalow, Riverview. Waters Upton Parish Council had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

The application had been deferred to enable Planning Officers to discuss with the applicant the Board's concerns regarding the scale of development, particularly the garage and impact on adjoining amenity, and the potential that the garage could

become an independent dwelling. The applicant declined to amend the plans but agreed to enter into a Section 106 agreement to tie the detached garage and ancillary accommodation above to the main dwelling to ensure the development did not create a separate unit of accommodation in the rural area. This would be in accord with the conditions previously proposed and which the Planning Officer still considered to be appropriate.

The Planning Officer reminded Members that prior to the Board meeting on 7 March 2012, the Applicant's Agent had resurveyed the site to accurately measure the position of the rear boundary and the location and block plans had been amended accordingly, with revisions to the red line site area. The scale and design of the development were unchanged. The Planning Officer considered that the site area was still of a sufficient size to adequately accommodate the proposed dwelling, garage and amenity space. In addition, the Planning Officer considered that the proposal was acceptable in its present form and would be in keeping with the character of the area; furthermore there were no windows on the side elevation of the garage protecting the adjoining neighbour from any noise or loss of privacy. The adjoining property had a detached garage with accommodation above and the dwelling and garage could be accommodated without adversely affecting adjoining residential amenities. The officer reminded members of the Parish representation at the previous meeting, confirming their request for a S106 agreement retaining the garage as ancillary accommodation, similar to that of the adjoining property.

The Board considered that it was an important principle that detached garage and ancillary accommodation above should remain linked to the main dwelling, and that no further ancillary accommodation was gained through the control of the garage at ground floor; officers confirmed that the proposed conditions would adequately control this.

RESOLVED – that with regard to planning application TWC/2011/0746 the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the applicants entering into a Section 106 agreement requiring that the garage shall be retained as ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling and not sold as a separate unit or let as a separate unit, and further subject to the conditions set out in the report.

(b) TWC/2011/0959 Isombridge Farm, Isombridge, Shropshire, TF6 6NF

The application sought planning permission to convert two agricultural buildings located at either end of a small field on the edge of Isombridge Farm to a live/work unit. No information had been provided to outline the type of business which would occupy the work element of the live/work unit although the original submission stated that the business would fall within Use Class B1 which included offices, research and development and light engineering.

Councillor J M Seymour, Ward Member, had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

Councillor D Johnson, representing Rodington Parish Council, spoke in favour of the application. He informed the meeting that his parish council had adopted a parish

plan which favoured, among other developments, development which would support home based employment. This plan had been consulted upon by the parish council. The current application met this plan and therefore the aspirations of residents of the parish. He noted that the Core Strategy quota of 170 dwellings permissible in the rural area in the period 2006-16 was not a well-considered quota and claimed that there had been no consultation here. He emphasised that the current application met the demand for live/work units in the locality.

Councillor J M Seymour, Ward Member, also spoke in support of the application. She emphasised that the application would benefit a local farming business that currently supported four families by sustainably using redundant farm buildings to generate a small rental income. She referred to the new National Planning Policy Framework with its presumptions in favour of applications that supported the rural economy and that made use of redundant farm buildings. In her view, the site was located very near to the existing farm complex. She considered that the advice of a specialist consultant that the buildings had architectural merit had been sidelined, and referred to the Longdon-on-Tern appeal. Cllr Seymore also considered there were 44 people who are looking for such facilities and these would be approached after any approval.

Mr B Davies, the applicant's agent, addressed the meeting in support of the application. He argued that the proposal would help to sustain the existing farm business. Furthermore, the buildings had architectural merit, as had been pointed out in the report of a consultant appointed by the applicant, and therefore he considered that the application would meet Policy H18. He also considered that the buildings were an integral part of the farm complex, and therefore the application would meet Policy E6. The agent also referred to additional information sent to the department prior to the meeting.

The Planning Officer responded to the points that had been made, clarifying the policy basis that as the site was located in the open countryside where development is strictly controlled there was a need to justify such development. Policy H18 would only permit the reuse of redundant non residential buildings to a residential use where buildings had architectural merit and in this case reiterated the Conservation and the case officers' views that the buildings were generic, disjointed and lacking in architectural or conservation merit. Taking account of policy E6 no evidence had been submitted of how the development will assist farm diversification. The officer also referred to the marketing report for a B1 use over a two year period and the only interest was purely for residential conversion, and as such raised concerns over the viability of the scheme and the likelihood of residential without the work element especially as the two elements are separated in two buildings; subsequently justification and further evidence had been requested from the agent however such information had not been submitted.

The officer also highlighted Members attention to the additional information submitted by the agent since the publication of the report, and responded to those points.

The Assistant Director also responded to some of the points that had been raised, in particular, how the allocation of rural housing had been arrived at by due planning

process involving a public inquiry and the scrutiny of a Planning Inspector, and the place of the new National Planning Policy Framework, which, while it guided planning policy, did not supersede existing local plans and was to be considered where no local planning policies covered an application. He noted the presence of a survey of live/work requirements which had not been adopted or implemented, and emphasised that planning policies should prevail.

