

## **BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN**

### **Minutes of a Meeting of the Borough of Telford & Wrekin held on Thursday 24 November, 2011 at 6.30 pm at 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, N.A. Dugmore, A.J. Eade, C.B.A. Elliott, R.C. Evans, A.R.H. England, N.A.M. England, G.M. Green, E.J. Greenaway, K.R. Guy, T.J. Hope, M.B. Hosken, M.G. Ion, R.T. Kiernan, A. Lawrence, A.A. Mackenzie, A.D. McClements, W.A.M. McClements, A.A. Meredith, C.P.R. Mollett, L.A. Murray, R.A. Overton, F.R. Picken, S.A.W. Reynolds, H. Rhodes K.S. Sahota, R.G. Scammell, J.M. Seymour, R.J. Sloan, C.F. Smith, A.J. Stanton, B.J. Thompson, W.L. Tomlinson, C.R. Turley, P.R. Watling and D.R.W. White.

#### **57. PRAYERS**

The Reverend Keith Osmund-Smith, minister at Madeley Baptist Church, led Members in prayer.

#### **58. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - that the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 15th September and the minutes of the Extraordinary meeting of the Council on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

#### **59. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors D.G. Davies, B.H. Duce, I.T.W. Fletcher, V.A. Fletcher, A.S. Jhavar, J. Loveridge, C.N. Mason, J.C. Minor, G.C.W. Reynolds and K.L. Tomlinson.

#### **60. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor F.R. Picken declared a personal interest in agenda item 14c), the motion on capital funding for social housing.

Councillors S.A.W. Reynolds, B.J. Thompson and C.R. Turley declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 14a), the motion on a Newport referendum.

Councillors E.A. Clare and C.F. Smith declared personal interests in agenda item 7, the report on matters determined by Cabinet. The declarations were in relation to item 2.3.7 of the report, Planning of School Places: Secondary Provision.

#### **61. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

##### **a) Mayoral Engagements**

The Mayor briefly updated Members on his recent engagements.

## b) Awards

The Mayor presented the Institute of Revenues Rating & Valuation (IRRV) annual performance silver award to Angie Astley, Head of Leisure, Libraries and Customer Services. Angie was receiving the award on behalf of Benefits Manager Lee Higgins and the Council's Benefits Team.

The benefits team had been short listed in the "Benefits Team of the Year" category after a year of transformation and performance for the service. Over the last two years, the number of customers receiving either Housing Benefit or Council Tax benefit in Telford had increased by 18 per cent. During the same time, the Benefit Service had introduced a variety of new ways for customers to apply for their benefits that had reduced costs significantly, while producing some of the best processing times in the West Midlands.

## 62. LEADER'S REPORT & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### a) Leader's Report

Councillor K.S. Sahota, Leader of the Council, updated Members on a number of current issues. He reported that the senior management restructure had been agreed by Cabinet on 10 November. He hoped that all Members would offer their support in implementing the restructure which would help to achieve the aspirations of the Co-operative Council.

The Council was in positive discussion with Hark Apollo and developments in the Town Centre were moving forward.

More schools were being rebuilt under the administration's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) plans which would provide both high quality and sustainable schools and provide value for money.

The Leader told Members that he would be meeting shortly with both MP's for the area and union officials to discuss what could be done to help secure all jobs at the MOD Donnington site, the main employment base in the town.

His administration supported and acknowledged the right of public sector employees to take industrial action on 30 November.

Discussing the 2012/13 budget the Leader stated that the government's requirements for a freeze on Council Tax would have implications for services in the future.

In closing, he welcomed the news that the Olympic torch would be coming to the Borough as part of the build up to the 2012 Olympic Games.

### b) Announcements

The Leader presented Graham Clark, principal of New College, Wellington with a certificate of achievement. Graham was retiring after 17 years in post. The Leader invited Councillor M.G. Ion, Borough member for College ward, to say a few words.

Councillor Ion paid tribute to Graham's significant contribution to the community and his commitment to improving the life chances of young people. He had made New College a truly open, inclusive and community focused institution. His support for the area had been unstinting; he would be a hard act to follow.

Graham thanked Members and spoke positively about Telford as a town that was moving forward. He told Members that he was proud that education had progressed and he was proud of the opportunities available to the people of Telford. Councillor E.J. Carter also paid tribute to Graham and wished him well for the future.

### **63. CABINET DECISIONS MADE SINCE THE LAST MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Members received the report (Appendix C) on the Cabinet decisions made since the last meeting of the Council on 15 September.

Councillor S.P. Burrell asked the Cabinet Member: Children, Young People & Families for clarification on two points relating to plans for secondary schools. He asked if residents of local communities would be able to access facilities at these schools and for confirmation of how many school places had been reduced by the loss of a secondary school.

Councillor P.R. Watling replied that work would be undertaken with the schools allocation team to address the issue of pupil numbers, the current plans were more substantial than those offered previously. Councillor Watling agreed to provide a written response to Councillor Burrell's questions.

Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Leisure & Well-Being, updated Members on the Investment in Telford Ice Rink report, shown at section 2.2.3 of the Cabinet report. Councillor England told Members that officers had been challenged to find a package that would enable the Council to maintain an 'in house' operation of the Ice Rink. The facility would be enhanced, the vicinity of Southwater Square and the Southwater development would also benefit.

Councillor S. Bentley believed that the Council should ensure that all private investment opportunities had been exhausted before going ahead with the proposed investment. Councillor A.J. Eade, leader of the Conservative group, felt that rather than allow a private operator run the Ice Rink, which would help to protect jobs and services, the Council Tax payer would have to cover any ongoing losses from the proposed service. Councillor A.J. Stanton asked about the business model for the proposal and for clarification of when the £3.2m investment would be repaid. Councillor England responded that there had been longer term disinvestment in this facility, there would be a loss in the first few years but this was projected to move to a surplus after 2 years. Local people would benefit from an enhanced service and the Council would be supporting investment in the Southwater development. Councillor Dugmore asked about any unsuccessful bids for the operation of the Ice Rink. He understood that some bid information was commercially confidential but he was interested in seeing the cost figures. Councillor England agreed to provide a written response to the questions from Councillor Dugmore and from Councillor Stanton.

## **64. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET**

### **20 October 2011 Cabinet**

#### a) 2011/12 Financial Monitoring Report

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report (Appendix D) of the Head of Finance which showed overall revenue spending as being within projected budgets and provided an update on progress on capital programme spending. The report also highlighted some changes to capital allocations and virements in section 1 of the report which required formal approval by Council.

**RESOLVED** – That the changes to the Capital programme shown in section 1 of the report be approved.

#### b) Investment in to Telford Ice Rink (Business Case)

Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Leisure & Well-Being, presented the joint report of the Head of Leisure, Libraries & Customer Services and the Head of Property & ICT. The report (Appendix E) sought Council approval for inclusion within 2012/13 budget strategy of capital and revenue implications of the financial business case for an in house' development option as well as 2011/12 spend as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

**RESOLVED** – That Council endorse the inclusion within the budget strategy for 2012/13 the capital and revenue implications of the investment in to Telford Ice Rink as well as the spend in 2011/12 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

#### c) Dawley Sports & Co-operative Learning Community – Sport England Bid

Councillor A.R.H. England, Cabinet Member: Leisure & Well-Being, presented the report (Appendix F) of the Head of Property & ICT which required Council to approve a stage 2 bid of £1.5m to Sport England for enhancement of the sports & leisure provision at the Dawley Sports & Co-operative Learning Community.

The bid included the provision of a national BMX track, full size 3G pitch for Rugby League and an 8 court facility for Netball, Table Tennis and Rugby. The bid had increased from the original submission of £1.21m by £290k, largely due to reductions in funding from three of the National Governing Bodies (NGB's).

**RESOLVED:** That a Stage 2 bid for £1.5m to Sport England as per the agreed timescales and advice, be approved, taking into account the major opportunities of the iconic sporting facilities to be developed in Dawley, and the identified risks.

### **20 October 2011 Cabinet**

#### a) 100 Day Review of 2011/12 Service & Financial Planning Strategy

Councillor W.A.M. McClements, Cabinet Member: Resources & Service Delivery, presented the report (Appendix G) of the Interim Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer which set out final proposals to revise the Council's capital programme and the revenue budget for 2011/12.

Councillor A. Lawrence welcomed increased investment in the maintenance of roads and pavements but expressed concern that not enough money was being made available to stop the deterioration of the Borough's roads. He sought an assurance that the budget available to keep the condition of the Borough's roads at standard was sufficient. Councillor McClements replied that current budget provision was needed to plug holes left by previous budget funding. Councillor S. Davies, Cabinet Member: Environment, Co-operative Council & Partnerships, noted that over £5.6m would be invested in the Borough's roads in 2012/13. Councillor W.L. Tomlinson, Leader of the Liberal Democrat/Independent group, was broadly supportive of the report's recommendations. Councillor McClements welcomed his comments. Councillor E.J. Carter welcomed the regeneration schemes for Hadley and Oakengates but expressed some disappointment that the schemes had been reduced. Councillor McClements replied that the revised scheme for Hadley had significant revenue benefits as compared to the previous scheme and that the Oakengates revised scheme reduced borrowing requirements significantly.

**RESOLVED: That Council approve -**

- a) The cancellation of the planned building of new Civic Offices to generate additional ongoing revenue savings of over £1.1m pa;**
- b) The development of a Community Hub in the Southwater area of Telford Town Centre which will provide customer access to Council services and a new library. The Community Hub could also provide space for community groups/organisations, and other public sector bodies – making the Community Hub a Cooperative Council centre;**
- c) Changes to other capital projects and the generation of additional capital receipts generating ongoing revenue benefits of over £1.75m pa;**
- d) A much stronger emphasis on improved procurement processes in order to deliver savings which reduce the overall impact of grant cuts on front-line services;**
- e) Increased investment in the maintenance of roads and pavements of a further £1.3m capital in 2012/13 and £0.25m in 2013/14 over and above the existing approved capital programme;**
- f) Investment of £2.3m in a regeneration scheme for Hadley and £1.9m for Oakengates;**
- g) Creation of a capital budget of £45k to match fund projects of up to £7.5k in each of the 6 Borough Town areas;**
- h) Reinstatement of free swimming for under 16s with a flex card**

- i) Allocation of up to £0.6m one-off funding to provide additional support for employees facing compulsory redundancy;**
- j) Contributing £25k one off funding to a small business loans fund;**
- k) Creation of a Co-operative Council initiatives budget of £15k;**
- l) Carrying forward revenue benefits identified in the report of around £1.6m as a one-off benefit to help support the budget for 2012/13 together with any unspent element of the contingency at year end;**
- m) Note the responses to the engagement exercise included in section 8 and Appendix 1 and the comments of the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee included as Appendix 3 of this report.**

Prior to discussion of the following item the Interim Chief Executive, left the room.

**b) Review of Senior Management Restructure**

Councillor K.S. Sahota, Leader of the Council, presented the report (Appendix H) of the Head of Governance which sought comments from Council on the proposed re-structure arrangements. The detailed review purpose and terms of reference were attached to the report. Councillor Sahota hoped that all members would support the proposals which were part of the Council's continuing efforts to protect front line services in the face of severe public spending cuts.

The review of the Senior Management Structure that had been undertaken by the Interim Chief Executive recommended the deletion of the Chief Executive post and the creation of a new Managing Director post. This approach had been endorsed by Cabinet at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> November, where it was agreed that the post should be advertised internally in the first instance. If no suitable candidates were selected then the post would be advertised externally. The proposed ongoing savings resulting from the re-structure were £406k.

Richard Partington had been appointed Interim Chief Executive with effect from 1 August 2011. In addition to his strategic responsibilities as Interim Chief Executive he had been given the specific remit of undertaking a review of the senior management structure and making recommendations for moving away from the traditional "Chief Executive" model and facilitating the development of a co-operative council model of service delivery.

A further report would be received by Council at its meeting of 19 January 2012 detailing the required constitutional changes for approval, the linking of the Head of Paid Services role and Returning Officer and Registration Officer with the role of Managing Director, agreeing any recommendation from the Personnel Board regarding the appointment of the successful candidate into the role of Managing Director, agreeing the designations of Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer to the newly created posts. Swift and sound recruitment to the position was very

important in order to provide leadership to, and completion of, the significant changes proposed in the Senior Management report.

Key recommendations in the report included :-

1. The creation of a full time post of Managing Director on a salary of £137,000 (£12,000 below that of the previous Chief Executive);
2. A net reduction in the number of Corporate Directors by one and a proposed reduction in salary for all Corporate Directors from £119,000 to £109,600pa;
3. The re-designation of Heads of Service to Assistant Directors with no increase in salary;
4. A reduction in the number of Heads of Service (Assistant Directors) and the identification of two part time, specialist positions, a net reduction of 2 posts at this level;
5. The re-shaping of responsibilities and a comprehensive programme to achieve the aims of the Co-operative Council;
6. Re-shaping the Local Strategic partnership structure better to enable delivery of key priorities and to address key issues in the Borough;
7. Putting in place arrangements to seek to address poverty and social exclusion within our communities;
8. Proposals to improve the support provided to all Borough Councillors; and
9. A stronger organisational focus on delivery and excellent customer service.

Councillor A.J. Eade, Leader of the Conservative group, felt that significant reductions in senior management costs had already been achieved. There was a danger that the proposed structure would not be able to deliver key services, he cautioned against going ahead with the proposals. Services should be reconfigured, following which, the structure could then be reviewed. He confirmed that the Conservative group had withdrawn from the recruitment process for the Managing Director post because they considered that the post should be advertised externally.

Councillor Sahota told the meeting that the process was open and transparent and that an external recruitment process would potentially cost at least £30k. He drew Members' attention to the £406k savings resulting from the re-structure and recommended the report to Council. Councillor S. Bentley felt that the Council had a duty to find the best possible candidate and this should involve an external recruitment process. The Interim Chief Executive post that had been advertised as a part time post whereas the proposed Managing Director post was a different role.

**RESOLVED – That Council's comments on the senior management restructure be noted by Cabinet**

Prior to discussion of the following item the Interim Chief Executive returned to the room

## **65. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM BOARDS & COMMITTEES**

### **Council Constitution Committee 8 November 2011.**

#### **Boundary Review Terms of Reference**

Councillor K.S. Sahota, Leader of the Council, presented the report (Annex I) of the Head of Governance which contained recommendations (shown at Annex 1 of the report) for the Terms of Reference of the Council's Boundary Review Committee.

The committee had been appointed at the Annual General Meeting of the Council on 26 May 2011. A defined Terms of Reference were required to identify those matters that would be considered by the Boundary Review Committee.

The report proposed that the Boundary Review Committee should have powers to deal with all boundary review matters. Those delegated powers relating to Boundary Review matters that were currently with Licensing Committee would be transferred to the Boundary Review Committee.

#### **RESOLVED-**

- a) **That the Terms of Reference of the Boundary Review Committee, as set out at Annex 1, be approved and reflected in the Council's Constitution.**
- b) **That the Terms of Reference of Licensing Committee are amended and the Constitution amended to reflect the delegated powers being transferred to the Boundary Review Committee, shown at paragraph 3.4 of the report.**

## **66. ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2010/11**

Councillor D.R.W. White, Chairman of Scrutiny Management Board, presented the Scrutiny Annual Report, 2011. Councillor White told the meeting that the year had seen the establishment of 7 new Scrutiny Committees linked to the Council's priority areas. There were now 5 service themed Scrutiny Committees which looked at service issues within their area, overseen by the Scrutiny Management Board which monitored the delivery of the work programme and reviewed issues of strategic importance.

The planned reconfiguration of acute hospital services by the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust was a key issue for the people of the Borough. The Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) had conducted robust scrutiny on behalf of the public, concluding that proposals were in the best interests of the people of the Borough and the people of Shropshire. Councillor J.M. Seymour paid tribute to the work of the JHOSC in 2010/11 and to the excellent work of Councillor V.A. Fletcher who had been lead Scrutiny member and joint Chairman of the Committee in the previous year.

The year had seen major changes to the ranks of Scrutiny Members and to the organisation. The Scrutiny team had undergone changes during the year but had continued to produce excellent work during very challenging times. Looking ahead, the Borough, like all Councils, was required to make large spending reductions.

There was arguably no better time for Members who were not part of the Cabinet to engage in the decision making process. Key challenges ahead were scrutiny of the budget priorities for 2012/13, scrutiny of health and adult care and support in the light of NHS reforms and continued monitoring of the full business case for the hospital reconfiguration.

As part of the ethos of a Co-operative Council there was a commitment to engage openly with local people, to involve partners and residents in the Council's work and to challenge which, and how, services would be funded and delivered by the Council and its partners. Scrutiny Committee meetings were now held in public in order to make the process open and transparent.

Councillor White urged all Members to engage with the Scrutiny process and thanked everyone who had contributed to scrutiny work undertaken during the year.

**RESOLVED** – That the Annual Scrutiny Report 2010/11 be noted.

**67. AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11**

Councillor R.K. Austin, Vice-Chair of Audit Committee presented the report (Appendix K) of the Head of Governance which provided Members with an annual report of the operations of Audit Committee for 2010/11.

**RESOLVED** – That the Audit Committee Annual Report 2010/11 be noted.

**68. MINUTES OF BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

Council noted the following resolved minutes.

Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee	27 <sup>th</sup> September and 25 <sup>th</sup> October.
Audit Committee	20 <sup>th</sup> September and 1 <sup>st</sup> November
Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee	12 <sup>th</sup> October
Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee	19 <sup>th</sup> September
Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee	12 <sup>th</sup> September
Council Constitution Committee	8 <sup>th</sup> November
Health Scrutiny Committee	25 <sup>th</sup> August and 22 <sup>nd</sup> September
Licensing Committee	7 <sup>th</sup> September

Plans Board	24 <sup>th</sup> August, 14 <sup>th</sup> September, 5 <sup>th</sup> October and 26 <sup>th</sup> October
Scrutiny Management Board	13 <sup>th</sup> September
Standards Committee	21 <sup>st</sup> September

## 69. QUESTIONS

The following questions were submitted under Council procedure rule 10.

- a) Councillor E.J. Carter asked the following question of Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development

*How is the Council influencing the Marches LEP to work with the Black Country & Birmingham LEP's to further Telford's interests, particularly in the light of the Enterprise zones at both I54 and Hereford?*

Councillor Smith replied that the Council was an active player in the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) whilst also recognising that strong economic links existed with the Black Country. The Chairman of the Marches LEP saw the Borough's work with the Black Country as being complementary to the work of the Marches LEP. Officers were working together on supply chain development, research & development, skills & workforce development and transport & logistics.

Councillor Carter asked whether, in the light of Hereford's recently acquired Enterprise Zone status, the Council would keep lobbying for Enterprise Zone status. Councillor Smith replied that the Council would continue to lobby hard on this issue. The Council could learn from the Hereford experience in developing our own enterprise zone ideas.

- b) Councillor E.J. Carter asked the following question of Councillor H. Rhodes, Cabinet Member: Transport & Community Protection

*What are the Council doing, via the Strategic Rail Group, to lobby the Department for Transport for the return of the direct rail service from the county to London?*

Councillor Rhodes replied that the Shropshire, Telford & The Marches Strategic Rail Group had written to the Department for Transport in April 2011 in a consultation response asking that the bidders for the franchise be required to include a Shropshire to London route in their bids. MP's had been lobbied and work would continue in lobbying for a direct rail service between the county and London.

- c) Councillor E.J. Carter asked the following question of Councillor C.F. Smith, Cabinet Member: Housing, Regeneration & Economic Development

*How is the Council progressing the handover of assets from the Homes & Communities Agency (as it is my understanding that the Treasury have recently changed the rules on these matters)? If the rules have changed what can be done to*

*make an application under the TIF route to secure these assets for the Borough at the earliest possible time?*

Councillor Smith replied that the work was progressing well; key strands had now been agreed with the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA). There was currently a delay to the process whilst the Treasury assessed the Milton Keynes plan. Councillor Smith was not aware that TIF rules had changed.

In response Councillor Carter noted that Milton Keynes had opted to use prudential borrowing. Councillor Smith responded that he could not speak for Milton Keynes but that this Council would consider the financial implications of such an option extremely carefully were it ever to be suggested.

- d) Councillor A.J. Eade asked the following question of Councillor K.S.Sahota, Leader of the Council.

*Would Cllr. Sahota confirm as to whether any formal contracts or agreements exist for the sale of Council owned land in Newport to a major retailer or developer?*

Councillor Sahota replied that there was no contract. The only contract he could identify for Council owned land in Newport related to a joint venture arrangement agreed by the previous administration for infrastructure work at the Audley Avenue site. A Planning application had been made and a budget receipt for this was shown in the previous administration's budget.

Councillor Eade asked if there were any informal agreements in place. Councillor Sahota replied that he not aware of any informal agreements.

- e) Councillor A.D. McClements asked the following question of Councillor Kuldeep Sahota, Leader of the Council.

*Wearing a white ribbon is a pledge from men never to commit, condone, or remain silent about violence against women. With 1 in 4 women experiencing intimate partner violence in their lifetime; 2 women a week being killed in the UK by their partner or ex-partner and one million children witnessing domestic violence in their homes every year in the UK, can I ask the Leader whether he has any plans for this Council becoming a White Ribbon Town?*

Councillor Sahota replied that he would approach senior officers to discuss how the Council might seek to obtain White Ribbon status in 2012.

Prior to the next agenda item the Mayor reminded Members that the following agenda item related to planning applications for Newport and that in the interests of good governance Members should be mindful of this during the debate. Specifically, he urged Members not to comment on any individual planning applications for Newport. In respect of individual applications, Members understood their responsibility to only make decisions based on all the relevant information and advice provided to them at the time any application was considered.

Councillor K. R. Guy notified the meeting that all members of the controlling group who were members of Plans Board had decided that they would leave the meeting for the duration of the debate on the motion proposing a Newport referendum. Councillor N.A. Dugmore also confirmed that the two main opposition group members present who were Members of Plans Board would leave the meeting for the debate on this matter.

The following members left the room for the debate on this matter:  
Councillors K.R. Guy, A.A. Meredith, S.A.W. Reynolds, L.A. Murray, C.R. Turley, S. Bentley, N.A. Dugmore and B.J. Thompson.

## **70. NOTICES OF MOTION**

- a) The following motion had been submitted by Councillor A.J. Eade and seconded by Councillor A.J. Stanton.

*“In the best spirits of its Co-operative status, this Council commits to conduct a referendum of the people of Newport and surrounding area, giving them the opportunity to express their views about the development proposals facing the town”.*

Councillor Eade, proposing the motion, told Members that he was disappointed that the Council appeared to have already made its mind up on this matter. The development proposals for Newport would change the face of the town. He felt strongly that in the interests of local democracy local communities should be trusted and be allowed to have their say. Councillor E.A. Clare, Cabinet Member: Adult & Social Care, noted that planning processes existed and that it would be wrong to deviate from the regulatory planning processes which were applied to all development matters. Councillor R.A. Overton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with special responsibility for Borough Town development & policy, believed that the impact on overall budgets of changes to the Newport development proposals would be an issue for the whole of the Borough. The planning process should not be undermined in this way. Councillor E.J. Carter felt that the size of the proposals for between 850 and 1100 homes were excessive and would have a detrimental impact on the town. Councillor C. B.A. Elliott noted that development proposals for Newport were contained in the budget of the previous administration. He asked where, under current economic conditions, the money for a referendum would come from. Councillor M.G. Ion thought that the principle of consultation was laudable but believed the request for a referendum was cynical. Councillor R.J. Sloan believed that the Council had a responsibility to residents to maximise the effectiveness of its assets. He noted that a capital programme which included Newport development had been endorsed at a Cabinet meeting of the previous administration as far back as February 2009.

Councillor A.J. Stanton, seconding the motion, believed that building a large number of houses would place strains on the existing infrastructure.

Closing the debate, Councillor A.J. Eade believed that the towns of Telford and Newport were different. Telford had been designed as a new town and was able to cope with significant population growth whilst Newport was not. The proposals

represented a substantial change in development policy and, as such, a referendum should be held to allow the people of Newport to express their views.

A vote was taken and the motion was defeated.

**RESOLVED – That the motion not be approved**

- b) The following motion had been submitted by Councillor A.J. Eade and had been seconded by Councillor E.J. Carter.

*“This Council calls on the Director General of the BBC to reconsider proposed service reductions in its local radio network and in particular its proposals for debilitating cuts in services and programming at BBC Radio Shropshire”.*

Councillor Eade told the meeting that BBC Radio Shropshire reached 29% of the population of Shropshire; many of the people who used the service were elderly or vulnerable.

Councillor K.S. Sahota told Members that he fully supported the motion and that he had recently written in response to the current BBC consultation. Savings should be identified in consultation with communities and any final decisions on cost reductions should focus on minimising the effect on those communities. Councillor Sahota felt that it would be appropriate for a further letter of response, signed by all three political group leaders, to be submitted. This would reinforce the Council’s views on the proposed cuts to BBC Radio Shropshire which would have a disproportionate effect on Shropshire.

A vote was taken and the motion was unanimously approved.

**RESOLVED – That the motion be approved**

Councillor F.R. Picken left the room for the debate of the next item.

- c) The following motion had been submitted by Councillor C.F. Smith and seconded by Councillor R.A. Overton.

*“This council believes that in order to resolve the impending housing crisis, a programme of investment in good quality affordable/social housing is urgently needed across the Borough. Such investment will help the building and construction industry, reduce homelessness, provide employment and give a much needed boost to the economy.*

*This council calls on the government to urgently direct capital funds to build social/affordable housing to meet the needs of our communities and lift the economy, whilst at the same time helping the building industry.”*

Councillor Smith told Members that affordable housing would help the many people who would otherwise find the purchase of a property unaffordable. He was aware that the government were proposing an initiative on this matter but, as yet, he did not believe details had been finalised. Homelessness was on the increase and such a measure would provide an economic boost and provide help to the people who were

most in need. Councillor S.P. Burrell broadly supported the motion. He would support the motion if it were amended to specify the requirement for a comprehensive and effective housing needs survey. Councillor Burrell proposed the following amendment to the motion; this was seconded by Councillor A.J. Eade.

That the following words (second paragraph of motion) be deleted

*"This council calls on the government to urgently direct capital funds to build social/affordable housing to meet the needs of our communities and lift the economy, whilst at the same time helping the building industry."*

That the following words be added

*"Upon completion of a comprehensive survey of the need for affordable and social housing across the Borough, this Council will call on central government to urgently direct capital funds for the construction of affordable and social housing to meet the needs identified in our communities. "*

The motion thus read:

*"This council believes that in order to resolve the impending housing crisis, a programme of investment in good quality affordable/social housing is urgently needed across the Borough. Such investment will help the building and construction industry, reduce homelessness, provide employment and give a much needed boost to the economy.*

*"Upon completion of a comprehensive survey of the need for affordable and social housing across the Borough, this Council will call on central government to urgently direct capital funds for the construction of affordable and social housing to meet the needs identified in our communities. "*

Following a debate the amendment was withdrawn with the agreement of the meeting and a vote was taken on the original motion which read.

*"This council believes that in order to resolve the impending housing crisis, a programme of investment in good quality affordable/social housing is urgently needed across the Borough. Such investment will help the building and construction industry, reduce homelessness, provide employment and give a much needed boost to the economy.*

*This council calls on the government to urgently direct capital funds to build social/affordable housing to meet the needs of our communities and lift the economy, whilst at the same time helping the building industry."*

The motion was unanimously approved

**RESOLVED – That the motion be approved.**

The meeting ended at 9.16 pm

**Speaker**.....

**Date** .....

**MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS**  
**17 NOVEMBER 2011 – 9 JANUARY 2012**

<b>November</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>M</b>	NHS South Staffordshire & Shropshire Staff Awards Ceremony at the County Showground, Stafford
	<b>18<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>M</b>	Lilleshall, Donnington & Muxton Christmas Festival at Cordingley Hall, Donnington
	<b>19<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>M</b>	The Rock Methodist Church Christmas Fayre at the Methodist Church Community Room, The Rock, Telford
	<b>20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>M</b>	Service of Remembrance for Road Victims at Hereford Cathedral
	<b>22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>M</b>	Hot Shots Award Ceremony at Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Oakengates
	<b>23<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>M</b>	Diamond Jubilee Field in Trust Dedication Ceremony at The Arena, Telford Town Park
		<b>M</b>	Visit to the Fairtrade Stall at Civic Offices, Telford
	<b>25<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>M</b>	Opening of Age UK Diamond Dementia Centre, Frizes Leasowe Sheltered Housing Scheme, Ketley
		<b>M</b>	Oakengates Celebration of Christmas at Oakengates Theatre at The Place
	<b>26<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>M</b>	Wrekin Lions Christmas Gala 9 <sup>th</sup> Charter Night Dinner at The Whitehouse Hotel, Wellington
	<b>28<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>M</b>	Ideal Care Homes First Brick Laying Ceremony at the site of the former Bridge School, Brookside
<b>December</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>M</b>	World Aids Day at Terrence Higgins Trust, Wellington
		<b>M</b>	Civic Carol Service at Oakengates Theatre at The Place, Oakengates
	<b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>M</b>	Great Dawley Parish Council Christmas Lights event at High Street, Dawley
	<b>M</b>	Telford & Wrekin Arthritis Support Group Annual Christmas Party at St Georges Sports and Social Club, St Georges	

- 4<sup>th</sup> M** Great Dawley Parish Council's Older Persons Christmas Dinner at The Park Inn, Telford
- 6<sup>th</sup> M** Hollinswood & Randlay Christmas Concert & Light Switch on event at Hollinswood Neighbourhood Centre
- 8<sup>th</sup> M** RBL Annual Poppy Dance at Hadley United Services Club, Hadley
- 9<sup>th</sup> M** Royal Mail Delivery Office Christmas Visit with David Wright MP at Tweedale and Oakengates
- M** Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood – VIP Pantomime performance at Oakengates Theatre at The Place
- 11<sup>th</sup> M** Santa Fun Run at The Arena, Telford Town Park
- M** Severn Hospice Festival of Carols at St Peter's Church, Priorslee
- M** Wellington Town Council Christmas Carol Service at All Saints Church, Wellington
- 12<sup>th</sup> M** Marine Damien Davies Memorial Event at The Remembrance memorial, The Arena, Telford Town Park
- 13<sup>th</sup> DM** Lightmoor Village Christmas Event at Woodlands Park adjacent to Oak Tree Centre, Lightmoor
- 14<sup>th</sup> M** Mayor's Christmas Raffle at Civic Offices
- 15<sup>th</sup> M** Mayor's Christmas Raffle at Darby House
- 16<sup>th</sup> M** Christmas Raffle Prize Draw at The Mayor's Parlour, Civic Offices
- 18<sup>th</sup> M** Carols by Candlelight at Holy Trinity Church, Hadley
- January 6<sup>th</sup> M** Official Opening of Woodlands Primary and Junior School, Woodside

**BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN**

**FULL COUNCIL 19 JANUARY 2012**

**APPOINTMENT OF MANAGING DIRECTOR**

**REPORT OF HEAD OF GOVERNANCE AND HUMAN RESOURCES  
MANAGER**

**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To make recommendation for the appointment of the Council's first Managing Director

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Richard Partington is confirmed as Managing Director, Head of Paid Services, Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer

**3 PREVIOUS MINUTES**

Cabinet, 7 July 2011

Cabinet 10 November 2011

Personnel Board 24 November 2011

Full Council 24 November 2011

Personnel Board 7 December 2011

Personnel Board 13 December 2011

**4 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 In May 2011 a new administration took control of Telford & Wrekin Council and indicated their intention to develop a new model of working centred upon being a Co-operative Council.
- 4.2 As part of this the administration were particularly interested in developing a Managing Director model and tasked the Interim Chief Executive with undertaking a review of Senior Management structures to deliver savings and better meet the needs of the organisation. The review included recommendations for the creation of a Managing Director role as part of a further reduction in Senior Management structures and costs. The recommendations were considered and approved by Council on 24 November 2011.

- 4.3 The position was advertised in accordance with council processes and shortlisting was conducted by the Personnel Board on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011 against the Job Description and Person specification.
- 4.4 On 13 December 2011 a thorough, day long selection and assessment process was undertaken. This included written exercises and assessments, presentations and interviews including role play exercises. The Personnel Board then undertook a detailed interview.
- 4.5 Following the process outlined in 4.4 the Personnel Board concluded that Richard Partington had performed very strongly in all of the areas required for the position and fully met the criteria previously determined by Council .
- 4.6 It was the unanimous decision that Richard Partington should be put forward to Council as the Personnel Board's recommendation for the position of Managing Director. In accordance with statutory provisions all Cabinet members were given the opportunity of objecting to the recommendation and none have done so.
- 4.7 It is therefore recommended that Richard Partington be appointed as the Council's first Managing Director with effect from 19 January 2012 in line with the details set out in the recruitment details determined by Personnel Board and the review recommendations agreed at Council.
- 4.8 The position will carry the designation of Head of Paid Services role and Electoral Registration Officer, responsible for the annual canvass, and Returning Officer for elections and referenda.

## **5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Personnel Board have delegated power to undertake recruitment processes for Senior Positions and make recommendations for appointment to full Council.
- 5.2 A decision to appoint to a post carrying the designation of Head of Paid Services, Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer must be approved by Council.

## **6. FINANCE**

- 6.1 Deletion of the former Chief Executive post and creation of a new Managing Director post is the first stage of implementing a wider review of Senior Management arrangements at the Council that will generate net annual savings of over £0.4m pa after funding a new statutory Director of Childrens Services post. The Managing Director post will be paid a spot salary of £137,000 pa which is a saving of £16,400 pa including on costs compared to the previous Chief Executive post.

7. **ENVIRONMENTAL**

There are no environmental issues arising from this report.

8 **EQUALITIES**

The appointment has been undertaken within the principles of the Council's Recruitment & Selection policy which addresses Equality and Diversity issues.

Report prepared by John Harris Human Resources Manager 01952 383520

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL – 19 JANUARY 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 8 December and 22 December 2011.

**2.0 CABINET BUSINESS**

Matters that have been determined by Cabinet are listed below:

**2.1 8 December 2011**

- 2.1.1 Scrutiny Report – First Point for Business.
- 2.1.2 Telford International Railfreight Terminal.
- 2.1.3 Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Half Year Progress Report.
- 2.1.4 Welfare Benefit Reform and Localised Support for Council Tax – Impact on LA Services.

**2.2 22 December 2011**

- 2.2.1 Financial Monitoring 2011/12.
- 2.2.2 Service & Financial Planning 2012/13 – 2014/15.
- 2.2.3 NHS Transformation – Implications for Telford & Wrekin Council.
- 2.2.4 Delegated Powers for Public Protection Staff.

**3.0 DELEGATION OF POWERS GRANTED BY THE CABINET**

<b>REPORT HEADING</b>	<b>DELEGATION GRANTED TO</b>	<b>DETAIL OF DELEGATION GRANTED</b>
NHS Transformation – Implications for Telford & Wrekin Council	Head of Care & Support and	That authority be delegated to the Head of Care & Support, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult & Social Care and the Head of Governance, to award the host contract for Healthwatch.