Members debated the most appropriate approach to this application. While Members expressed their support for the encouragement of small business, some Members were not assured that this proposed unit would be taken up by businesses in the area, and they noted that there were business units in the Borough that were unoccupied. The Chairman expressed his concerns that the application should not become a pretext for a solely residential development; other Members considered that the points made by the Parish Council held some validity; subsequently it was proposed by Councillor Dugmore, and seconded, that determination of this application be deferred to allow Members to undertake a site visit. The Assistant Director reminded the Board that the purpose of an inspection was not to hear further arguments with regard to the proposal, and other Members did not consider that an inspection would resolve the issues at stake here. Consequently, on being put to the vote, the visit was not agreed.

Councillor Guy proposed that an open deferral be allowed to enable the applicant to make a clearer business plan, and evidence of viability with potential occupants with regard to the potential take-up of a live/work unit at this location.

RESOLVED – that determination of planning application TWC/2011/0959 be deferred to gain additional information and justification for the proposed live/work unit in the open countryside.

(c) TWC/2012/0046 The Hedges, Rowton, Telford, Shropshire, TF6 6QY

This proposal sought planning permission for a new dwelling, garage and ménage area with lighting at land to the south of Rowton in the open countryside.

Councillor S J Bentley, Ward Member, had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

Mr A McPaul, the applicant, spoke in support of the application. He gave his view that the application site was within what he defined as the village of Rowton, and that it was only 200 metres from the centre of the village and only 50 metres from the neighbouring property. He identified the services that to his view made Rowton a village and not a Hamlet. The proposal would be sited with lane access to the village and would adjoin the pumping station serving the village. His proposed building would be a small, affordable and sustainable dwelling which would be sited on an existing hard standing area with no impact on additional land.

The Planning Officer emphasised that in line with the Council's policies this site was defined as lying in open countryside outside of the defined settlements within the rural area where development would be located, and that furthermore no need or justification had been shown why the applicant required to reside at this site. No

agricultural or forestry need had been demonstrated, and that the equestrian use of the site related to a leisure use rather than any agricultural use. Furthermore, the application was not defined as an affordable dwelling as suggested by the applicant as it did not meet the Council's affordable housing policy exceptions. Additionally the proposed house construction being built to meet code 3 for sustainable homes was a medium level, and a high level of sustainability would be code 5 or 6. Members concurred with these strong presumptions against granting planning permission, noting in addition that the site was further from the settlement of Rowton than they had initially imagined, and was not a defined settlement where development would be focused, and as such set an adverse precedent undermining the councils policies. Members also raised concerns with regard to the height of the ménage lights.

RESOLVED – that planning application TWC/2012/0046 be refused for the following reasons:

1. The Local Planning Authority considers that the erection of a new dwelling on this highly unsustainable site is unacceptable as it is outside the settlements of High Ercall, Tibberton and Waters Upton. Furthermore, the special circumstances advanced fail to justify this proposal as an exception to general housing policy. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to “saved” policies H10 and H24 of the adopted Wrekin Local Plan 1995-2006 and policies CS1 and CS7 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, 2007 and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The Local Planning Authority considers that proposal to erect a new dwelling in the open countryside exceeds the maximum housing numbers permitted in the rural area and undermine the Core Strategy approach. Accordingly, the proposal is deemed contrary to policy CS1 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, 2007.
3. The Local Authority considers that the proposed lighting poles by reason of its location, scale and height would have a detrimental effect on the amenities of adjoining residential properties by virtue of visual impact and light pollution; furthermore the proposal would detract from the character of the predominantly rural open area. Accordingly, the development is contrary to saved policy UD2 of the Wrekin Local Plan and policy CS15 of the Local Development Framework Plan.

(d) TWC/2012/0102 6 Hillside East, Lilleshall, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 9GZ

This application sought planning permission to extend a dwelling house with a single-storey side extension and to convert part of an existing garage into habitable space (annexe) with the erection of a new dormer window.

RESOLVED – that with regard to planning application TWC/2012/0102 the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist be authorised to grant planning

permission subject to the applicants entering into a Section 106 agreement requiring that the development shall be retained as ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling and not sold as a separate unit or let as a separate unit, and further subject to the conditions set out in the report.

- (e) TWC/2012/0147 Sundip, Somerwood, Rodington, Telford, Shropshire, SY4 4RF

This was an application seeking planning permission for the conversion of an existing double garage to form a habitable annexe. It also sought retrospective consent for a door and two windows within the building's north facing elevation. Members expressed their concerns that this was a retrospective application. The meeting was informed that the conversion would, as part of a planning consent, become subject to building control approval.

RESOLVED – that with regard to planning application TWC/2012/0147 the Assistant Director: Planning Specialist be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the applicants entering into a Section 106 agreement that the development shall be retained as ancillary accommodation to the main dwelling and not sold as a separate unit or let as a separate unit, and further subject to the conditions set out in the report.

- (f) TWC/2012/0157 39 New Street, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 1LU

This application sought advertisement consent to display one externally illuminated fascia and one externally illuminated hanging sign on the front of the premises on New Street, Wellington. This application was considered in conjunction with application reference TWC/2012/ 0158 seeking consent for change of use, alteration to shop front and installation of a satellite dish and air conditioning unit.

Members considered that the proposed advertisements respected the nature of the Conservation Area.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0157 advertisement consent be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

- (g) TWC/2012/0158 39 New Street, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 1LU

This application sought permission for change of use from retail (Use Class A1) to betting office (Use Class A2) alteration to the shop front and installation of a satellite dish and air conditioning unit to the rear of the building. This application was considered in conjunction application reference TWC/2012/ 0157 seeking consent for advertisement of signage at the front of the building.

Wellington Town Council had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board.

Councillors G Riley and P McCarthy, representing Wellington Town Council spoke in opposition to the proposals. They expressed the concerns of the town council at the decline of shopping opportunities and diversity that their town was able to offer and the resultant reputation that the town might acquire. There were already two betting shops in the town and a total of four gambling outlets. The town council considered if this was an application for an additional sex shop members views would be different. The town council was concerned that the proposal was located in a deprived area and would encourage a destructive and addictive habit. They had collected a petition signed by 300 local signatories that supported this view.

The Planning Officer confirmed that the petition had not been submitted to the department and consequently not reported on the report or any update. The officer highlighted that whilst the proposal would conflict with the 1 in 4 non retail units in this precise location, along the street the proposal would not reduce the retail units to less than 25% as set out in the report.

The Board, however, considered that empty shopping units were more destructive to a retail environment, and retail units that were in use enhanced the 'footfall' in our towns and thus helped to sustain other retail units.

RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2012/0158 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm.

Chairman:

Date:

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on Monday, 9th January 2012 at 2.30pm in the Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors D. White (Chairman), V. Fletcher, G. Green, A. McClements, R. Sloan, C. Turley.

IN ATTENDANCE: Cabinet Members C. Smith and E. Clare, Councillor J. Seymour; Michael Barker, Head of Housing & Planning; Kathryn Kynaston, Strategic Housing Manager; Chris Winter, Strategy & Commissioning Officer ; Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist; Tracy Clarke, Scrutiny Officer.

SMB-24 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on the 5th December 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

SMB-25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. M. Hosken.

SMB-26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

SMB-27 MEETING HOUSING NEEDS

The Strategic Housing Manager summarised the report on Meeting Housing Needs which addressed specific issues which had been raised by Members. The following key points were made:

- All local authorities were required by law to have a housing allocations policy, even if they were not landlords. The policy may be one and the same as the Choice Based Lettings Scheme (called 'Choose Your Home' in Telford & Wrekin), but the Telford & Wrekin policy took a broader view to encompass the role of all partners, including private landlords, to make the best use of stock for those in need. There had been delays in finalising the policy due to waiting for new national guidelines as part of the National Housing Strategy. National guidance on Allocations Policies had been issued for consultation the previous week, and the intention locally was to consult with key stakeholders on the implications of the guidelines and to develop a revised draft policy prior to public consultation in the spring. Authorities were required to comment on the draft guidelines by the end of March. The guidelines followed the Localism Act to ensure that social housing is directed to those most in need. Local authorities must tailor the policy to local circumstances and prioritise categories of people deemed

most in need of housing, such as ex-service personnel, while retaining reasonable preference categories. The Act also encourages priority to be given to applicants who are in employment, caring or making a contribution to their local communities. The policy would be considered by Wrekin Housing Trust with regard to CYH.

- There were a large number of applicants for affordable housing which reflected the national picture and the position of other authorities, and this pre-existed the introduction of CYH. There were currently 20,000 applicants registered on CYH, which included people registering in anticipation of need. The latest assessment for the borough estimates that there is an annual net shortfall of 1,200 affordable homes every year. Work was being done with Wrekin Housing Trust (WHT), other Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and private developers to increase the supply of affordable housing, manage expectations and to re-use old properties.
- An Emergency Priority band had been introduced to CYH which enabled people in this band to bid for properties over and above anyone in the other bands (urgent, needing, wanting). The band had been created for emergency situations such as unforeseen circumstances (fire, flood etc.), where there were safety risks, or where medical conditions had made accommodation unsuitable.
- With regard to applicants from outside the borough securing accommodation over local people, the principle of choice based lettings schemes was to allow everyone equal choice regardless of where they live, and CYH had been developed consistent with this national approach. Anyone could apply to the scheme and once registered could bid for properties. It was therefore possible that people from outside the borough could be housed in advance of local people. The new national housing strategy had also emphasised the need for flexibility, to assist people in social housing to move around the country. However, some schemes or properties were advertised with a 'local lettings plan' which could specify that the applicant needs a close connection with the local area to bid, and although other people could bid, those fulfilling the criteria would be prioritised.
- Members had asked about feedback from other providers about CYH, but the Council was not aware of any specific feedback at the present time.
- In the last few years there has been a step change in the number of affordable homes built in Telford & Wrekin. This is now at around 200 each year, compared to the long term average of 100. 202 were provided in 2010/11, compared to 200 over the rest of Shropshire. With funding reductions and housing market conditions it was uncertain that the level of growth could be sustained. The Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) had traditionally supported the delivery of affordable homes through the National Affordable Housing Programme, but there was now less funding available. As part of the local 'Small Sites Programme', the HCA and the Council will enable the delivery of up to 200 new affordable homes by providing land at nil value. Alternative methods of increasing the local