Delegated Powers in Respect of the Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010	Public Protection Service Delivery Manager Public Protection Team Leader Environmental Health Officer Trading Standards Officer Compliance Officer Scientific Officer District Officer	All powers and functions under the Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010 except authority to prosecute
Delegated Powers in Respect of the Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010	Public Protection Service Delivery Manager Head of Governance	Authority to prosecute for offences under the Sunbeds (Regulation) Act 2010
<b>LEGAL COMMENT</b> <b>FINANCIAL COMMENT</b> <b>LINKS WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES</b> <b>RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES</b> <b>ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT</b> <b>EQUALITY &amp; DIVERSITY</b> <b>WARD IMPLICATIONS</b>	As described in each report considered by Cabinet. Copies of all reports have been previously circulated to all Members of the Council	

**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL MEETING – 19 JANUARY 2012**

**SETTING OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE FOR 2012/13**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE**

**PART A – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

To determine the Council Tax Base for General and Special Fund purposes for the financial year 2012/13.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the calculation of the tax base for 2012/13 as at paragraph 6.6 and Appendix 1 be approved.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount calculated for Telford and Wrekin Council Tax base for 2012/13 for its Special Fund Area shall be as per the appropriate parish amounts detailed in Appendix 1 for the parishes listed in 6.7.

**3. SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific priority plan objectives?
Yes	All priorities. Setting the council tax base is a legal requirement and is needed to calculate council tax levels for 2012/13 and therefore directly supports the delivery of all Council priorities.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?
Yes	Council tax payers
<b>TARGET COMPLETION / DELIVERY DATE</b>	The setting of the Council Tax Base is the first stage in the process of setting the Council Tax for 2012/13 which will be presented to Full Council on 1/3/2012.
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes Used in determining the Council Tax to be charged in 2012/13.
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	Yes The Council has a statutory obligation to set the Council Tax Base by 31 January 2012 to enable the level of Council Tax to be then

set within the statutory timescales.

As part of this calculation the Council must also estimate the aggregate sums of the amounts which are likely to be paid during the relevant financial year as described in this report and including any likely reductions available due to second or empty homes and any exemptions claimed. The Council has previously approved levels of discounts in respect of second and empty properties, which are still in place.

In summary the Council has the power and the duty to set the Council Tax Base in the way described in this report.

**OTHER IMPACTS,  
RISKS AND  
OPPORTUNITIES**                      Yes

The opportunities and risks associated with the report have been identified and assessed. Arrangements will be put in place to manage the risks and maximise the opportunities that have been identified..

**IMPACT ON  
SPECIFIC WARDS**                      No

## **PART B – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### Council Tax Base

- 4.1 In order to determine the appropriate Council Tax levels for the area, it is necessary for the Council to determine the tax base for its area or part of its area. The budget requirements of the various precepting authorities are divided by this figure to arrive at the Band D equivalent level of Council Tax.
- 4.2 The tax base for 2012/13 must be set by full Council between 1 December 2011 and 31 January 2012 as prescribed by the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 as amended. The figures used for tax base allow for the continuation of the resolutions in respect of reducing the discounts for empty properties and second homes agreed previously.

## **5 PREVIOUS MINUTES**

5.1 Council meeting 27 January 2011

## **6. COUNCIL TAX BASE INFORMATION**

6.1 As members will be aware, the Council Tax is a banded capital value based property tax.

6.2 The main features of the tax are:-

- Each domestic property is allocated to one of 8 bands depending on its capital value which has been set by the Valuation Office Agency.
- Section 5 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 sets out the range of property values within each band. Associated Regulations determine the relationship between the tax rates for each band.
- A 25 % discount from the full charge is available for single adult households. Certain categories of resident are disregarded in deciding the number of adult residents. These include students, student nurses, youth training trainees, the severely mentally impaired etc. Qualifying criteria must be met before discounts or disregards are allowed.
- A reduction equivalent to one council tax band is available where a resident of a dwelling is disabled and certain facilities are required for meeting the needs of that disabled person. For Band A properties the reduction is equivalent to 1/9th of the Band D Charge so the charge for such a Band A dwelling is 5/9ths rather than 6/9ths for a Band A property.
- Council Tax Benefit of up to 100% of the full charge is available for those on low incomes. The Government is however consulting on significant changes to the Council Tax benefit system which are likely to be implemented from 2013/14.
- The grant system is intended to take account of differences in the needs and taxable capacity of each area.

6.3 The Council Tax Bands range from A to H and the details are as follows:-

<b>Band</b>	<b>House Value</b> (as at April 1991 prices)	<b>Band D</b> <b>Proportion</b>	<b>Telford &amp;</b> <b>Wrekin</b> <b>Properties</b> <b>Spread</b>	<b>%</b> <b>Increase/</b> <b>Decrease</b> <b>for 12/13</b>
	£	%	%	%
A	Under 40,000	66.7	37.47	-0.18
B	40,001 – 52,000	77.8	26.26	-0.01
C	52,001 – 68,000	88.9	14.65	+0.14
D	68,001 – 88,000	100.0	10.94	+0.03
E	88,001 – 120,000	122.2	6.30	+0.02
F	120,001 – 160,000	144.4	2.88	+0.00
G	160,001 – 320,000	166.7	1.43	+0.00
H	Over 320,000	200.0	0.07	+0.00

#### 6.4 Property Base

There are 69,322 properties in the valuation list for the Telford & Wrekin area. This compares with a figure of 68,661 in the list at the same time last year. There has been an increase of 661 properties, which equates to an increase of 0.96%. Overall there has been a decrease in the proportion of Band A and B properties and an increase in Band C, D, and E properties, with the largest increase in Band C.

#### 6.5 Council Tax Base

To arrive at the Council Tax Base, it is necessary to undertake the following calculation in respect of each tax band:

Total number of chargeable dwellings  
 (Less) Dwellings subject to discounts  
 =  
 Total equivalent number of properties  
 x  
 Ratio to Band D  
 =  
 Relevant Amount (Band D Equivalent)

The relevant amounts for each tax band are then aggregated to arrive at the total for the area.

Finally, an estimated Collection Rate needs to be applied to the resultant figure. This has to be common to the whole area and has to provide for amendments to the Council Tax Banding List, appeals against banding, additional discounts and losses on collection. It is suggested that a figure of 99% be used as has been the case since 2003/04. Clearly every effort is taken to pursue all council tax due to the authority vigorously.

## 6.6 General Fund Tax Base

This is the estimated council tax base for the whole of the area and will be used by Telford & Wrekin to calculate its General Fund Council Tax levy and also by West Mercia Police Authority and the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire & Rescue Authority to calculate the levy in respect of their precepts.

The tax base for this purpose for 2012/13 is 51,861.7. Using an estimated collection rate of 99% (adjusted for 100% collection of contributions in lieu), the tax base becomes **51,345.1**. The detailed build up to this figure by parish is shown in Appendix 1.

## 6.7 Special Fund Tax Base

This is the estimated council tax base for the Special Fund area, i.e. those areas where Telford & Wrekin Council provides services which, in other areas, are provided by Town & Parish Councils. These areas are;

- Dawley Hamlets,
- Great Dawley,
- Hollinswood & Randlay,
- Lawley & Overdale,
- Madeley,
- Oakengates,
- St Georges & Priorslee,
- Stirchley & Brookside,
- The Gorge,
- Wellington and
- Wrockwardine & Trench.

The Council Tax Base for each can be found in Appendix 1.

For 2012/13 it will be necessary to have two levels of special fund tax. The first tax will be levied on all the parishes in the Special Fund area. The second tax will be levied on those parishes that have opted not to take over responsibility for street lighting in their area.

The Special Fund Council Tax will be set taking into account the services provided by each individual parish and taking account of the tax base for each parish.

## 7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Local Government Act 2003

CLG Calculation of Council Tax Base Return (CTB1) October 2011

The Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings)(England) Regulations 2003

Report prepared by

Bernie Morris, Finance Team Leader (01952) 383702

Ken Clarke, Head of Finance (01952) 383100.



**TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL****COUNCIL – 19 JANUARY 2012****2011/12 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT****REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE****PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT****1.0 SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES**

- 1.1** The Financial Monitoring report to Cabinet in December 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 and slippage which require formal approval by Full Council:

<b>Virements</b>		
<b>To:</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>From:</b>
Town Park	195,000	Short Breaks, Capital
BTI Leegomery	5,000	Access Funding
Malinslee Local Centre	21,000	Playbuilder 2

<b>Capital Approvals</b>		
<b>Description</b>	<b>Amount £</b>	<b>Funding</b>
Madeley Academy	51,280	Grant
Newport High School	1,000,000	Grant
Mount Gilbert Special School	300,000	Grant
Newport Feasibility	100,000	Prudential Borrowing
Donnington House	65,000	Revenue/External

<b>Slippage into 12/13</b>	
	<b>£</b>
Children and Young People	
ADSLC - Abraham Darby Academy	(3,048,968.63)
Lakeside SLC - Lord Silkin School	(578,878.04)
Lakeside SLC - Stirchley Leisure	(110,958.00)
Lakeside SLC - PCT consulting rooms	(69,784.00)
Dawley SLC - Phoenix School	(568,939.80)
Wrockwardine Wood Arts College	(2,018,924.45)
Adams' Grammar School	(764,084.77)
Southall Special School	(140,930.00)
Site Surveys and Investigations	(1,585,482.00)
Housing Regeneration, Prosperity	
Accommodation Strategy	(500,000.00)
Parks for People - Phase 2	(159,000.00)
Borough Towns Initiative-Wellington Civic	(250,000.00)
Borough Towns Initiative-Oakengates	30,000.00
Malinslee Local Centre	(41,000.00)
North & South	(500,000.00)
Extra-Care Housing (Other)	(200,000.00)

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 Members are asked to approve the changes to the capital programme shown in section 1 above.

## **3.0 SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

<b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?	
	Yes	Delivery of all priority objectives depend on the effective use of available resources.
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	No	
<b>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</b>	The capital programme will be immediately updated to reflect the new approvals.	
<b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>	Yes	Financial impacts arising from this report will be reflected in future financial monitoring reports and built in to the final service and financial planning strategy for 2012/13
<b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>	No	None directly arising from this report. The S151 Officer has a statutory duty to monitor income and expenditure and take action if overspends /shortfalls emerge.
<b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b>	No	
<b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b>	No	Borough Wide

## **4.0 PREVIOUS MINUTES**

03/03/11 – Full Council, Service & Financial Planning Strategy  
26/7/11 – Cabinet, 2011/12 Financial Monitoring  
20/10/11 – Cabinet, 2011/12 Financial Monitoring  
22/12/11 – Cabinet, 2011/12 Financial Monitoring

## **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

There is no additional information.

## **5.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

2011/12 Budget Strategy / Financial Ledger reports

Report Prepared by: Ken Clarke, Head of Finance – 01952 383100;  
Pauline Harris, Finance Manager – 01952 383701

## **ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 at 2.30 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire**

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

**Also Present:** Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist.

#### **ASCSC-12 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** - The minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2011 were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting except that the word “notebooks” in section ASCSC-10 be amended to “netbooks”.

#### **ASCSC-13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllrs. J. Loveridge, C. Mason.

#### **ACSSC-14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **ASCSC-15 PHASE 2 CARE & SUPPORT STRUCTURE PROPOSAL**

The Committee reviewed the information provided during the presentation at the previous meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2011 on the Phase 2 Care & Support structure proposals, a draft copy of the initial comments agreed by the Committee at the previous meeting and the feedback on comments made during the consultation process including from the staff engagement sessions.

There was a lengthy discussion about all the information which had been provided and the following key concerns were highlighted:

- Serious concern was expressed about the loss of specialist posts such as the Asbergers and Dementia specialists, and the potential for a dilution of skills. It was noted that the new structure would include lead posts so that the specialist skills would be retained within the teams. Members felt strongly that the training for front-line staff to expand coverage of these skills must be rigorous so that the skills are strong.
- The functions currently carried out by the Employment & Community Education Teams in Care & Support should remain within Adult Care as the emphasis should remain on the “care” side rather than being transferred to Economy & Skills.

- Members agreed that the transition arrangements from children’s to adult services is vitally important and that the new Transition and Enablement service for 14-25 year olds will be very important and must have clear links to children’s service to bridge the gap, and pick up young people who may be in need but who are not receiving children’s social services.
- There was a concern about the slight reduction in the level of senior officer capacity in the Enablement team and whether this was sufficient to support less experienced and qualified Enablement Workers.
- Members were concerned that some staff will be expected to carry out the same, or greater, level of responsibility with less pay and wanted to ensure that unions were being fully consulted on the proposals.
- Quality of care in care homes was a huge concern, as had been highlighted nationally in recent reports and television programmes. Members recognised that the Care Quality Commission is responsible for monitoring and inspecting care homes and that the Council does not have any funding or statutory powers in this area. However, Members were concerned that as much capacity as possible should be built into the new structure for inspections, and that the Council should use the commissioning process to strengthen quality specifications and monitoring processes when contracting with providers.

The CQC had produced guidance on how they can support Scrutiny Committees and this had been circulated to members of the Committee. It was agreed that the Scrutiny Officer would find out who the local designated CQC contact for the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee would be. It was **agreed** that the CQC inspection regime for care homes in Telford & Wrekin would be included in the Committee’s work programme.

- The single point of contact was strongly supported but Members wanted to see the number widely promoted through partners and felt that GP surgeries have an important role to play in passing the number on to people.
- Members were concerned that services are offered wherever possible out of hours when it is likely that crises will occur.
- Members strongly supported the retentions of the Home from Hospital team, but recommended that a systematic way of identifying Telford & Wrekin residents sent to hospitals outside the borough so that they can be supported prior to discharge in the same way as patients at PRH.
- It was strongly recommended that any service changes should be communicated to service users as far in advance as possible so that people understand what will happen.
- It was suggested that electronic netbooks could provide a cost effective tool for staff to use during home visits, but Members were concerned that technology should not put up barriers or be off-putting to patients and that staff must make sure that patients are comfortable with electronic devices being used.

Further clarification was sought on whether the “brokerage” service would be available to self-funders free of charge, that the free enablement service would be available to all people (discharged from hospital or referred by social services) and the safeguards and responsibilities of the local authority for people on Direct Payments. The Scrutiny officer would request the information for circulation to the Committee.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the Scrutiny Group Specialist would draft comments based on the concerns identified for approval by the Committee and submission to the service area for consideration in the further development of the structure proposals.**

## **ASCSC-16 CARING FOR OUR FUTURE**

A briefing note on the Government’s Caring for Our Future consultation had been circulated to the Committee. The consultation was to engage with people who use care and support services, carers, local councils, care providers, and the voluntary sector about the priorities for improving care and support. Feedback from the consultation would feed into the White Paper on Social Care and a “progress report” on funding reform in the Spring of 2012.

Members considered each of the six specific areas set out in the consultation document and discussed comments they would like to make as part of the consultation. The following points were agreed:

### **Quality – What are the priorities for promoting improved quality and developing the future workforce?**

- The role of the Care Quality Commission needs to be clear and there needs to be a strong emphasis on hands-on inspections.
- A role and additional resources for local authorities to enhance and support the CQC should be considered.
- Local authorities need to be able to hold the CQC to account for their inspections.
- The public need to be made aware of which organisation complaints should be addressed to and the routes for appeal.

### **Personalisation – What are the priorities for promoting increased personalisation and choice?**

- Giving people choice and a range of flexible options is essential, but there needs to be clear messages about what people can expect when local authority budgets are being cut.
- There needs to be more development of the micro-market (small providers) but there has to be funding to enable this.
- People must be given choices but there must be safeguards in the system to make sure people are not pressurised into making decisions that they do not want.
- The cost of services must be clearly delineated.

- People must receive good quality advice so they can make an informed decision about what is best for them and whether to manage their own budget or have services provided for them.

**Integration – How can we take advantage of the Health & Social care modernisation program to ensure services are better integrated around people’s needs?**

- There is a huge issue with the distribution of funding between health and social care and concerns about the increased pressure on local authority budgets resulting from efficiencies in the health service. This is especially important in relation to Continuing Health Care. The distribution of funding must be addressed to enable services to be integrated.
- Services should only be integrated where it is in the best interests of the person requiring care.
- Integration should be at as local a level as possible.
- There is a difficulty in integrating local care with large health organisations, and integration must be driven by the Health & Wellbeing Boards and Clinical Commissioning Groups at a local level.
- It is imperative that integration is supported by close working relationships and joint systems.

**Prevention – What are the priorities for supporting greater prevention and early intervention?**

- Public health and health promotion are essential to improve health and reduce health and social care costs over the longer term.
- Local authorities should be properly funded to deliver public health and health promotion initiatives.
- There should be a focus on health promotion in education
- Concern that in the short term prevention and early intervention initiatives are curtailed through lack of funding.

**Shaping local care services – What are the priorities for creating a more diverse and responsive care market?**

- There are grave concerns nationally about the quality of care and it is essential that care standards are monitored.
- A pool of care providers needs to be built up to provide a wide range of help (including domestic tasks such as ironing) from within the private, voluntary and community sectors and there needs to be a system for monitoring these services.
- Local authorities need to offer a brokerage service.
- As previously mentioned, there needs to be development of the micro-market.

**The role of the financial services – What role could the financial services market play in supporting users, carers and their families?**

- The issue of the overall lack of funding for local authorities to meet the increasing demand and cost of care must be addressed.

**RESOLVED**

**That the Scrutiny officer would draft and circulate the comments for approval by the Committee for submission to the DfH as the Telford & Wrekin Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee's response to the consultation.**

**ASCSC-17 FORWARD PLAN**

It was agreed that the date for the next meeting would be confirmed by e-mail and that the agenda would include the impact of the withdrawal of CHC funding on the local authority and the adult safeguarding annual report.

The meeting ended at 4.00 p.m.