supply of affordable homes were always under review.

- The report provided an update on the key elements of the Government's new housing proposals. The recent national Housing Strategy confirmed the Government's intention to reform social housing and move away from it being 'a home for life'. The Localism Act also required the development of a Tenancy Strategy by November 2012, with the provision to offer fixed term tenancies for up to 5 years and the removal of the requirement for 'open' waiting lists.

Following the presentation, members raised a number of issues which were discussed.

- An issue had previously been put forward to scrutiny about Choose Your Home not taking into account the Parish Council's local housing needs register on two new rural housing schemes in Waters Upton where planning consent had been granted with local lettings plans attached to the development so that property was let to individuals with a local connection. In one case the S106 agreement had been overridden by the existing tenant's right to make a 'mutual exchange', which had enabled a tenant not meeting the local connection criteria to move into the development. Members were informed that this case was exceptional. Another more recent instance had involved a query of the local connection and level of housing need of certain applicants. Members were informed that the situation had been resolved after a detailed investigation and the issue would be reviewed to ensure it did not happen again. It was acknowledged that the process needed to be open and transparent, and that policies would be clearly worded in future. Members reiterated that where agreements were in place, they should be adhered to, and further, that applications should be validated to ensure applicants meet the local eligibility criteria. Cllr. Seymour commented that on the Wrockwardine development on The Avenue, applicants had been checked to ensure they complied with the local connections criteria.
- There was further discussion about housing in rural areas. The Head of Housing & Planning explained that rural housing was important but development was governed by strict planning policies. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care suggested that scrutiny members may want to review the Rural Needs Housing Survey methodology at a future meeting to look at how rural and urban needs are met. Members made a number of points relating to rural developments:
 - Members commented that affordable housing in rural areas was important to stop young people draining away from villages. Members were informed that developments given planning consent under an 'exceptions' policy must be affordable. The exceptions policy enables parishes to establish local needs criteria. For example, in Wrockwardine four homes had been built on The Avenue and applicants with a proven local connection could apply. This would help to sustain local villages, although if, at a later date, there was no local demand, applications could be opened up to neighbouring parishes.

- That rural development depends on identifying sites which are acceptable locally and there can be a tension between the need for affordable housing and local conservation or environmental protection objections.
 - There had been some mixed feedback from a recent presentation to Lilleshall and Donnington Parish Council on a rural housing needs survey, and officers would take this back to look at.
 - Members gave an example of a notice about a planning application which had been sent to residents who could not see the relevance and suggested that notices should only be sent to appropriate residents. The Strategic Housing Manager replied that notices are sent to all residents within the parish, and that changing the boundaries would require the support of the parishes but that this could be considered.
- There was a discussion about non-traditional housing schemes. The Chairman and Cllr. Fletcher referred to a previous scrutiny review of Housing & Homelessness which had recommended that the Council explore and support more non-traditional development builds on land that is not suitable for traditional builds. Members felt there were pockets of land in the borough that were not suitable for traditional build, but that could be made viable as sites for non-traditional affordable housing schemes. Members pointed to the sites in Muxton and Tweedale as good examples of non-traditional builds, although the original intention had been for temporary accommodation. The Chairman referred to a scheme in Birmingham which could be looked at as a good example of non-traditional affordable homes. The Head of Housing & Planning responded that there was no reason in principle why non-traditional schemes could not go ahead as long as the proper planning and licensing processes were carried out and there was market demand, but that no developers had come forward with non-traditional proposals. However, there was no reason why the Council could not work with developers to explore the potential and identify sites.
 - The availability and cost of land was discussed. Developers and providers will only build schemes that are economically viable, and it is more difficult for RSLs which are not-for-profit to be able to afford land. The HCA consulted the Council on bids by RSLs for grant funding from the National Affordable Housing Programme, 2011-15. In a separate initiative, The Council and HCA had offered a number of sites at 'nil value' for RSLs to bid for under the Small Sites Programme, and 200 affordable homes were being delivered as a result. Land at nil value was only offered to RSLs for affordable housing, and the RSL would take responsibility for the delivery of the scheme and for infrastructure work. More generally, however, the HCA and the Council were required to make a return and could not always make land available free of charge. Cllr. Fletcher referred to a HCA development site in Priorslee which had been granted planning permission for 450 houses which could have helped older people needing more suitable housing to stay in the area while freeing up larger houses for families, but the land had reverted back to agricultural use presumably because no developers had come forward. Cllr. Fletcher suggested that the Council should talk to the HCA to look at how

development of these types of sites could be encouraged. Cllr. Green also pointed out the need to resolve access problems to sites which would otherwise be suitable for development.

- Members asked where money from disposals in Telford & Wrekin was invested by WHT, as there was a perception that money was not necessarily re-invested within the borough and could be spent in Shropshire or Staffordshire. Members had heard that WHT had given an undertaking that for every property sold, a further two could be developed. Officers replied that the Trust's Annual Report would show income from disposals and expenditure on investments and that the Report could be provided to members. However, the Report did not show where money from disposals in the borough was spent and this question would need to be addressed by the Trust. The Head of Housing & Planning said that a clear understanding of the Trust's business model was required and a dialogue needed so that the Council could work with them to encourage re-investment in the borough. The Head of Housing & Planning said that where properties were in poor condition, it may sometimes be better to sell them to the private sector and have the property turned around, rather than to leave it empty or invest in the property. Members felt that properties needing less than £10,000 worth of renovations should not be sold off but should be refurbished and put back into stock.
- Members wanted to know what % of homes were allocated through CYH to people in Telford & Wrekin compared to people outside the borough. No figures were available at the meeting, but the feeling was that the vast majority go to Telford & Wrekin residents. Choice based lettings schemes had to be open to anyone, and equally, local people could bid into schemes in other areas.
- Members wanted to know who drives the allocations policy and whether it was the Council or WHT, who operates CYH on behalf of the Council. Officers replied that the Council's allocations policy is wider than CYH and provides a framework within which local housing providers will operate. As an RSL, WHT works under a different set of policies and legislation to the local authority, and although the Council can negotiate and influence, it has no direct control or powers of compulsion over WHT. The Council has planning and regulatory powers which could be used to influence the Trust, and the allocations policy would help the Council to influence WHT and provide a basis for negotiation. It was important that policies were aligned. Each RSL makes their own property allocations from the CYH bidders. Members were disappointed that development of the allocations policy had been put off until guidelines were published and felt that it would have been better to have had a policy in place which could then be amended to take account of new legislation. This should be taken forward as quickly as possible. Members requested that the draft allocations policy be brought back to the Scrutiny Management Board for review prior to public consultation.
- Members were very concerned about a flaw in the CYH banding system. Apart from the new emergency category, there were three bands: urgent,

needing and wanting which were defined on the CYH website. Applicants moving to a higher band could be worse off as a result of the further prioritisation by date order of application. For example, an applicant moving from the top of the “needing” band would go to the bottom of the “urgent” band: if houses then come up in the “needing” category, they would miss out even though they had become a higher priority. Members were very concerned that this flaw in the system should be addressed, and that it should be made very clear to applicants how the system works and the implications of moving between bands. Benchmarking with other choice based lettings systems was suggested. Cllr. Fletcher also suggested that there should be a better understanding of what the bands mean otherwise there could be a false impression created about the number of people who were homeless.

- Members brought up some examples of poor customer service which ward residents had reported receiving from WHT. There were further concerns about the WHT Hotline which had been set up to improve communication for Members with the Trust as this did not seem to be working. These issues could be raised with the Trust.
- The role of Councillors needed to be made clear to the public, and that the Council is not a landlord so although Councillors will liaise with the housing associations on behalf of residents, they do not have any power to influence the housing associations regarding accommodation.
- The Cabinet Member for Adult & Social Care drew Members’ attention to the potential impact of changes in the benefit system. From 1st April, people living alone will only receive housing benefit based on one bedroom accommodation regardless of how many bedrooms are in the property. The tenant, or their family, will need to make up any shortfall. There was a concern that people could be made homeless if they could not afford the extra rent. The move to the Universal Credit could also pose a threat because people un-used to managing a budget in this way could get into rent arrears.

Members agreed that the meeting had raised a number of key issues which should be followed up at a future meeting. A Members Information Seminar with the RSLs had been planned for 15th March, and it was agreed that Members should attend this meeting to hear what was said and ask questions, and a further meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board would be arranged following the seminar. It had already been agreed during the meeting that the draft allocations policy would be presented at a future meeting, and it was further agreed that the Chairman would discuss the issues raised at this meeting with officers to confirm arrangements for the next meeting.

SMB-28 RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

A response from the service area and Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Scrutiny Management Board at the meeting on 7th November

2011 about highways related issues had been circulated to Members. Members were satisfied with the responses, but made further requests regarding two of the recommendations;

- Recommendation 2. Cllr. McClements had attended a Co-operative Council meeting recently and heard that York City Council had a very successful Snow Warden scheme and suggested that the service area should look at as a potential example of good practice.
- Recommendation 3. Members asked that Town & Parish Councils should also be made aware that the grit in grit bins was only for use on roads, and should also be given clarity about whether they could purchase additional grit for use on footpaths.