**Chairman:**

.....

**Date:**

.....

## **BOUNDARY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Boundary Review Committee held on Monday, 19th December, 2011 at 5.30 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire**

**PRESENT:** Councillors R.J. Sloan (Chairman), A.J. Eade, K.T. Blundell, D.G. Davies & R.A. Overton.

#### **BRC-1      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors N.J. Dugmore and S. Davies.

#### **BRC-2      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **BRC-3      TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members noted the Committee's Terms of Reference which had been approved by Full Council on 24 November 2011 and were attached at Appendix A.

Matters delegated to the Committee included:

- Dealing with all matters relating to Community Governance Reviews
- Grouping, dissolving and separating parishes
- Dividing the constituency and electoral divisions in to polling districts.

Non- delegated matters for the Committee were also identified and included a duty to prepare information on and to recommend consultation responses to council on the following:

- Parliamentary Boundary Reviews
- Periodic and further Electoral Reviews
- European Parliamentary Electoral Region Reviews
- All other Electoral Arrangement Reviews

**RESOLVED** – that the Terms of Reference be noted.

#### **BRC-4      REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS & PLACES**

The report of the Returning Officer, attached at Appendix B, detailed the review of polling districts and places in the Borough. Consultation had completed on 11 November 2011 and six responses had been received.

The pattern of polling districts and polling places had evolved to meet successive boundary changes to borough and parish wards and to meet the convenience of electors. Proposals for change in this review had been kept to a minimum.

The report proposed changes to arrangements in Dawley Magna, Madeley, Malinslee and Priorslee wards. Arrangements remained unchanged for all other wards.

### Dawley Magna

The proposal was that the boundary between polling districts TDX and TDA be redrawn so that TDX comprised all of Central Dawley. The polling station for TDX would be Dawley Christian Centre, High Street Dawley.

Further consideration would be given to the most appropriate polling station for the revised polling district TDA in the event of the Webb Youth Club ceasing to be available, with the Returning Officer consulting the Parish Council on alternative and convenient venues. The Returning Officer would notify the Chairman of the Boundary Review Committee of the outcome consultations.

### Madeley

The proposal was that the Returning Officer monitors the situation in Madeley with a view to continuing to provide a centrally located, convenient polling station for the electors of polling districts TMA and TMD. Consultation would take place with the Parish Council and the Chairman of the Boundary Review Committee would be notified of the outcome of consultations.

### Malinslee

The proposal was that a new polling district, TML, be formed for Dawley Bank with its polling station being at Dawley Baptist Church.

### Priorslee

The proposals were that polling districts TPG and TPZ be merged.

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the fact that, in line with the agreed Terms of Reference, the Committee had delegated power to deal with this matter. Members were all in agreement that the recommendations in the report should be approved by the Committee and that the recommended changes should be adopted.

**RESOLVED – that the changes recommended to the polling districts and places contained within the Returning Officer's report, be adopted.**

The meeting ended at 5.42 p.m.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **BUDGET & FINANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Minutes of the meeting of the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> November 2011 at 6.00p.m. in the Scrutiny Meeting Room, Civic Offices, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors R. Sloan (Chairman), K. Austin, R. Evans, C. Mollett, S. Reynolds, C. Turley.

**Also Present:** Councillor W. McClements, Cabinet Member Resources & Service Delivery; Sarah Bass, Strategic Procurement Service Delivery Specialist; Andy Challenor, Community Engagement and Equalities Manager; Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist; Tracy Clarke, Scrutiny Officer.

### **BFSC-15    MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee held on the 12th October 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman with an amendment to record apologies from Cllr. Adam Stanton.

The Chairman thanked members for their work at the previous meeting in agreeing comments on the 100 Day budget which he felt had presented a balanced view and would stand the Committee in good stead for scrutiny of the budget proposals. The Chairman had presented the Committee's report to Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> November.

### **BFSC-16    APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Adam Stanton, Co-optee Mr. R. Williams.

### **BFSC-17    DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

### **BFSC-18    APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman invited nominations for a Vice Chairman. Cllr. Reynolds was proposed by Cllr. Turley, seconded by Cllr. Austin and elected by a majority of the Committee.

**RESOLVED** that Cllr. Reynolds be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee.

### **BFSC-19    PROCUREMENT**

The Strategic Procurement Service Delivery Specialist outlined the key points from the report on Savings Through Procurement which had been provided to the Committee. The report was set in the context of the Council's restructure and the need to make savings.

The new structure of the Corporate Procurement Team included 1 Strategic Procurement Service Delivery Specialist, 3 qualified and experienced Procurement

Officers and 2 part-time administrators. This was in keeping with a previous scrutiny report which had recommended strengthening procurement skills in the central team.

The aim was to look at all aspects of procurement corporate-wide, from small items such as stationery to large projects such as the Southwater developments, to see what efficiencies could be made. A Procurement Task Force (PTF) had been set up to champion effective and efficient procurement across the Council. The PTF was Chaired by the Head of Governance and made up of Service Delivery Managers from each service area, representatives from legal and audit and supported by the Corporate Procurement Team.

The PTF met monthly and was action-driven. The PTF had a number of objectives which were set out in the report:

- Ensure continued efficient and effective procurement activities in their service areas
- Report actual savings as they are realised
- Share information on current negotiations to reduce costs and any challenges faced
- Provide detailed information on how current contracts are being managed
- Take the lead in supplier management where contracts pass over a number of areas
- Identify procurement and negotiation training and skills gaps for officers
- Look for opportunities to aggregate spend and put corporate contracts in place
- Look for opportunities to cancel contracts where provision can now be managed in house.
- Look for opportunities to avoid procurement all together by use of existing local and regional arrangements, shared services or innovative service provision

The Senior Management Team had identified specific proposals to deliver savings from procurement as:

2012/13	£2.2m
2013/14	£890k
2104/15	£500k

The PTF had been formed in September 2011 and the report highlighted the key areas of work:

- Reviewed contractual relationships with our top 60 suppliers and suppliers paid over £100k in the last financial year to ensure that these contracts provide value for money and, where practicable, to negotiate improved rates or create capacity and flexibility allowing more services to be delivered at the same cost. Contracts worth over £500k p.a. had been reviewed last year, and contracts worth £100k-£500k were now being reviewed. Negotiations with suppliers had identified a number of quick wins on corporate contracts.
- Worked with the Improvement and Efficiency Partnership to health check the approach and indentify potential opportunities not yet accessed, including an energy audit, and work on commissioning in adults' and childrens' care.
- Developed a comprehensive contracts monitoring document which will feed into the Contracts Register and be a key source document to monitor savings and

manage all contracts over £50k in the Council and feed into the transparency agenda.

- Worked to change the procurement culture to ensure best value for all contracts from specification through to contract management.
- Adopted a market category approach for reviewing social care contracts rather than supplier specific.

Staff training had also been identified as an issue for further development. There is a large amount of information on the intranet to support staff but this needed revisiting to highlight the key documents people need to do their daily job. The team was developing “Savvy Buyer” training for staff to improve buying and supplier management techniques and to get the message across that every £1 matters. A contracts, grant and SLA register would be in place by Christmas.

Procurement was a standard agenda item at Senior Management Team and Policy Review meetings so progress was monitored at a senior level by members and officers.

Following the report, members asked a number of questions:

- *From the review of the top 60 suppliers, can you give some examples of where contracts have been re-negotiated to make savings or get better services?*  
EU regulations prohibit re-negotiation of contract prices, but we are looking at how to minimise inflationary price uplifts and how to drive a better level of service from existing contracts. £13k per month has been saved on the ICT contract by upgrading the platform. The brewery contract has moved to a cheaper brand to lower unit prices and increase profit on sales. The commissioning team in adult care is working with care providers in Shropshire Partners in Care to look at more flexible working and how to maximise resources.
- *How do you link into the Co-operative Commission sub-group which is looking at procurement?*  
The procurement team has been brought into the sub-group and is working with businesses in the Co-operative Commission on outward facing work such as defining how the council procures and when a grant would be issued opposed to a contract, how forms can be made less bureaucratic to enable small companies and voluntary sectors to bid easily, if developing a central point which manages grants would be good idea. The sub-group is briefed on the work of the PTF.
- *How many corporate contracts are there?*  
There are about 12 covering goods bought Council-wide such as cleaning, hotel booking, stationery, postal services and personal hygiene. These are managed by the procurement team to get best value. For example, where staff have identified an item that could be bought more cheaply from an alternative supplier, we would contact the approved corporate supplier to find out whether they could match the lower price.
- *Are any new corporate contracts or aggregated purchasing being considered?*  
The new Agresso system enables us to run detailed reports to monitor expenditure across all areas of the Council and to identify what staff are buying

and which suppliers are being used. This will enable us to identify common areas of spend where purchasing could be aggregated or corporate contracts established. The PTF includes service delivery managers from all service units to facilitate and co-ordinate this.

- *How rigorously are corporate contracts enforced and how is off-contract spend monitored?*  
Spend analysis reports are run off Agresso to identify off-contract spend and staff buying off-contract are challenged. If the other supplier is cheaper, we contact our approved supplier and ask them to match the competitor's price.
- *Does the Corporate Procurement Team have the authority to enforce compliance with corporate contracts?*  
We tend not to have to do enforcement because once the issue is raised, staff comply with contracts on a voluntary basis. The Head of Governance as chair of the PTF reports to the Senior Management Team every week, so if there are any issues they are picked up by the relevant Head of Service who then reports back to staff in their service area. An e-team site is being developed for staff involved in buying, although this cannot include commercially confidential information.
- *Have any contracts been cancelled and if so were any penalties incurred?*  
The IT contract has moved to a one month termination due to the number of licences required for the churn of staff. The annual repair contract has been cancelled and repair and maintenance has been moved in-house. The possibility of moving some adult care in-house is being explored. The "Savvy Buyer" training will ensure that staff fully evaluate the need for the service before buying.
- *Is there still an issue with the turn around of supplier invoices? This can be critical for small businesses relying on cash-flow.*  
There were initial bedding-in problems with Agresso but reports are run on all outstanding invoices and the position is improving. There has been a comprehensive staff training programme and bulletins for staff on Agresso. The Council has a five day turnaround target for invoices which is an important pledge to businesses.
- *Is the level of complaints from schools reducing?*  
Half are embracing the new system and half are not. There was an issue with the timing of the implementation of Agresso as it happened just before the school summer holidays, but we are working to support all schools to ensure they have the key skills. We have run refresher training for administrators and have received good feedback from this. The number of issues has reduced significantly over the last 3-4 weeks. Schools pay the Council for financial services and we need to demonstrate best value. The Head of School Improvement is working with the schools to look at setting up cluster groups to support better value joint procurement.
- *The procurement savings targets are very ambitious – is £2.2m in 2012/13 realistic?*  
The £2.2m savings proposal is a challenging saving but the bigger the saving, the more money there will be for front-line services. In the budget, non-staff savings

will be categorised in four ways to show where the saving has been made: increased income, operational efficiencies, service changes and procurement. The issue will be to realise the savings in time for next year's budget.

– *Can we put performance gateways into small contracts?*

Contract under the EU threshold (£156k) can be negotiated and we look at deliverables against the contract. EU regulations can be seen as frustrating because they do not allow for negotiation on prices. We need to lobby MPs to lobby national government to reach a memorandum of understanding within the EU so that authorities can negotiate without being challenged.

At the end of the discussion it was **agreed** that the Committee would continue to monitor savings on procurement.

## **BFSC-20     BUDGET ENGAGEMENT**

The Community Engagement and Equalities Manager tabled two reports: a discussion note on the budget strategy equality impact analysis and engagement process, and a summary of the individual savings proposals which had been selected for impact analysis and service user engagement.

It was essential that rigorous equalities impact assessments were carried out on proposed services changes where the changes may affect any of the 9 characteristic protected groups under the Equalities Act. Other authorities had been subject to judicial review under the Equalities Act to challenge the legal process for making decisions about service changes which would unfairly disadvantage protected groups.

The Government Equalities Office had suggested a number of principles (derived from case law) which should underpin an impact analysis, and adhering to these would lessen the likelihood of judicial review. The principles were set out in the report as:

- Impact analysis should be proportionate to the decision being made and should begin at the start of the decision making process.
- Decision makers need rigorous and accurate advice and analysis from officers.
- A properly detailed evidence based analysis of the issues and supporting information is essential. An impact analysis will not be adequate if it considers the issues only at a broad level, does not draw attention to specific impacts, or fails to consider the alternative approaches that could alleviate, or at least mitigate, the impact of the decision.
- The decision maker cannot devolve responsibility; they must have access to all of the information.
- Lastly, decisions and impacts should be reviewed within a given timescale or trigger.

The budget savings pro forma had required managers to identify the impact of proposals on service users. Additional screening and more detailed work had been done by the Community Engagement and Equalities Team with lead officers to identify further equalities implications and requirements for impact assessments

and/or service user engagement. A list of the individual savings proposals for next financial year's budget requiring impact analysis/service user engagement had been drawn up and agreed by Policy Review. The list was tabled for members to consider. This included the individual proposal, the outcome of the equalities impact assessment (and comments) and the scope of required service user engagement.

Impact Assessments would be carried out and reported to Cabinet in December with the budget proposals. An overall impact analysis would be done in January 2012 to identify the impact of the combined savings proposals.

The individual proposals identified for further assessment/consultation were in Care & Support, Environmental Services, Highways & Transport and Leisure & Libraries.

The timetable for engagement with service users did not in all cases fit with the timeframe for consultation on the budget and would be done alongside the implementation of the service which would require a longer timescale. The scoping exercise identified the required level and timetable for service user engagement which would focus on how to mitigate the impact of the savings.

Following the presentation, there was a discussion about the reports. Members pointed out that the budget would be agreed at full Council in March 2012 which was before longer-term consultation on key services, such as the charging policy, had taken place. Members wanted to know what would happen if the consultation showed that the cuts made to the service needed to be reviewed when the budget had already been set, and whether the fact that the longer-term consultation had not taken place before the savings proposals were agreed would expose the Council to a risk of challenge.

Members were told that the scoping exercise had been carried out to understand the proposed savings and where there was a need to consult. Impact assessments and where possible service user engagement was being carried out during Phase 2 (October-December) to feed into the budget proposals. There would be continued service user and wider public engagement during Phase 3 (December-February). However, some services (such as personalisation) required more detailed consultation with service users which could not be done within the tight timescale for setting the budget. However, the engagement process would focus on reducing and mitigating any negative impacts of service changes within the agreed funding level. It was highlighted that consultation is not a one-off exercise and would be on-going. Savings for 2013/14 would be identified early on so that consultation could start early. The most important thing at this stage was to complete the impact analyses to identify any potential negative impacts. Information would be analysed and reported by the end of the week.

Members agreed that scrutiny has a key role to play in ensuring consultation is done properly.

**BFSC-21    FORWARD PLAN**

The next meeting would be held on Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2012 to review the budget proposals.

Members agreed that the Small Business Loans Fund would be added to the work programme and that the savings suggestions was not an immediate priority and would be left until later on next year.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

**CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of the meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee**  
**held on Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011 at 6.00 p.m. in the Scrutiny Meeting**  
**Room, Civic Offices, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors G. Green (Chairman), M. Ion, J. Loveridge, A. Mackenzie, Co-optees A. Atkinson, S. Ali, E. Ofori, M. Ward.

**Also Present:** Cllr. A. McClements; Jim Collins, Head of School Improvement; Karen Perry, Interim Head of Safeguarding; Christine Marsh, Early Intervention Manager; Stephanie Jones, Interim Scrutiny Group Specialist; Tracy Clarke, Scrutiny Officer.

**CYPSC-13 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on the 19th September 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**CYPSC-14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors P. Watling Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, J Greenaway, C. Turley.

**CYPSC-15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**CYPSC-16 WORKSHOP ON CHILD POVERTY**

At the Children & Young People Committee meeting in August, members had selected Child Poverty as a topic for the work programme. Members had been informed that a meeting of officers and Cabinet members was due to be held to start to develop a shared understanding of poverty and its causes and to develop strategies for tackling child and family poverty. A workshop had been held with Cabinet members, and the purpose of the work shop at this evening's meeting was to enable scrutiny members to input into the process by generating ideas which could be taken away for consideration and development.

The Early Years Advisor facilitated the workshop. The context of poverty was set. The causes of poverty were complex and could not just be attributed to financial hardship. The effects of poverty on aspirations, self-esteem, personal relationships, educational attainment, employability, health and well-being could be life-long. Research had highlighted the fact that a child from a more affluent family whose early stage attainment is lower than a child deemed to be in poverty will achieve a higher level of attainment at the end of their schooling. The cycle of poverty can be

perpetuated over generations and the cycle needed to be broken. Poverty had substantial implications for public spending on benefits, criminal justice, education and social care.

Nationally 21% of children were living in poverty. There was a growing understanding nationally that the causes of poverty need to be addressed and not just the symptoms. Historically, national and local poverty indicators and performance targets had focussed on the symptoms (such as teen pregnancy, child care, NEETS) rather than on the causes. New indicators were being developed through the Child Poverty Act to measure severe and persistent poverty which would have a focus on the causes.

Nationally the Child Poverty Strategy key drivers were:

- Tackling worklessness
- Tackling poverty
- Strengthening families
- Tackling educational failure
- Tackling poor health

The number of children living in poverty in Telford & Wrekin was 24.1% which equates to between 8,000 and 8,500 children. Furthermore, there were seven wards in the borough with above national average figures for children in poverty.

Brookside had been selected as a pilot area to identify the causes of poverty and how to tackle it. A multi-agency team was in place to take this forward.