These suggestions would be sent to the Head of Service to action.

RESOLVED – that the response to the recommendations be noted subject to the two further suggestions being forwarded to the service area.

SMB-29 FORWARD PLAN AND ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

Members considered the report of the Scrutiny Group Specialist on the Scrutiny Management Board Work Programme. Items for the work programme had been agreed in July 2011 and several new items had been added at subsequent meetings with no items being removed. As a result the work programme had become too big to be delivered within the remaining meetings scheduled for the municipal year. An informal meeting of the Scrutiny Chairmen had been held on 12th December to review the items and propose a course of action that would make the work programme deliverable and focused on priorities.

Members were asked to consider the proposed method of dealing with each item in the work programme as set out in section 5.1 of the report. Assuming the proposals were agreed, the revised Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 1 of the report would be adopted. The statutory scrutiny functions relating to Safer, Stronger Communities Partnerships, and the implications for scrutiny of the Police and Social Responsibility Bill, and Flood and Water Management had been prioritised for the work programme.

Members considered and agreed the proposals.

Members noted the time and date of the next meeting at 2.30pm on Monday, 5th March.

RESOLVED – that the proposals in section 5.1 of the report be accepted.

The meeting ended at 4.16 p.m.

Chairman:

Date:

SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on Monday, 5th March 2012 at 2.30pm in the Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors D. White (Chairman), V. Fletcher, G. Green, A. McClements, R. Sloan, C. Turley.

IN ATTENDANCE: Chris Butler, Service Delivery Manager Highway & Engineering Services; Steve Hollins, Team Leader Engineering Services; Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist; Tracy Clarke, Scrutiny Officer.

SMB-30 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on the 9th January 2012 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

SMB-31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr. M. Hosken.

SMB-32 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

SMB-33 FLOOD & WATER MANAGEMENT

Referring to the report circulated in advance, Chris Butler, Service Delivery Manager Highways & Engineering and Steve Hollins, Engineering Team Leader, gave an update on how Telford & Wrekin Council is meeting its responsibilities as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) under the Flood & Water Management (FWM) Act 2010.

The FWM Act 2010 had been enacted following the 2007 floods and the resulting Pitt review. A key issue to address was the deficiency of partner working. The Act had established county and unitary authorities as Local Lead Flood Authorities (LLFAs) with responsibility for leading actions with partners to combat flood events. DEFRA had awarded grants to LLFAs in 2011/12 and further grants had been awarded for 2012/13.

The following key work was highlighted:

- The spilt of the Severn Trent Regional Flood & Coastal Committee into two committees for the Severn & Wye and the Trent catchment areas from July 2012. Cllr. Shaun Davies, Cabinet Member for Environment, Co-operative

Council & Partnership had been nominated to join the Severn & Wye committee. Representation on the committee is vital in enabling Telford & Wrekin to bid into the £3m funding accumulated from the combined levies from each member local authority.

- The Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA) required by the EU Floods Directive had been submitted to the Environment Agency (EA) and was deemed exemplary. This identified the potential flooding hot spots in the borough.
- A Strategic Flood Risk Management Board had been established in 2011 including Cabinet Members and key officers from the Council and other partners (Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water and the emergency services). Cllr. Davies had recently been appointed as Chairman. An Operational Board had been set up to carry out the operational work and make recommendations to the Strategic Board for ratification. The Operational Board would meet monthly and the Strategic Board six monthly.
- The local Flood Risk Strategy was being developed in conjunction with partners and stakeholders including local communities and businesses and would define the actions required for effective risk management of flood events.
- The Council will become a Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SAB) in October 2012 and will be led by Highways and Engineering Services. The SAB will work along side planning to approve drainage systems for new developments. SAB approval would be required before a development could go ahead. The process would establish an income stream for the maintenance of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) as the authority would be responsible for maintenance of the approved systems. Further guidance on SUDS is expected in April 2012.
- From April 2012 property owners will require consent from Highways and Engineering Services to carry out works on watercourses on or adjacent to their property. Applications will be considered in both engineering and environmental terms and could be rejected, or modifications required.
- An asset register of all features in the borough that may affect flood risk was being compiled as a statutory requirement. This was a significant piece of work and would take up to 18 months to complete.
- Highways and Engineering were responsible for investigating all flooding incidents and reporting findings to the Environment Agency and the Strategic Board. There were requirements under the Act relating to prevention measures.
- Work was being done with Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency to jointly fund flood alleviation in Ketley.

- £45k funding had been secured to provide flood protection to properties in Old Hall Close and residents were involved in discussions.
- Highways and Engineering continue to manage the deployment of the flood barriers in Ironbridge with the Environment Agency. These tend to be predictable winter occurrences, unlike summer flash flooding. The barrier is a temporary defence and a fraction of the cost of permanent structures.

Members were informed that Telford & Wrekin Council was acknowledged nationally and regionally as an example of best practice in flood and water management. Officers attended conferences around the country with the Environment Agency and had hosted visits from other authorities to share best practice. Revenue had been generated in the past from providing consultancy services.

Following the presentation, members asked a number of questions and were provided with the following information:

- Development plans must be approved by Engineering Services for sustainable drainage systems. Commuted sums will be secured for maintenance costs which become the responsibility of the Council. It is recommended that money is ring-fenced for this purpose.
- The Council works closely with the water company, Severn Trent Water when addressing flooding problems in the borough. However, the funding mechanisms for each organisation are completely different. In addition the approach to designing flood alleviation schemes also differs and can present difficulties when agreeing to design capacities.
- The Council as the LLFA does not have powers of enforcement over its partners on the Strategic Board. However, the Council has a duty to investigate and report events to the Strategic Board and so far STW have been responsive to the initial investigations.
- Flooding of the disused mines and mineshafts in Telford & Wrekin presented a risk of instability.
- Stringent planning guidelines are applied to developments within flood plains. All planning applications are reviewed by the Highways and Engineering team so that development within a flood plain are strictly controlled.
- The DEFRA grant was £117k for 2011/12 which covered both salaries and work on the ground, and £146k had been allocated for 2012/13. Unlike some other authorities, the Council had retained specialist skills in-house so the Council was well placed to maximise funding and is able to provide consultancy services to other authorities.

- The register of flood features would take around 18 months to complete and will be published on the website.
- Each authority pays a local levy, funded by DEFRA, to the Regional Flood Defence Committee - in Telford & Wrekin this is the Severn & Wye Committee. Cllr. Davies will sit on the Committee and Telford & Wrekin will be able to bid for funds as well as being able to comment on the proposals brought by other authorities.
- Highways and Engineering Services hold several Geographical Information System (GIS) maps detailing all watercourses and drainage systems across the borough. These maps are very useful in predicting areas that are at risk of flooding.
- Funding is prioritised towards house and internal flooding rather than flooding of outdoor areas.
- Members were asked to help by reporting flooding incidents to the team.

RESOLVED

Members were reassured that the Council has continued its good work in this area.

SMB-34 PROPOSED CHANGES TO SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

The Scrutiny Group Specialist summarised a report about changes which the Scrutiny Committee Chairmen were proposing to the scrutiny arrangements for the next municipal year. The key changes were:

- To merge the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committees into one Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee. This was to address the large overlap between work programmes which it was felt would increase as the Health reforms brought about closer integration of health and social care.
- The establishment of a new Housing, Economy and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee. This would also incorporate transport, environment and regeneration within its remit. The intention was to establish a dedicated committee for these service areas, which currently fall within the remit of the Scrutiny Management Board.
- To invite Town & Parish Councils to elect one representative to sit on each of the Scrutiny Committees. This was to enhance links between scrutiny and the Town & Parish Councils.

There was a discussion about the proposals and the following points were made:

- That scrutiny needed a structure which would give robust challenge to the Executive and that a reduction in the number of scrutiny committees was not consistent with providing a strong check and balance across the range of Executive functions.
- That the work of the Committees would need to be balanced with the resources available, not only in the scrutiny team, but across the organisation a whole as resources become much more scarce.
- That the Scrutiny Management Board would need to manage the allocation of resources across the Committees.
- That the Town & Parish Council representatives would be appointed by the Town & Parish Councils themselves and that they should bring added value to the borough ward Members. Scrutiny Chairmen would need to address incidents of parish-related issues being brought to the table if this happened at meetings.

The process for making the changes was discussed. It was noted that the Scrutiny Management Board may make changes to scrutiny arrangements within the provisions set out in the Council's Constitution, and in consultation with the Scrutiny Assembly. Changes would be reported to Full Council by the Scrutiny Chairman.

RESOLVED

- **Members agreed the scrutiny committee structure as set out in section 5.1 of the report be consulted on with the Scrutiny Assembly**
- **Members agreed that the proposals to invite Town & Parish Councils to elect representatives for the Scrutiny Committees be consulted on by the Scrutiny Assembly and Town & Parish Councils**
- **That the timetable set out in Section 7.5 for making changes to scrutiny arrangements be noted.**

SMB-35 FORWARD PLAN AND ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that an additional meeting would be held in April to review feedback on the proposed changes to the scrutiny arrangements and to agree the final changes.

The Chairman advised members that he and Cllr. Turley had met the Strategic Housing Manager to discuss the issues raised at the January meeting regarding housing and Choose Your Home. A report was tabled to show what had been discussed, the actions agreed and a list of questions arising to be directed to RSLs. The questions would be sent to RSLs attending the Members' Information Seminar on 15th March to see whether they could be addressed in presentations or in the Q&A sessions. It was suggested that members attend the Seminar on 15th March, but were reminded that this this was not a scrutiny meeting but could complement

scrutiny work by proving members with was an opportunity to find out more, and potentially to ask questions. It was agreed that feedback from the Seminar would be discussed the next Scrutiny Management Board meeting for members to identify further scrutiny work.