There were a number of misconceptions about poverty including:

- That unemployment was just about financial hardship. Unemployment can impact on the aspirations of the whole family and can contribute to a culture of worklessness in families.
- That financial difficulty equated to poverty. This was not necessarily a true indication; good parenting was not always about affluence and there was evidence that good parenting and routines for children could overcome the potentially negative impacts of financial hardship. However, parents locked into an every day battle may require additional support.

Members asked a number of questions:

**How do we define a “child”?**

A child is defined from 0 – 18 years.

**The members agreed that assumptions were being made as to why there are such high figures of poverty in Telford and Wrekin. Can the figures relating to the number of children in poverty in each ward be broken down into street level?**

This data is in the process of being broken down to street level in the pilot area of Brookside. However, this data cannot be published because it may identify specific families and would contravene data protection legislation.

**Why is it important to increase good quality child care provision?**

To put this into context each child aged between 3 – 4 years old is entitled to 15 hours of free childcare over 38 weeks, and research has shown that the outcomes for children improve if they have access to good quality childcare.

The Members agreed that good quality care allows a parent to work but recognised that childcare can be very expensive. The Early Years Advisor highlighted that grants and voucher schemes are available but even with these, the cost of childcare can still make it difficult to manage financially. A Member added that with a higher than average number of low skill levelled jobs in Telford and Wrekin the type of work available often involves weekend and shift work and the availability of child care may not accommodate shift patterns. The Early Years Advisor agreed that good quality care can be even more difficult to find for those working shifts or weekends, or for lone parents, as there is limited good quality overnight provision for children.

**Has the National Curriculum become a contributing factor to the number of children in poverty because prior to this there was a more balanced curriculum including social skills such as budgeting, cooking and planning?**

The National Curriculum focuses on raw standards of attainment, and although some additionality may have been squeezed out, issues of child poverty existed before the introduction of the National Curriculum and no causal link had been established. Additionally, many schools still provided these additional activities.

**How do you think the cycle of poverty can be broken, and why do some manage to break out of it and not others?**

There was a general discussion about this question and various observations were made. Some children appeared to have a greater resilience than others to see a different way of living which inspired them to break the cycle of poverty. The trigger could be a significant person in the child's life such as a relative, teacher, youth service worker etc.

In terms of strategy it was important to consider how to target children most in need of support, including those with unequal access to extra-curricular activities such as music, sport or drama, and there needed to be positive intervention to reach those who do not come forward to access services. The Early Years Advisor highlighted that Children's Centres were set up to provide opportunities for children who would normally not have access to activities. Cllr. Mackenzie commented on the success of the family centre in Sutton Hill. The service was well used and had assisted parents who were not working to become more motivated and get back into education and training by providing a supportive environment.

**Why do you think that the Family Centre in Sutton Hill is a success?**

The family group project in the Community Centre is well established, trusted and appreciated by the community. The centre is well used by toddlers and "young mums" and there is a "buzz" about it. Trust has been built up over a number of years and there is a strong support network so that people help each other. The project is a good example of how community and voluntary groups could provide support and offer stable and reassuring role models of people who have broken the cycle of poverty and are managing their lives. Community Ambassadors are being looked at as a way of building similar "home-grown" projects from within the community. The Council has a role to play in supporting voluntary groups and helping them to attract

funding, and this is being done as part of the Brookside pilot through a multi-agency approach. Sutton Hill can be used as an example of good practice, but Ambassadors will need to be recruited locally in Brookside who know and understand the area and are trusted by the community. The pilot is about genuine consultation with local people to listen to what they want to and to involve them in the design and delivery of local services.

It was agreed that a sub-group of the Committee would visit the Sutton Hill centre to find out more about how the group works and the reasons for its success and report back to the Committee and the service area.

Cllr. Ion made the point that in addition to long-term prevention strategies, immediate financial pressures, such as debt to loan sharks, also needed to be dealt especially in the light of cuts to the Citizen's Advice Bureau and suggested that more should be done to promote credit unions.

Members considered three areas as part of the workshop, and the following points and recommendations were agreed. These would be taken forward for further consideration.

### **1. Causes**

- Low income is too simple a definition – there is more to it than that
- Parenting/caring skills
- Broken homes
- Educational skills for work
- Organisational skills
- Low aspirations
- Life skills

### **2. What would help?**

- Breaking the cycle
- Re- igniting the aspirations – modelling peer coaches
- Relationship – someone to take a real interest in you / mentor
- Targeting help/support where it is most needed
- Improving access to services or activities
- Positive messages – celebrating success

### **3. Recommendations**

- Successful family group
- Community Ambassadors
- Voluntary groups from the community
- Role models of local people who have turned their lives around
- Support mechanism of assistance for local voluntary groups such as the parish council
- Simple model like the Sutton Hill Family Group
- Partnership with Local Authority Services
- Tackle the difficult issues such as:
  - Rogue debt
  - Genuine engagement

- Communities on design and delivery of local services

## **RESOLVED**

- **That a sub group of the Committee would visit the Sutton Hill family group project to find out more about how it works and the reasons for its success and report back to the Committee and the service area.**

## **CYPSC-17 THE PHASE 2 CHILDREN'S SERVICE REVIEW**

The Head of School Improvement and the Interim Head of Safeguarding delivered a presentation on the Phase 2 Family & Community Services and Safeguarding structure proposals. This followed on from the meeting in August when the Committee received a presentation on the Phase 1 proposals.

The Head of School Improvement emphasised that despite budget cuts, the priority for the service remained as always to keep the vulnerable children, young people and adults safe from harm and neglect. However, the budget cuts would have an impact on service delivery and changes would need to be made.

In addition to the information given in the presentation, the following key points were highlighted:

### **School Improvement**

- Relatively few areas of the School Improvement service were affected by the Phase 2 proposals. A key change was the realignment of the Participation Worker for Children in Care post from Safeguarding to School Improvement in recognition of the need to raise levels of attainment for children in care.
- Learning & Behaviour Services had been streamlined to focus on support for Additional Educational Needs (AEN) and away from Special Educational Needs (SEN) in line with the reduced budget and the Green Paper on SEN.
- A review of the management of Pupil Referral Units was on hold pending potential changes in the White Paper which would become the Education Bill.
- Services for the top end of schools at KS4 and beyond would be reviewed in the light of the raising of the school leaving age to 18 by 2013.

### **Early Intervention**

The key aim was to develop three Children and Family Centre hubs based on the Co-operative Learning Communities and Sure Start children's centres working with children aged 0- 19 years to provide a seamless service.

### **Cohesion Services**

This would bring together a range of Council and multi-agency teams to work with families with more complex needs, providing targeted support from universal and family intervention services. This would build on the good work already done on

tacking crime, anti-social behaviour and sexual exploitation and would link into work on homelessness and NEETS.

### **Youth Offending Services**

A strong team was in place but a regional review of the service was taking place and the structure of the service would be deferred until later in 2012 when the West Mercia-wide approach was clearer.

### **Integrated Planning, Placements and Commissioning**

The key principle would be to provide a central team for planning and commissioning of children's services with an enhanced role for the commissioning/contracts officer to support an integrated approach to procuring placements. There would be improved tracking of young people through schools to pick up and support to young people with risky behaviour who may have previously slipped through the net, including young people moving into the borough.

### **Children's Specialist Services**

This would bring all the high-end specialist services for children and young people together in one location to bring economies of scale, drive down costs and improve services. The underlying principles were integrated working and early intervention through multi-disciplinary teams.

### **Family Connect**

Family Connect is fundamental to the reconfiguration of services and restructure. It will provide a single point of contact for all children and family services. There would be a one contact telephone number with a multi-agency team operating a triage system to provide support or sign-post to specialists. The team will be joined-up in one location. This would have a major impact on intractable problems by providing the right support at the right time. The focus will be on early identification, intervention and resolution for presenting issues.

### **Safeguarding**

The key aim was to improve outcomes for children with child protection plans and children in care, to reduce the number of children with protection plans and in care where it is safe to do so, and to improve social work practice in-line with the Munro report.

#### **– Child Protection and Assessment**

The proposal would mainstream the approach to children abused through sexual exploitation. The Safeguarding Duty Desk would be linked to Family Connect and issues would be picked up through the triage process and supported by the Cohesion team and the Safeguarding Advisory Team for complex cases. Child protection issues would be triaged straight to the child protection team.

Assessment and Case Management would be re-aligned into three teams, and there would be a clearer role for non-qualified staff. The link worker to PRH continues but is linked in future to the Community Social work team.

#### **– Children in Care and Fostering**

A senior social worker post would be created to support effective links between the safeguarding service and the placements team. There had been a big,

successful recruitment campaign for foster carers, and the proposals would also strengthen support for foster carers. There would be two fostering teams – one for recruitment and support of mainstream foster carers and a second to support special guardianships, kinship carers and private fostering (i.e. by friends).

- Child In Care and Fostering and Emergency Duty Team (EDT)  
A new specialist Reviewing Officer post would be located into the Safeguarding Advisory Service Conference and Review Team. Foster carers are reviewed on an annual basis or when needed. Training for foster carers was on-going and would be reviewed. Feedback on the EDT would be monitored to ensure it remained effective for the whole community.

There were no great changes to the children in care team and changes were more about the redesign of social workers into groupings around groups of children in care following the Munro recommendations.

- Safeguarding Advisory Services and Corporate Parenting & Professional Social Work lead.  
These services were covered in the presentation slides, but there were no specific points made at the meeting.

Consultation on the School Improvement proposals would end on 4<sup>th</sup> January and consultation on the Family & Community Services and Safeguarding would close on 18<sup>th</sup> January.

Members asked a number of questions:

#### **How are kinship carers monitored?**

All kinship carers are assessed in the same way as other foster carers and will be subject to an annual review. The fostering social worker will support the carer but the child's safety and wellbeing will always be the priority.

#### **What rights do grandparents have with respect to care and contact?**

Grandparents can become kinship carers. When children cannot be looked after by their parents, then other relatives will be assessed to see if they are suitable and this will include grandparents. The local authority can offer support and financial assistance consistent with the foster carers' allowance. Telford & Wrekin has a robust decision making process as to when it is appropriate to make the grandparent a carer. If it is not appropriate and the child is placed elsewhere, the team would assess whether it is in the best interests of the child to have contact with the grandparent and extended family. If it is not appropriate, then the grandparent would need to pursue access to the child through the courts.

#### **How would Members report an issue in their ward?**

Members can phone in and report any issues that are of concern. The single point of contact through Family Connect will take away the confusion of knowing who to report the problem to.

**Why is the number of children coming in to care rising, and is this an indication that some children are being taken unnecessarily into care?**

If support can be put in then children's needs might be managed through a child protection plan and they will stay at home rather than going into care. The child will be taken off the protection plan if they go into care or if the child is no longer deemed to be at risk.

There were now 301 children in care and there had been an increase over the previous months. This was a national trend and the recession had had an impact. Benchmarking was done with other authorities, and the number of children in care per 10,000 children in Telford & Wrekin was lower than for statistical neighbours. Compared to the West Midlands benchmarking group, only the shire counties had a lower pro rata number. Hard work was being done to keep children out of care through earlier intervention, but the priority remained keeping children safe from harm.

**The Family Connect single point of contact is very welcome but a human voice on the end of the phone is very important. Will calls be answered by a person or an automated voice?**

The calls will all be answered by a member of the team.

At the end of the discussion, the following points were agreed:

**RESOLVED**

- **That the Committee would submit a response to the Phase 2 structure proposals. Members would e-mail questions to the Scrutiny Team to request a response. A further meeting would be held in December for the Committee to agree its response.**
- **That there would be a standing item on each Committee meeting agenda to monitor the number of children in care and placement stability.**

**RECOMMENDED**

- **That a Members' Information Seminar should be held to inform members about the Family Connect service and the telephone number.**

The Head of Safeguarding agreed this would be offered to Members.

**CYPSC-18 FORWARD PLAN**

The Chairman advised members that site visits of the Dawley Sports Co-operative Learning Community would take place on 26<sup>th</sup> October and members were welcome to attend. Details would be circulated by the Scrutiny Officer.

It was noted that following the discussion about raising the aspirations and attainment of children in care at the previous meeting, Shaukat Ali had contacted the Scrutiny team and had offered to help broker a scheme with Wolverhampton University and New College to offer contact events for children in care. This was

being taken forward by the Extended Services Manager and further reports would be brought to the Committee.

There was a discussion about future meetings and the following changes to the Forward Plan were agreed:

- A meeting to take part in the consultation on the planning of school places and secondary school provision would be held in December. A report was due to go to Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> November.
- A sub-group of the Committee would visit the Sutton Hill family centre.
- The suggestion to consider the Council's relationship with schools in light of the introduction of academies and free schools would be added to the work programme.
- An update on the Mott MacDonald investigation at Abraham Darby would be brought back to the Committee. Members were seeking assurance about the impartiality of the report given that the work would be funded by Kier.

The meeting ended at 8.14p.m.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of the meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at 6.00 p.m. in the Scrutiny Meeting Room, Civic Offices, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors G. Green (Chairman), M. Ion, J. Greenaway, C. Turley.  
Co-optees A. Atkinson, S. Harris

**Also Present:** Cllr P. Watling, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People; Jim Collins, Head of School Improvement; Stephanie Jones, Interim Scrutiny Group Specialist; Tracy Clarke, Scrutiny Officer.

#### **CYPSC- 19 REMARKS FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

An updated report had been circulated to the Members on the Short Breaks for Disabled Children detailing the number of service users and the cost of the activities. The Chairman requested that any questions were circulated to the Scrutiny team for follow up with the relevant officer.

**RESOLVED** - that a further update report be received by the Committee in six months time.

#### **CYPSC-20 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on the 20th October 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **CYPSC-21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors; A. Mackenzie, J. Loveridge, K. Guy, Co-optees; M. Ward, S. Ali, E. Ofori, Officers; Guy Kershaw, Project Director BSF.  
Members referred to the repeated non attendance of some councillors. The Chairman advised that this would be raised with the relevant Group leader(s). Members agreed this was a suitable response.

#### **CYPSC-22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## **CYPSC-23 STATISTICS ON PLACEMENT STABILITY AND THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN CARE**

The Chairman drew Members' attention to the statistics presented on the Children in Care (CiC). Members agreed that the increase in the number of CiC had been gradual with no sudden rises as previously implied. The Chairman advised that there was a need to protect the CiC from being subjected to media headlines.

The Cabinet Member for Children & Young People highlighted that the rise in the number of CiC was a national problem and not just an issue that had affected the Borough of Telford & Wrekin.

Members of the Committee agreed that all Members across the Council regardless of their political interest were Corporate Parents whose duty it was to ensure that the Local Authority offered the best possible care for the CiC.

- Members discussed the statistics and agreed that it would be helpful to have the statistics at every meeting.
- A concern was raised that some schools may have a disproportionate amount of CiC.
- Members asked the Head of School Improvement about the admissions procedure for CiC. The Head of School Improvement explained that the Foster Carer applied on behalf of the child just as a parent would and this normally involved placing the child at a school closest to the foster home. If the child's placement had not been confirmed then the Social Worker would apply for the school place on their behalf. As most schools signed up to a code of practice, CiC were the top priority for schools and the child's progress was tracked. If a child in care needed to be placed outside the Borough then the school and the placement would try and be arranged at the same time by the Social Worker.
- Members agreed that access to good schools was important for all children but especially CiC.
- Members agreed that as Corporate Parents, they needed to know that the CiC were progressing and not wait until the results were published at the end of the year and the school year had ended.
- The Scrutiny Specialist suggested that the Members have all the Performance Indicators to a future meeting so that they can confirm if there is any more information that would assist them in their monitoring.
- The Chairman concluded that this was an area that needed more consideration and more officer time, as previously two hour meetings were held on this topic alone.
- Members requested information on what happened at the moment with regards to the CiC 16+ transition into adulthood.

### **RESOLVED -**

- (a) That the statistics on CiC would be presented monthly;
- (b) That the Members would receive information on the number of CiC by school and age group for children in and out of the authority.

(c) That Members receive interim reports on how the CiC are progressing.

#### **CYPSC-24 UPDATE ON BSF PROGRAMME- PLANNING OF SCHOOL PLACES: SECONDARY SCHOOL PROVISION**

The Head of School Improvement updated the Members on the canopy collapse at the Abraham Darby Academy. Members were reassured that the costs for the remedial report commissioned by Telford & Wrekin Council from the independent consultant Mott McDonald would be met by Kier the site developer. The Chairman asked for the Member who had raised this question to be updated.

The Head of School Improvement presented an update on the Building Schools for the Future programme (BSF). The BSF Programme was a £45 billion government funded programme launched during the previous government, with the aim of rebuilding or refurbishing every secondary school in England. As part of this programme Telford & Wrekin Council were given access to £200m of funding.

As a Council, Telford & Wrekin had a vision of becoming a co-operative learning borough, developing learning for the wider community to benefit.

The Head of School Improvement gave an overview on the programme for each school.

- Newport currently had school accommodation at two selected schools and one secondary school. The refurbishment of the Newport schools would be as the original programme which included £10m investment.
- Wellington currently had three secondary schools, as part of the revised proposals this would reduce to two secondary schools.
- Ercall Wood was currently going through the planning process to be re-built on land adjacent to the current school.
- Hadley Learning Community had been developed on the old Hadley Manor School site.
- Phoenix School would be re-sited at the bottom of the Dawley High Street as part of the original BSF programme.
- The Abraham Darby School was currently being replaced with a new academy which was originally scheduled to open in January, but due to the unfortunate incident with the canopy collapse the school would not open until September 2012. The handing over of the leisure facilities would take place in January 2012.
- Madeley Academy was a new build which had been completed.
- Southall School and Mount Gilbert Special Schools would both undergo refurbishments.

The Head of School Improvement advised Members of the revised BSF proposals which were part of the consultation that was due to end on 23<sup>rd</sup> December. A follow up meeting would be held in Priorslee and the results would be shared with Cabinet in January 2012. The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the consultation would then run until 19<sup>th</sup> March.

The revised proposals included a new ecumenical 1050 place Christian Academy for pupils aged 11-18 on the proposed site in Priorslee. This would build on the existing successful sixth form currently at the Blessed Robert Johnson College (BRJ) and enable residents of Priorslee to access 16+ provision. This was a change from the previous proposal which was to locate the Wrockwardine Wood Arts College on the Priorslee site.

Members were advised that the Wrockwardine Wood Arts College would now be located on the Oakengates site with the Sutherland Business and Enterprise College. Despite both schools having had improved GCSE results in the last two academic years, falling school numbers no longer necessitated the need for two colleges.

The Charlton School in Wellington was a popular school with a current school roll of 1175 pupils on a site built to accommodate 800 pupils. It was hoped that Charlton school could be moved to the current site of the BRJ incorporating a refurbishment of parts of the school such as the extensive sports facilities.

A revised BSF proposal had been put forward to build a new Lakeside co-operative educational campus on the Stirchley site encompassing primary, secondary and post 16 education working alongside Telford College of Arts and Technology as a trustee. The original plans to knock down the primary school and build a new secondary school had been changed to accommodate funding changes from the new proposals.

The Head of School Improvement drew Members' attention to the proposed opening dates and the consultation timetables for the new schools. The next stage of the new sample contract was the building of the Ercall Wood School, which was due to open in 2014, with the Oakengates and Priorslee sites opening later in the same year, followed by the Lakeside Learning Campus the year after and Charlton a year later than Lakeside. However, in order to facilitate parental choice and be able to offer three new schools in the same year, consideration was being given to opening Priorslee, Oakengates and the Lakeside Campus in 2014 but this would depend on the contract that was awarded to the developers.

Following the presentation Members asked a number of questions.

- Members were concerned that there may be problems merging Wrockwardine Wood Arts College and Sutherland Business Enterprise College as the governors and school trustees from both schools join together to be the body of one school. **The Cabinet Member highlighted that this had already been raised as a concern as the two schools had a very different ethos. However, lessons had been learnt from past mergers.**
- Members asked if it would have been easier to close one school and increase the pupil numbers of the other school. **The Cabinet Member added that it was felt that the identity of both schools should be preserved and that although some parents had chosen Wrockwardine Wood Arts College because they thought it was moving to Priorslee, most parents were happy to remain with their original choice.**

Members felt that the positive side of the school merger needed to be addressed. This would be a new school with new facilities and good local publicity could assist in creating a positive image of the school. Members felt that by engaging the community, in particularly the primary aged children who may attend the school, the new school would be seen as a positive option.

- A Member explained that originally when a school becomes an academy that they receive £25,000 and the assistance of a DfE Advisor with the set up of the steering group to advise the existing school governors. Members asked if the new academies would be receiving the same package.  
**The Head of School Improvement thought that all converter academies would continue to receive the £25,000 funding.**
- A Member asked if the new schools would be sponsored or converter academies.  
**The Head of School Improvement advised the Members that the academies would be sponsored. An example being the academy at Priorslee which would have sponsorship from the three dioceses, with the Shrewsbury diocese being the principal trustee.**
- The Chairman asked if there was a way of involving Governors who had local knowledge of the area such as the Councillors?  
**Those schools that joined the Schools Co-operative Society signed up to the ethos of working with the community. This would allow the Council access into the academies in terms of information sharing.**
- If an academy does not get the support from the DfE then it would be advisable for a contingency to be established to support the school governing body with legal, HR and financial advice. Members discussed the possibility of an induction programme to help attract new Governors.
- The Chairman raised her concerns that the recent Press Release was misleading as a number of schools said no changes. This included the schools in Newport who were receiving £9m of refurbishment .  
**The Head of School Improvement advised that the sums of money allocated to each school were not detailed in the programme because it was felt that the public would perceive this as a negative, having already received this information in the past. However, this would be addressed in the next press release.**
- Members asked if any consideration had been given to putting the Southall school onto the Lakeside site?  
**The Head of School Improvement said consideration had been given to relocating Southall School onto the Lakeside site but there was not enough space to locate it there. The Oakengates site was also considered but this was also dismissed. However, when a contractor was appointed in May this could be considered again.**  
Members agreed that as part of the consultation this should be looked at again, because of the options for the children to benefit from accessing mainstream education for areas of specialism.

- The Chairman highlighted that the change of school sites would mean the need to sell off large areas of land. This would be looked at by another area of Scrutiny, following on from this discussion Members asked at what point in the development of houses there is a trigger to return to Central Government for accessing more funding.
- A Member raised concerns that despite 3,000 houses being developed in Lawley, there was no secondary school provision.

**The Cabinet Member stated that the current forecasts factored-in the Lawley development but it may be advisable that an expert explains to the Members how the school admission figures were forecast.**

- What feedback will be given to the School Councils?  
**The Cabinet Member explained that all feedback would be through the frequently asked questions on the website and individually to School Councils.**

**The Cabinet Member and the Head of School Improvement left the meeting.** Members considered the information provided and discussed the recommendations that they wanted to make.

- Members considered the co-location of Southall and Mount Gilbert Schools with mainstream secondary and post-16 schools (for example on the Lakeside site) is re-considered to provide access to mainstream provision and exams.
- Members who had attended the consultation meetings raised concerns that they needed to have an improved structure. Members therefore suggested that:
  - Meetings should be chaired by an independent Chair
  - Meeting agendas should be well structured to ensure issues discussed were relevant and at the right time
  - Head teachers may not be deemed independent and should not have a role in consultation meetings
  - Consultation events should be held with feeder primary schools to ensure the engagement of parents of children who the changes will affect in future. This was particularly important with the case of the merger of Sutherland and Wrockwardine Wood.
  - Feedback must be given to people attending meetings, and in particular to children and young people.
- Members discussed the contingency arrangements that should be in place to support the new governing bodies of new academies in the event that they did not receive the DfE converter grants and project support. Advice and support should be available for governance, legal, finance and HR matters, possibly through the School Organisation Working Group.
- Members raised their concern that should the housing market recover that the school provision in the area may not be enough. Members requested that they

are provided with information to explain at what point new housing growth triggers a review of the projections for school places

- The Chairman stated that the Presentation material should be changed to make clear that the investment is taking place in all schools. “No change” on the presentation plans could be interpreted as no change to the existing school rather than no change to the original BSF plans which would see investment in the schools. All PR and communications must clearly keep the public informed about what is happening.

**RESOLVED** - that the Scrutiny officer draft and circulate the comments for approval by the Committee for submission to the Head of School Improvement, as the Children & Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee’s response to the consultation.

**CYPSC-25 FORWARD PLAN**

- The Chairman reminded Members that the meeting next week was to receive the presentation of the Co-operative Youth Offer and for Members to make recommendations on the Phase 2 Service proposals.
- The meeting in January would be the meeting with the Children in Care regarding 16+ the transition into adulthood.
- Future items to consider possibly in March were school governance and the directory of services for schools.
- The Chairman reminded Members that the sub group meeting with the Sutton Hill Family group would take place on 18<sup>th</sup> January at 9.30am
- Members agreed that the Street Pastors were an amazing team. The Chairman advised Members that she would ask if the project can be sustained and report back to the Committee
- The Chairman stated that a report on the Lighthouse Group would be sent to the Members.
- Members agreed that the Educational Psychology Team should be congratulated on the Bereavement Policy. The Members agreed that they were happy to endorse the policy and for this to be sent to schools. Members asked for a covering letter to be sent to the schools advising them about possible training.

The meeting ended at 8.09pm.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

**CO-OPERATIVE & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of the meeting of the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny**  
**Committee held on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2011 at 6.00 p.m. in the Civic**  
**Offices, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors A. McClements, (Chairman), A. Jhawar, K. Tomlinson, S. Bentley.

Also Present: Angie Astley, Head of Leisure, Libraries & Customer Services; Stuart Davidson, Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager; Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist; Tracy Clarke, Scrutiny Officer.

**CCSC-11    MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee held on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**CCSC - 12    APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors A. England, Cabinet Member; N. England, J. Loveridge, Scrutiny Co-optee L. Baker-Oliver.

**CCSC-13    DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**CCSC-14    LEISURE SERVICES CONCESSION POLICY**

The Chairman thanked the Cabinet Member (in his absence) and the Head of Leisure, Libraries & Customer Services for involving the Committee at the early stage of the discussion about concessions in leisure. Included within the Leisure Services savings proposals, as part of the Councils budget cuts Leisure Services have proposed a review of the existing concessions policy to realise an additional £50,000 of income.

The Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager presented the report on Leisure Concessions and the Arthog Remissions Policy, and tabled a table showing how the swimming concession in Telford & Wrekin compared to other authorities. A report on the feedback from consultation with the public on the proposals relating to Free Swimming in the 100 Day budget was also tabled.

Research by external consultants highlighted that the Councils leisure concessions were generous and in times of austerity there are potential savings that could be made.

In terms of savings there is a necessity to maximise the income levels, while protecting vulnerable groups and still achieve the £50,000 savings.

### **Leisure Concessions**

- Leisure is a discretionary service for the Local Authority and there are no legal obligations for the Council to provide concessionary leisure activities for residents.
- All categories are means tested except senior citizens aged 60 years old who regardless of their financial circumstances are entitled to concessionary rates and free Swimming. This could be deemed to be unfair when there are a number of people in this age group who still continue to work.
- The options are to look at groups who have an automatic right to concessions or the level of concessions offered. The easiest option is to look at the level of concession that the group is entitled to and this needs to be comparative to other concessions offered by other services.
- The age group that has the potential to offer the largest potential savings through swimming and health & fitness is the over 60 age group. The other categories potential savings are minimal in comparison.
- The Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager tabled a document with the feedback from the Local Authorities that had responded to the question on the concessionary rate for the over 60's. The document highlighted that Telford & Wrekin Council is the only authority that is offering free swimming with the norm being for concessionary rates of up to 50%.
- The Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager drew the members attention to appendix 2 on concessions modelling which showed different levels of price increases and the comparative loss of income from service users who may chose other options, including the private sector.
- It was agreed that part of the problem with the Local Authority Leisure facilities is that the service has been on a tight budget and has suffered from a lack of long term investment. This has led to tired looking facilities which can make it more difficult for the Councils leisure services to compete with the private sector. Although it was noted that much of this is being addressed through regeneration programmes and the Sports & Learning Communities programme.
- The Head of Leisure, Libraries & Customer Services highlighted that the Council run Leisure services had benefitted from the credit crunch, with users from the private sector looking for a more affordable option. Furthermore, with refurbishments taking place at Wellington and the new build at Abraham Darby these facilities should be able to directly compete with the private sector in the near future.
- There is a recognition that there has been problems accessing the facilities at Hadley Learning Centre and Madeley Court Academy but due to recent negotiations it is hoped that this has now been resolved for future usage.

## **Questions and comments from Members**

### **How do the Council run leisure services compare with the private sector?**

The full package rate at Telford & Wrekin Council is £26.00 this compares favourably to Nuffield Health at £40.00 and JJB at £30.00. The Council aims to offer good facilities, good staffing and better equipment than its private competitors at the value end of the market. The difference is that the private sector is not obliged to provide services for the public and so has its focus purely on profit.

### **Are there any figures available on the income from secondary spending?**

The Flex card has the intelligence to show what users are buying using their cards although this doesn't extend to all products such as vending machines.

### **If the over 60s had their concessionary rates for swimming taken off them what would happen to those residents who fall into the lower income bracket?**

If the over 60s are in receipt of pension credit then they would still qualify for the concessionary rate.

### **Could one of the options be to raise the age group eligible for concessions from 60 to 65 to reduce the number of Members who might be working and getting the benefits of free Swimming?**

The Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager said all but one authority is using the age of 60 as the age for concessionary rates to start. However, the majority of the over 60's service users are over 65 years old and therefore no considerable savings would be made by raising the concessionary age. A member added that as this is a discretionary service therefore there are no legal requirements to offer concessions and therefore this is a privilege and not a right.

### **Why are there 100% discounts on services?**

The Council's scheme has been recognised as generous and with the need to make £50,000 savings this is being reviewed.

### **Are there cost implications for checking the residents who say they are eligible for discounts?**

No there are no costs involved. The eligibility of the resident for the concessionary rate is checked when they complete the application form for the flex card.

### **Can any revenue be made by raising the flex card charges?**

A comprehensive review of Flex card charges was undertaken last year with a new charging structure introduced from April 2011. This could be re-considered but there is a risk that if customers deem the card to be too expensive then they may not buy the card in the first place and will therefore not access the leisure activities leading to a greater loss of income.

### **Do the schools still have a statutory obligation to provide free swimming for one hour a week?**

There is a local indicator for the percentage of children who can swim 25 metres or more at the end of key stage 2 and this can be provided. With regards to if there are any statutory obligation this can be checked.

**A Member raised that free swimming should only be for children swimming with their families, as making a concessionary activity for the family is a good idea. The Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager said families are still being targeted with various campaigns. This idea was not agreed with some of the other Members who said the health and social benefits for children should not be underestimated.**

**Members discussed the possibilities of having a sliding scale for the concessions to take account for single parent families and families that miss the benefits threshold and subsequently are not entitled to other benefits such as leisure concessions. It was agreed that this would be unworkable and the current means tested system aims to enable as many people as possible to not be disadvantaged.**

**It would be of benefit to market the benefits of the flex card.**

There has been marketing but there is always more marketing that can be completed. The limited marketing budget is a factor in why more marketing is not carried out. However, we are getting more creative with our marketing by utilising social networking sites, particularly to target our younger service users.

**Leisure is very important it can have long term benefits that assist in the long term public health of residents. Historically the revenue from leisure has always subsidised other services. Have cabinet been asked if this item can be exempt?**

The Chairman was clear that while in an ideal world there would be no cuts, this meeting had been called for the Committee to be able to make direct and early recommendations on the £50,000 saving proposals and the only areas that will be a priority for the council in terms of being exempt from budget cuts are going to be safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults.

**A lack of previous investment in the leisure services has meant that facilities such as the Horsehay Golf Club have not been able to compete with facilities in the private sector. How can this change?**

As part of the Co-operative Council, negotiations are taking place to allow Leisure to have a three year budget and invest any extra income that is generated into future improvements.

**What is the time factor for the savings?**

The new schemes need to be initiated by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012, however, there will need to be at least a months notice to communicate the concessions to the public.

At the end of the discussion the Members agreed that the over 60's age group was an area that could be considered for potential savings. However, in order for them to make further recommendations they asked for more modelling options to be prepared.

The Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager said that they would report back in the next three weeks with informed options for creating savings. This will include some more modelling on the over 60's swimming and gym membership.

### **Arthog Remissions Policy**

- The reason this has been brought to Scrutiny is because a complaint has been received and although this is the first known complaint that has been received about the service in 18 months it was felt the Members may wish to review the policy and make any necessary recommendations.
- Arthog Outdoor Education Centre primarily provides educational opportunities rather than the Treetops experience offered by the private sector. While Arthog used to mainly cater for secondary aged children this has evolved to be more primary aged children. Most of the children enjoy a 5 day stay which costs between £228 and £263 a stay. Although some schools do stay for 3 days.
- The remission policy in place allows for 500 pupil places to be funded. With the current economic climate the demand for this service may increase.
- The management of Arthog has fallen into the remit of leisure and there is no statutory obligation to provide the service, although there is legislation in respect of charging and remissions policies for Local Education Authorities.
- If changes were to be made to the remissions policy then the children from the lower income families may not be able to go to Arthog. As a lot of the schools that attend Arthog are primary schools with whole classes attending, if a number of pupils drop out then this may mean that the pupils may need to go into another class putting extra pressure on the Teachers that stay at school or that the school are forced to cancel their booking. This could mean the centre suffers from a loss of revenue and the pupils miss a valuable experience.

### **Questions from the Members**

#### **How is Arthog run?**

Arthog is managed by the Council through Leisure Services, in addition there is a Management Committee that comprises of Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire Council Officers and Headteachers.. At the moment any surplus money is being re-invested to bring the centre up to a standard that is appropriate for both school children and the adult market at the weekends. This year this has included refurbishing the kitchen to an appropriate standard.

#### **How often is Arthog shut?**

Arthog does not shut at the weekend, companies and events make use of the facilities and a differential pricing structure is used. Arthog's additional business operates at no cost to the Local Authority.

**Will Arthog make a profit this year?**

Until Arthog was taken over by Leisure Services it was being subsidised. This year it will break even.

**While it is understood that there has to be a cut off of where the support ends could the remissions policy have a sliding scale?**

It is not deemed suitable to have a sliding scale option as the implementation would be difficult.

However, some Headteachers offer an instalment system, although this is not something that the Council has any influence over.

**What is preventing us from determining an annual income level?**

There could be a set income level where the concessions cut in but this would be difficult to implement, in terms of checking on income levels.

**If Arthog could become profitable then this money could be used to subsidise those families identified by their Headteachers as needing extra financial help. Members agreed that some families do not accept free school meals when they are entitled to them so they may not accept help regarding Arthog.**

**What reserves do the schools have to assist lower income families?**

With the changes in school governance there will be a new fund that schools may chose to fund projects such as Arthog. However, this will be their choice and Arthog will probably be competing against other projects.

**Can the number of complaints regarding the remission policy be reported back?**

Yes, the number of complaints can be checked.

**The Members felt that given that there only seems to be one complaint that the remission policy did not need to be changed. They did however, request that the number of complaints was checked and this was reported back at the next meeting.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- ***That the Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager would report back in the next three weeks with possible options for creating savings. This will include some more modelling on the over 60's swimming and gym memberships.***
- ***That following the next meeting that the Members will get involved in consultation with the Elderly Peoples Forum.***
- ***That the Head of Leisure, Libraries & Customer Services will report back on the number of complaints received on the remissions policy for Arthog.***

The Committee noted that the next meeting would need to be in the next three weeks. The Scrutiny Officer will confirm the date and time of the meeting with the committee

**The meeting ended at 7.36pm**

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

**CO-OPERATIVE & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of the meeting of the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny**  
**Committee held on Thursday, 1st December, 2011 at 6.00 p.m. in the Civic**  
**Offices, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors A. McClements, (Chairman), S. Bentley, K. Guy, T. Hope, A. Jhavar; Scrutiny Co-optee L. Baker-Oliver.

Also Present: Cllr. A. England, Cabinet Member for Leisure & Wellbeing; Angie Astley, Head of Leisure, Libraries & Customer Services; Stuart Davidson, Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager; Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist; Tracy Clarke, Scrutiny Officer.

**CCSC-16     MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee held on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**CCSC – 17     APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors N. England, J. Loveridge, K. Tomlinson.

**CCSC-18     DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**CCSC-19     LEISURE SERVICES CONCESSION POLICY**

The Chairman set out the purpose of the meeting as being to discuss in more detail the options for savings in leisure concessions and for the Committee to agree the preferred options to recommend to the Cabinet member.

Three documents were tabled for discussion:

- A report showing an evaluation of savings (income) options across the wider concessions schemes, including the options for savings on over 60s concessions which had been identified by the Committee as a potential area for savings. Modelling showed that savings on over 60s options alone would not be sufficient to generate the required level of savings and that other options would need to be considered. The evaluation showed the potential for savings (income) for each option and the level of financial, equalities or reputational risks associated with each option.
- Detailed financial modelling of savings options for swimming and health & fitness which attracted the greatest number of concessionary admissions and therefore the greatest potential for savings. Estimated projections were based on current

admissions numbers. The figures reflected the key relationship between the level of charges and the potential impact on usage and therefore income. The options modelled were full-price, half-price and a flat £1 concessionary charge for swimming. It was estimated that introducing a flat £1 charge for concessionary groups could generate a similar amount of income as charging either full or half price given the risk of drop-off resulting from loss of custom. Health & fitness options had been modelled on standardising and increasing the monthly fee to £21.50 and £26. Comparisons had been made with private clubs

- A comparison of the level of concessionary swimming entitlement for the over 60s offered by Telford & Wrekin compared to 16 other authorities. This showed Telford & Wrekin as the only authority in the sample offering a 100% discount, with the most popular discount being 50%.

The Community & Leisure Services Delivery Manager reiterated that the need to make £50,000 worth of savings needed to be carefully balanced to ensure there was no loss of income from over-pricing and potential loss of customers.

The Cabinet Member said that in an ideal world leisure activities would be free for all residents, but this was not a feasible option. There was a need to protect income streams and generate income to make the necessary savings, but protecting claimants would be a priority.

There was a general discussion about wider considerations relating to concessions, including:

- A suggestion to increase the Flex Card charge was discussed but was discounted on the basis that the charge had only been re-introduced earlier in the year and the cost of the card had been benchmarked against other authorities.
- Members again expressed their concerns that the benefit-based criteria for concessions eligibility was unfair to people on low incomes but over the benefit threshold. The introduction of a sliding pricing policy linked to income level was discussed again, but the difficulty and cost of administering this kind of system was acknowledged and in the absence of a viable alternative being identified, it was agreed that the existing benefit based criteria would remain.
- Members suggested that the option of corporate gym membership cards could be introduced and were informed that a corporate membership scheme was already in place with a number of large and small firms signed-up (including the Council). Members were pleased to hear that the corporate market would be a target for expansion and new income generation, especially with the new facilities at Abraham Darby coming on line.
- Members suggested expanding the Flex Card options to create a family card, and were pleased to hear this option was being explored following the Active Families pilot.
- A suggestion to generate more income from charging for the provision of towels could be considered, but the cost of laundering was high and private clubs were moving away from offering this service.
- There was a suggestion that concessions for older people could be limited to the use of facilities during working hours only so that people in work would not be able to benefit. This was a potential model that could be explored further in the future.

- A view was expressed by one member that leisure should be exempt from savings targets as income generated by leisure in the past had been used to subsidise other Council services. The idea was refuted by the Chairman who felt it was unrealistic to exempt leisure services from the cuts when the Council needed to make cuts to priority services such as care for the elderly.
- Members were concerned that the Council should use its relationships with schools to encourage them to provide at least the minimum required swimming time to all pupils.

Members then considered in detail the options evaluations in Appendix 1, and supplementary financial modelling in Appendix 2, to identify the preferred options to recommend to Cabinet.

- Option 1 was to remove the automatic concessionary status for the over 60s. It was noted that removing concessions for the over 60s alone would not generate the required level of savings, and members considered this option in conjunction with the wider savings proposals put forward. It was felt that withdrawing the concessionary entitlement of this group entirely would present difficulties for people who were accustomed to receiving the benefits and that wholesale withdrawal of entitlement may lead to a loss of reputation to the Council. There was a risk of a drop in participation in activities among the over 60s. On balance, Members agreed that the concessionary status should remain for existing over 60s.
- Option 2 was to remove the automatic concessionary status for new over 60s. This was given considerable consideration. Members were concerned that new over 60s would feel that the removal of entitlement was unfair, but on balance members felt that the impact on people who had never had entitlement would be limited. The number of over 60s was projected to grow and there was potential to increase revenue streams in this area. The Committee agreed with this option except for people in receipt of Pension Credit who would receive concessionary entitlement. Members advised that legal advice was sought to ensure there was no risk of challenge with this option.
- Option 3 was to remove swimming concessions altogether. Members rejected this option due to the high risk factor, the likely disproportionate affect on people on lower incomes and the fact that Telford & Wrekin would be out of line with other authorities.
- Options 4 and 5 were considered together. Option 4 was to introduce a half price swimming charge (£1.65) for all concessionary groups, and Option 5 was to introduce a flat fee of £1 for a swim for all concessionary groups. Members considered there was a greater risk of a higher drop in admissions with the half-price than the £1 flat fee and that more income would be generated from the lower charge with a lower drop rate than the higher charge if the drop rate was higher. Members felt there was a psychological barrier to prices over £1 which could have a disproportionate impact, and that the more cautious approach would leave scope for further review should the necessary savings not be made in 2012/13. For these reasons, the Committee felt it was reasonable to introduce a £1 flat fee for a swim.

- Option 6 was to remove the concession on swimming lessons (currently 15%). Members did not agree with this on safety grounds and that people, children especially, should learn to swim.
- Option 7 was to standardise the concessionary health & fitness fee to £21.50 per calendar month. Options had been modelled to increase the current monthly charge of £21 to £26 or £21.50. Comparisons had been made with private clubs and prices ranged from £25pcm for time limited membership to around £40 at the top end. This was an important income stream for the Council and was used to off set other leisure services and it was important that the income stream was protected. The Council had benefitted from the recession with customers looking for better value deals. Members felt pricing was very sensitive, and that the price differential with private clubs needed to be maintained to retain and attract customers. Members rejected the £26pcm option, but felt that a small monthly increase of £0.50pcm was reasonable and still offered excellent value for customers. It was agreed that the old “gym only” £16pcm fee should also be increased to £21.50 but that swimming and exercise classes would be included with membership.
- Option 8 was to remove all golf concessions. This was agreed as members felt that golf attracted more business customers and was less likely to affect people on lower incomes. Members felt that Horsehay golf centre was an asset that should be developed and promoted to attract new income streams.

It was noted that the preferred options of the Committee were 2, 5, 7 and 8 which would generate projected savings of £48k for 2012/13. This was slightly under the required £50k but Members felt that there was sufficient scope within the options, and the wider savings proposals, to make this up to £50k and that the savings would be closely monitored during the year to ensure targets were on-track.

Members were assured that an Equalities Impact Assessment would be carried out on whatever options were agreed by Cabinet.

### **RESOLVED**

**That the Committee would make recommendations to Cabinet that revisions should be made to the leisure concessions policy as agreed for options 2, 5, 7 and 8.**

At the previous meeting, the Committee had discussed whether the Arthog Remission Policy should be revised following a complaint that had been received from a parent about the fact that parents had to either pay all or nothing for the courses. The Committee had agreed in principle that the existing Remissions Policy should be retained, pending receiving further information about whether other complaints had been received over the previous years. The Head of Leisure, Libraries and Customer Services confirmed that no other complaints had been received, and reiterated the fact that schools had their own arrangements to provide additional assistance from their own budgets for children from low income families. Having received this information, the Committee confirmed that they would recommend that the existing Remissions Policy should be retained.

**RESOLVED**

**That the Committee would recommend to Cabinet that the existing Arthog Remissions Policy be retained.**

**CCSC-20 FORWARD PLAN**

The Chairman reminded members that the Committee's report and recommendations on First Point for Business would be presented to Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> December and that all members were welcome to attend.

The Cabinet Members for Leisure & Wellbeing put forward a suggestion for the Committee's work programme. The suggestion was to review community access to facilities developed as part of the Co-operative Sport & Learning Communities programme, and how this could be approached with schools which would be converting to academies.

The Committee agreed that the suggestion would be included in the work programme.

The Chairman reminded members that the next meeting would be to scope the review of the management of community centres and that the terms of reference for the review would be agreed at the meeting.

**The meeting ended at 7.34pm**

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of the meeting of the Health Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2011 at 6.00 p.m. in the Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire**

#### **PRESENT:**

Councillors D. White (Chairman), V. Fletcher, J. Seymour, C. Turley. Scrutiny Co-optees, D. Davies, R. Shaw.

Also Present: Craig Cook, Assistant Chief Officer - Resilience and Support Services Manager, WMAS; Daren Fradgley, Assistant Chief Officer Head –Performance Improvement, WMAS; Matt Bennett, DoS lead officer for the West Midlands; Dean Jenkins, General Manager; Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist.

#### **HSC-11 MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2011 were agreed as an accurate reflection of the meeting and signed by the Chairman.

#### **HSC-12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None

#### **HSC-13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **HSC-14 WEST MIDLANDS AMBULANCE SERVICE (WMAS) MAKE READY SYSTEM AND NHS PATHWAYS**

##### **1. MAKE READY**

Craig Cook, Resilience and Support Services Director, WMAS gave a presentation on the Make Ready System for Telford & Wrekin.

The presentation highlighted the following points:

- Key data for Telford & Wrekin:

– Population	169,000
– Ambulance activity (incidents attended)	24,000 p.a.
– Category A8 performance	83.8%
– Category A19 performance	99.1%
– Patients taken to hospital	16,000
– Operational A&E vehicles	22
– Operational staff	97
– Community first response schemes	3
  
- Make Ready is a quality assurance vehicles and equipment preparation programme aimed at improving efficiencies across the whole service. Currently, the paramedic crew checks the vehicle, equipment and drugs when they come on

duty. With Make Ready, there would be a team of Ambulance Fleet Assistants who would clean, re-stock and carry out checks on medical devices and vehicles ready for when paramedics come on duty.

- Make Ready goes alongside a review of estates and the distribution of ambulance stations. There were currently around 70 stations across the region with around 20 staff per station. Staff would be grouped around fewer hubs (with community stations and ambulance stands) to allow greater flexibility to focus resources on peak activity periods and places.
- An analysis of patient flow in the county showed a roughly equal flow of patients to PRH and RSH. The model was flexible to take account of the acute hospital reconfiguration.
- An analysis of life-threatening emergencies across the county showed high concentrations around Telford and Shrewsbury, smaller pockets around Oswestry and Whitchurch with other emergencies scattered across the county.
- There were currently 8 ambulance stations in the county with 2 (Donnington and Tweedale) in Telford & Wrekin. There would be investment in the structure of the hubs. Post Make Ready there would be 2 hubs in the county (Shrewsbury and Donnington) with four community ambulance stations in Telford & Wrekin (Tweedale, Stafford Park, Wellington and Newport) and 2 more over the border in Bridgnorth and Market Drayton. Locations had been mapped against emergency activity so ambulances would be stationed to respond more quickly as accidents present, within 8 minutes of anywhere in the borough.
- Ambulance Fleet Assistants would be employed to prepare ambulances and equipment for when crews come on duty. On average, one hour of a twelve hour shift is taken up with logistical issues and passing this to auxiliary staff would mean there is 100% paramedic availability and no lost clinical time.
- The benefits of Make Ready were summarised as:
  - Improved response needs and times
  - Meet the needs of the patient (“right time, right place, right care”)
  - Improved patient outcomes
  - Reduced waste and increased efficiency

Following the presentation members asked a number of questions.

*Is there still full service coverage under the current system during the time that ambulances are being prepared?*

Under the present system the crew may be called out before all the necessary checks have been completed so it is more difficult to ensure the service. Make Ready will free up paramedic staff from logistical tasks and ensure there are 12 hours of clinical time for each 12 hour shift.

*12 hours is a long shift especially when crews can have shifts extended by out of area journeys – is there a problem with fatigue?*

12 hour shifts are optimum for operational service needs and staff have expressed a preference to work longer hours for fewer days per year. There are varying shift patterns which conform with EU working time directives and a managed rostering system. The control room runs on protocols so there is a constant swap-over of crews. If a crew ends a shift at a hospital which is bed blocked, a relief crew is sent out to take over so the crew can go home. Crews are not deployed on long distance transfers when they are nearing the end of their shift unless there is a clear need. The introduction of the hubs and centralisation of staff will mean that shifts can be rostered more efficiently to reduce these kinds of extensions to shifts.

*Is bed blocking still an issue for ambulances at PRH?*

There is still a problem. Other areas have Hospital Ambulance Liaison Officers (HALOs) so there is a hospital based paramedic to monitor the actions required to keep patients arriving by ambulance flowing until a bed becomes free so that the ambulance can return to operational service and is not tied up at the hospital. Telford & Wrekin PCT funded a HALO for 18 months but then decided to discontinue the funding.

*Is there any cross-over of crews between areas e.g. for transfers between PRH and Newcross?*

Generally a Telford crew would transfer patients from PRH out of area. But if it is very busy the control room could ask a black country ambulance to pick up. It would depend on the priority the hospital has given to the patient. If a patient is stable, there is usually a 4 hour window to transfer but some cases may be more urgent.

*How is the service prepared for a major accident such as seen recently on the M5?*

The service is strongly placed to deal with a major incident. Anthony Marsh, the West Midlands Chief Executive, leads on emergency response nationally and there has been heavy investment in specialist training and equipment to respond to major accidents. Protocols are in place to manage the accident scene, especially during the initial crucial stages. The control room would be able to deploy resources from other areas very quickly. The Hazardous Accident Response Team are specialists who work with the fire service and would work between an area of danger such as chemicals or fire and safe areas. The team is based in Oldbury, about 40 minutes from Telford.

*Do the hospitals pay for the ambulance service?*

The ambulance service is commissioned annually by the PCT and is separately funded from the hospitals. There is provision in the funding arrangements for variations of service. In Telford & Wrekin there is also a private contractor to move patients between hospitals, but if the patient needs a higher level of care this would fall to the ambulance service.

*I am pleased to hear about the upgrading of paramedic skills. How does the advanced paramedic skill level compare to a nurse or doctor?*

The NHS has introduced a new nurse/paramedic practitioner level which is between doctors and nurses. The advanced paramedics have more responsibility and power. They are state registered by the professional health care council and are responsible for their own continuing professional development. Training modules are based around 3 key areas:

- Assessment of conditions and systematic critical protocols
- Treatment - e.g. wound treatment, drug treatment
- Discharge - checking there is adequate onward care e.g. referral back to the GP or other part of the health system.

Currently 35% of patients are not taken to hospital and the advanced paramedic training should reduce the need for hospital admissions further. The discharge training will ensure patients not taken to hospital have a route back into the system. There is also a clinical desk at Brierley Hill which paramedics can call for advice. The Trauma review will provide more on-line clinical care from doctors.

*How do you make sure patients not admitted to hospital have a route to further help should they need it?*

35% of patients are not taken to hospital. Sometimes, the problem is dealt with on the spot, for example a diabetic event, and there is no need for hospitalisation or further treatment. Patients are always advised that if they have further problems they should call 999 again. GPs are advised about such events. The patient is given a copy of the ambulance report and advised to take it to their GP.

*How many Fleet Assistants will there be and how will they be funded?*

There will be 11 Fleet Assistants in Shropshire financed from reduced overheads resulting from the modernisation of buildings. There is no new money available.

*When will the Donnington hub open?*

It will be running from around April 2012. There is building work, the reorganisation of the operation and staff consultation to do before the system can go live. The original Make Ready plan was for one hub for the county in Shropshire, but a number of factors and the identification of additional savings influenced the decision to have a second hub in Donnington.

*Are many 999 calls made because patients cannot contact their GP?*

There are no statistics on this as all calls are responded to, and paramedics assess the situation based on what they find. The Directory of Services system will allow us to gain more intelligence about patient flow.

*What is the average wait time for ambulances at RSH and PRH and is there still an issue with bed blocking?*

Much work has been done to improve patient flow, but there is still work to be done.

*Do the Hospital Ambulance Liaison Officers (HALOs) make a difference and offer value for money?*

A paramedic must stay with a patient in hospital until they can be handed over to hospital staff. This means the crew and ambulance can be out of action for hours if beds are blocked. The problem is more acute in rural areas where a small number of ambulances out of commission has a big impact. The HALOs work with the hospital management team to improve patient flow and ambulance turn around times. In 2010 Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin PCTs funded HALOs for 18 months but the funding was not renewed. It takes time to improve the system, but other areas which have maintained the HALOs are seeing improvements. Hartlands hospital has turned around performance. In October there was a lot of activity in the West Midlands and

ambulance delays, so front line staff were deployed to act as HALOs at PRH and RSH. The HALO was able to stay with patients in the hospital so that the ambulances could be turned around quickly which made a difference.

**Actions agreed:**

- **Information about wait times at PRH and RSH would be provided to the Committee.**
- **Comparative data on ambulance turn-around times would be provided for hospitals with and without HALOs.**
- **West Midlands ambulance performance monitoring information would be provided to the Committee on a regular basis.**

## **2. NHS PATHWAYS**

Daren Fradgley, Head –Performance Improvement gave a presentation on the NHS Pathways & Capacity Management System Directory of Services (CMS DOS).

This CMS DOS system was being implemented to route 999 calls to the appropriate NHS service so that patients go to the “Right Place, First Time, All of the Time”.

There had been an increase in ambulance activity with a growing number of 999 calls. 999 is often seen as the easiest and quickest route to access NHS services. It is well recognised, easy to remember, and people feel familiar with the service from hospital dramas on TV. The majority of 999 calls are now for non-life-threatening situations, so the ambulance service no longer deals exclusively with emergency care, but also deals with non-urgent care. To this end the service must evolve and route these patients more appropriately.

There were 810,000 999 calls in the West Midlands in 2010. The number grows by around 4-5% each year and calls are projected to increase to over 1million over the next five years. Funding will not increase with the level of activity.it is also an opportunity to make the system more efficient.

Ambulances are currently dispatched to 96% of all calls. To maintain neutral growth of the service, the number of calls not dealt with by ambulance response will need to increase from 4% this year to 8% in 2012, 12% in 2013 and 20% overall over the next 5 years.

The NHS Pathways / CMS DOS system was being implemented to make clinical assessments of calls so that non-life-threatening calls could be directed to the appropriate NHS provider to respond. The previous position was that 999 calls were “triaged” to determine whether the call was life-threatening, potentially life-threatening or non-life-threatening. In practice, ambulances responded to 96% of all calls so the triage system was not effective. 68% of ambulance call-outs resulted in hospital admission when only around 20% of the calls required an emergency response.

Work had been done with health partners to build up a Directory of Services (DOS). DOS is an internet tool which maps all health care provision within each geographical area, including GPs, primary care providers (walk in centres, community nursing etc.) and brought together in one place. The intention was to extend the directory to include local authority services over time.

With the CMS DOS system, 999 calls would be assessed to identify life-threatening signs and symptoms. Life-threatening calls would be red flagged and an ambulance would be dispatched immediately. Non-life-threatening calls would be assessed using the model sitting in the DOS to match the need against the right service provider and calls would be routed to that provider. The intention is to get patients into the primary care system at the right point, or to offer self-help. If there is no match in the DOS system, the patient moves to the clinical support desk which is staffed by clinicians, advanced paramedics and paramedics for further investigation. If there is any doubt about the symptoms, the patient receives an emergency response. Response times though DOS would range from immediate to 72 hours depending on the service required and level of urgency.

The intention was to make the directory available to all health care providers, private providers and the public. Access to parts of the system would be restricted

The key benefits of the system were highlighted as:

- Patients go to the right place, first time all the time
- Improved patient journey and experience
- Better use of available resources
- Cost base for assessment and referral to care much reduced
- Inappropriate ambulance journeys avoided
- Reduction in 999 conveyances and A&E attendances
- Gives commissioners world class data on what services are needed.

CMS DOS had been extensively piloted in 4 sites with 1.3 million 999 and 111 calls assessed with no adverse events. 6.6% of calls had been dealt with in the Directory or Clinical Support Desk (an improvement from 4%). The system was clinically driven with oversight by the National Clinical Governance Group chaired by the Royal College of GPs, had been academically evaluated by 2 universities and has overt support from the BMA and Royal Colleges.

In Telford & Wrekin since 20<sup>th</sup> September there had been 1747 emergency calls with 1647 emergencies. Of the emergencies, ambulances had responded to 1806 incidents, 35 calls were referred to GPs, 9 to the Clinical Support Desk, 7 to self-directed help.

The implementation of the system in Telford & Wrekin had taken longer than expected because GPs had requested more consultation before going live. The system had been implemented in a staged approach, but all parts were now ready to go live. All GPs, the community nursing team, midwifery unit, emergency practitioners, clinics and community services and out of hours services were in the Directory.

Following the presentation, members asked a number of questions.

*Who will answer the 999 calls?*

The existing staff will be taking the calls with the new system. They are trained in robust questioning techniques and use a repetitive assistance model to get the right information without wasting time. The module is time limited so the response is fast. If there is any doubt about the situation, an ambulance is dispatched. If the call is identified as a non emergency, the call moves onto the assessment model in DOS to match symptoms to the appropriate service.

*How will you ensure that the patient receives a response when they are referred to an alternative provider, for example for a GP appointment?*

The ambulance service will notify the GP that the patient has been assessed through the system to ensure that the GP sees the patient. Patients are always advised to call back if they do not receive a response.

*Would the person dealing with the call contact the appropriate provider themselves, or would the patient contact them?*

If there is an established relationship between the patient and the provider (for example their GP) the patient would be expected to contact the provider themselves. However, they would be given a timeframe for making contact and advised to call the ambulance service again if they have not succeeded in making contact within that timeframe. If there is no existing relationship between the patient and the provider, the Ambulance Service would contact the new provider.

*If the system cuts costs for the hospital, should they contribute to paying for the system?*

We are working with the PCT and Clinical Commissioning Group on the system. The GPs are very supportive and the Chairs of the Clinical Commissioning Groups in Telford & Wrekin and Shropshire have been championing the system regionally. The directory has focused on primary care, but the aim is to work with the local authority to extend care services in the directory.

Other questions;

*Is WMAS continuing to work with SaTH on the hospital reconfiguration?*

Work is on-going at a commissioning level and with local management to ensure plans support the reconfiguration and ensure the service is right for patients. We are doing this in conjunction with the Welsh Ambulance Service.

**Actions agreed:**

- **That copies of the Health Economy Information Leaflet on the NHS Pathways and Directory of Services provided by WMAS would be distributed to staff in adult and children's care services. The leaflet was aimed at health providers.**
- **That once information for the public was available there would be a link from the Council website to this information.**
- **That a visit would be organised for members to visit the control room to see the Directory of Services in operation.**

The Chairman thanked WMAS officers for attending the meeting, presenting the information and answering the Committee's questions.

**HSC-15      NATIONAL AUTISM STRATEGY**

This item was deferred to a future meeting as apologies had been received from the Development Manager Autism West Midlands.

**HSC-16      FORWARD PLAN**

There was a discussion about the Forward Plan and the following was agreed:

- That the Committee would not include the Trauma Review in the work programme as the designation of RSH as the trauma unit for life-threatening trauma was part of the reconfiguration proposals and was a matter for the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- That the next meeting would be to look at the development of the Health & Wellbeing Board, including the development of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, and the development and support for the Clinical Commissioning Group.
- That the Community Trust should be invited to address issues for Telford & Wrekin. Clarification should be provided about responsibilities for commissioning and providing services based in the community.

The meeting ended at 8.15 p.m.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **LICENSING COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> November 2011 at 6.00 pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford**

#### **PRESENT**

Councillors C Mason (Chair), T Hope, L Murray, R Picken, R Scammell, J Seymour and J Thompson.

Officers in attendance: Michael Barker – Head of Housing, Planning & 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-07      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **LC-08      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors B Duce, A Mackenzie and K Tomlinson.

#### **LC-09      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor L Murray declared an interest, as a signatory to a consultation response, in Agenda item 6,- Sex Establishment Policy.

#### **LC-10      HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY**

The report of the Service Delivery Manager – Public Protection was received which sought to inform Members of a draft Licensing policy for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing. A copy of the draft policy was appended to the report.

The draft policy set out the policies and procedures that the Council wished to apply in exercising its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing function. The aim of having such a policy was to ensure the safety and welfare of taxi users and drivers, as well as assisting the Council with consistent decision making. It was proposed that the draft policy, if agreed by the Committee, be subject to a period of public consultation.

A comment was received outlining concern in relation to a difference in condition between Hackney Carriage Licensing and Private Hire Licensing which the Public Protection Team Leader advised were written under different legislation.

A discussion followed with regard to paragraph 15.5 (2) which resulted in the wording changed to: 'To ensure that vehicles **licensed** within the controlled district of Telford & Wrekin meet these criteria'. In respect of paragraph 15.9 (1) the wording

be changed to: 'Drivers of vehicles adapted to carry disabled passengers **must be** trained in the use of equipment necessary to convey the passenger safely.'

Confirmation was sought on the level of CRB checks made within the new policy. The Public Protection Team Leader stated that previously Councils across the country required licensed drivers to undergo enhanced checks. This was now not appropriate as the law stated that the enhanced CRB check was only required for drivers who transported children on a regular basis. A number of Members expressed concern at this but was advised that the draft policy could not be changed to include enhanced CRB checks for all drivers as this would be contrary to legislation.

The Head of Housing, Planning & Public Protection enquired as to whether elements of the draft policy for Telford & Wrekin were comparable to Shropshire Council. The Public Protection Team Leader advised Members that cross border control was similar and included the item for Period of Licence, for drivers to request a licence for 3 years.

**RESOLVED** – by unanimous vote –

- (a) **that Members adopt a Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy.**
- (b) **that the draft policy for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing be approved for public consultation.**
- (c) **that if following a period of public consultation, no changes or only minor amendments were required, authority be delegated to the Principal Licensing Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Licensing Committee.**

**LC-11      HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENCE CONDITION REVIEW – AGE LIMITS ON VEHICLES**

Following a request from Telford Hackney Carriage Association to increase the age limits on hackney carriage vehicles from ten years to twelve years the Public Protection Team Leader presented a report of the Service Delivery Manager – Public Protection. It was advised that paragraph 5.3.1 of the report should be deleted. Also attached to the report was a copy of licence conditions, criteria for 'exceptional condition' vehicles and the results of a benchmarking exercise.

The Committee were informed that whilst the Council currently licence hackney carriages up to 10 years of age this could be extended if a hackney carriage vehicle was found to be in 'exceptional condition'. The proprietor would need to apply for the hackney carriage to continue to be licensed over the 10 year age limit, and the vehicle would then be subject to 6 monthly compliance tests, tested at Telford & Wrekin Services, which is a VOSA qualified MOT testing station. If the vehicle failed on 1 major or 3 minor items the application would be refused.

Having considered the request and information in the report it was:

**RESOLVED – by unanimous vote –**

- (a) that the maximum age of a purpose built vehicle (purpose-designed and built hackney carriage) to be licensed by this Council as a hackney carriage be maintained at 10 years**
- (b) that condition 2.6 be amended to state that the Council may waive the age restriction in the case of individual vehicles where an application is made and the Council considers that the vehicle is of ‘exceptional condition.’ Where vehicles are of ‘exceptional condition’ and continue to be licensed over the 10 year age limit, the vehicle would be subject to 6 monthly compliance tests.**
- (c) that the Council consults on the ‘exceptional condition’ criteria with the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade Associations before it is implemented.**

**LC-12      SEX ESTABLISHMENT POLICY**

Councillor Murray left the meeting at this point regarding his declaration of interest in the matter.

The Committee were made aware that Telford & Wrekin’s policy was out of date and following new legislation a new draft policy was prepared. The report of the Service Delivery Manager – Public Protection was received which informed Members of the results of the consultation on the Council’s draft policy for the regulation of sex establishments. They were further advised that of the 8 responses from the consultation, 1 expressed that no sex establishments were wanted in the Borough and one of the responses, signed by 7 Borough Councillors, strongly recommended introducing a ‘nil policy’ for Sex Entertainment Venues. Members were reminded that it was a regulatory function of the Council to licence sex establishments. Each application to licence a premises would be dealt with on its own merits and each application for a Sex Entertainment Venue would be heard by the full Licensing Committee.

It was further noted that not all venues need a sex establishment licence as it is possible to hold 11 sex entertainment events per year without a licence.

The Solicitor made Members aware that a nil policy for sex entertainment venues could result in a judicial review by prospective licensees and that a nil policy for all sex establishment licences could result in a judicial review for existing and prospective licensees. Members were supportive of retaining a sex establishment policy in order to give the Committee control over the licensing of such establishments.

**RESOLVED** – by unanimous vote – that Members considered the results of the consultation and that the reviewed Policy be effective on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2011.

The meeting ended at 7.00 pm.

Chairman:

Date:

## **LICENSING COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at 11.00 am in Committee Room 3, Civic Offices, Telford**

#### **PRESENT**

Councillors: C Mason (Chair), A Mackenzie, L Murray, R Picken and J Seymour.

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

Also in attendance: Mr Omar Ali – Mathieson Training Ltd.

#### **LC-13      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor K Tomlinson.

#### **LC-14      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **LC-15      PRIVATE HIRE AND DUAL DRIVER CONDITIONS OF LICENCE**

The report of the Service Delivery Manager – Public Protection was received which informed Members of funding for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver qualifications. The proposed recommendation wording was changed with the deletion of 'of this condition coming into force'. Members also reviewed the condition of licence for Private Hire and Dual Drivers relating to driver qualifications in light of the available funding.

The current condition of licence for Private Hire and Dual Drivers required all new drivers to complete a qualification in transporting passengers by taxi or private hire vehicle, or similar qualification, within 12 months of being issued a licence. The qualification which had previously been taken was delivered at no cost to either driver or Council as funding was available through Train to Gain. However, no Government funding had been allocated to deliver this qualification for this academic year and the cost for a standard NVQ was £1172 per driver.

The Licensing Service had now been informed that there was funding available for Edexcel BTEC Level 2 Certificate in the Introduction to the Role of the Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver. If funding should cease in the future, the cost of this course would be £295.

A comment was received regarding drivers licensed under other authorities. It was confirmed that any driver who could show they had passed a similar qualification to that which Telford & Wrekin proposed, but with another authority, would not need to take a qualification again if they were then licensed with this authority.

Members asked if there was any form of refresher training once the initial training had been completed. The Public Protection Team Leader confirmed that no refresher training was available at the moment but a condition of licence was that drivers attended up to 2 days training per year which Telford & Wrekin met the cost of. It was also confirmed that if a driver refused to attend training the driver would be in breach of licence conditions.

Mr Ali from Mathieson Training Ltd advised Members that trainers would liaise with drivers, police and councils to review common issues and advise drivers of parking areas, use of radio and horns, plying for hire and explain the differences between criminal and civil offences. This training would be in conjunction with the 9 BTEC units shown appended to the report of the Service Delivery Manager – Public Protection. Mr Ali confirmed that there was funding for the course until July 2012, after which he hoped to continue training at a cost of £295 per driver. Operators, Escorts and drivers without a badge had already carried out the training. One taxi company had completed the training for operators and drivers and another company were in the process of completing the training. The training could be taken over 4 full days or 8.5 half days. It could be taken on a flexible basis or between the hours of 9.30 am and 2.30 pm so that the course could be completed out of the ‘school run’ times. 12 drivers would be trained at one time and the on-line test would be marked externally. The training could also be paid in instalments if funding was then withdrawn.

Having considered all the information within the report and from the training provider, Members were reassured that their concerns at the financial impact of the revised condition for mandatory training had been addressed.

**RESOLVED – that condition 7.2a of the Council’s Private Hire Driver Condition and 7.2 Dual Driver condition be amended to read “that all drivers must undertake a qualification in ‘Transporting passengers by taxi and private hire’ or similar qualification within 24 months.”**

Meeting closed at 11.45 am

Chairman:

Date:

## **PERSONNEL BOARD**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Board held on Wednesday 7th December 2011 at 5.00 pm at the Civic Offices, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors K.S. Sahota (Chair), R.C. Evans, W.A.M. McClements, R.A. Overton and C.F. Smith.

#### **PEB-18      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Board held on 24th November 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **PEB-19      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors A.J. Eade and A. Lawrence

#### **PEB-20      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **PEB-21      EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** – that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

#### **PEB-22      APPOINTMENT OF MANAGING DIRECTOR**

The Head of Governance and the Human Resources Manager presented a report which outlined the shortlisting process for the position of Managing Director, and the arrangements for the assessment and interview process on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

Following advertisement of the post in accordance with the Council's current procedures, one application had been received. This has been analysed against the job requirements and the personal specification, and details of the application and the analysis were presented to the Board. It was considered that the applicant met the specification, and should be shortlisted. Members then considered the arrangements for the detailed interview and assessment of the shortlisted candidate on 13 December, and further information on the proposed tasks etc was circulated.

#### **RESOLVED -**

- (a) that the applicant be short-listed for the post of Managing Director;**
- (b) that the arrangements for the selection processes to take place on 13 December 2011, as set out in the report, be approved.**

- (c) that authority be delegated to the Human Resources Manager, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources & Service Delivery, to finalise the interview questions

Chair.....

Date.....

**PERSONNEL BOARD**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel Board held on Tuesday 13th  
December 2011 at 1.00 pm at the Civic Offices, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors K.S. Sahota (Chair), R.C. Evans, W.A.M. McClements, R.A. Overton and C.F. Smith.

**PEB-23      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel Board held on 7th December 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**PEB-24      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors A.J. Eade and A. Lawrence

**PEB-25      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**PEB-26      EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** – that the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972

**PEB-27      APPOINTMENT OF MANAGING DIRECTOR**

At its meeting on 7 December 2011, the Board had resolved to short-list one candidate for the final interview process. The application details of the candidate, together with a copy of the job description and person specification for the post had previously been circulated to the Board Members.

The Board examined all the application documents and conducted the final interview with the candidate. Following full consideration of all the available information, including the results of assessments, the content of written tests, feedback from presentations and role play activities, and the performance of