The Chairman informed members that the revisions recently made to the Scrutiny and the Media Protocol had given rise to a number of comments. It had been agreed at the December meeting that the Chairman would approve changes to the protocol for circulation to Scrutiny Assembly and adoption into the Scrutiny Handbook. However, in the light of comments received, the Chairman suggested that the protocol be brought back to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board for further discussion and to approve the changes.

Dates for the meeting would be agreed by e-mail.

RESOLVED

That an additional meeting be held in April to agree changes to the scrutiny arrangements, to agree the Scrutiny and the Media Protocol and to agree the next steps in the review of housing issues.

The meeting ended at 4.00pm.

Chairman:

Date:

STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Wednesday, 8 February, 2012 at 6.00 p.m. at Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors S. Davies, A.D. McClements, R.J. Sloan and A.J. Stanton;
Mr A. Selvaratnam (Chair) (Independent Member);
Councillors D. Edwards, P. Fairclough, R. Wickson and R. Williams (Parish Council representatives)

ST-17 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 8 December 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

ST-18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors C.B.A. Elliott and T.J. Hope
Mr F Beasland (Independent member)

ST-19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

ST-20 THE WAY FORWARD FOR STANDARDS

The Assistant Director: Law, Democracy & Public Protection and Monitoring Officer presented a report which set out proposals for a future ethical standards regime at Telford & Wrekin in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011.

Following the principles that were agreed at the last meeting (minute ST-16(a)), proposals had been developed for a new ethical standards framework for the Council. Appended to the report were a draft Members' Code of Conduct based on the seven principles identified in the legislation; proposed arrangements for dealing with complaints of a breach of the Code of Conduct; and the proposed terms of reference for the new Standards Committee. Since the last meeting, the Government had announced that the start date for the new regime would now be 1 July 2012 instead of 1 April. Parish and Town Councils had been asked for their views on the proposals, although only a couple of them had responded so far – both of whom were broadly in favour of what was being proposed. The Parish representatives stated that many Parish & Town Councils had not yet had an opportunity to meet and discuss the proposals. In response, the Monitoring Officer stated that, due to the implementation date being put back, recommendations could be delayed to the May Council meeting, which would give more time for responses from parishes to be submitted.

During discussion on the impact the new regime would have on Parish and Town Councils, the Monitoring Officer advised that the new regime was based much more on self-regulation, with Parish Councils taking on responsibility for the conduct of their members and deciding on what action should be taken in the event of a breach of the Code. However, appropriate support would continue to be provided to Parish and Town Clerks. In terms of the new Code of Conduct, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that the Act required all Parish Councils to draw-up their own Code. Members suggested that it would be beneficial if a common Code of Conduct was adopted by all the Parishes in order to establish a common benchmark and to make it easier for individuals who were a member of more than one Parish Council. The Legal Services Manager advised that the National Association of Local Councils was working on a model Code for Parish and Town Councils to adopt – but ultimately it would be for each individual Council to decide.

The Monitoring Officer further reported on discussions he had had with the Fire Authority and with the Monitoring Officer for Shropshire. There was agreement that there should be a consistency of approach in respect of the new regime, and accordingly the same Code (and arrangements) were being recommended for approval at each authority. As part of these discussions, there had been recognition of the advantages of having a joint or shared Independent Person resource. The Committee were therefore asked to amend the delegation given at the last meeting for the Monitoring Officer to recruit an Independent Person, in order to pursue a shared option with Shropshire Council and/or the Combined Fire Authority.

Members were in broad agreement to progress the way forward outlined in the report. However, it was suggested that the new Standards Committee undertake a review of the new ethical standards regime after six months of operation, in order to assess how effectively it had been operating. The Monitoring Officer advised that a review mechanism could be incorporated into the proposed terms of reference for the Committee.

RESOLVED – To RECOMMEND to COUNCIL

- (a) that a politically balanced Standards Committee comprising of 7 members of the Council, including at least one member of the Executive, be established;**
- (b) that a politically balanced Hearings Sub-Committee comprising 3 members of the Council be established;**
- (c) that, subject to (d) below, the draft Code of Conduct, as appended to the report, be approved for adoption as the Council's Code of Conduct with effect from 1 July 2012 or the date that the ethical standards regime must be implemented by;**
- (d) that authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to make the necessary**

amendments to the draft Code of Conduct to accommodate the provision of regulations made pursuant to the Localism Act.

RESOLVED - that the authority delegated to the Monitoring Officer at the last meeting (minute ST-16(b)) in relation to the recruitment of an Independent Person(s) be amended to enable a shared option with Shropshire Council and/or the Combined Fire Authority (and other public bodies if appropriate) to be pursued, and that at least one member of the Standards Committee be involved in the recruitment of an Independent Person(s).

The meeting ended at 6.35 pm

Chairman:

Date: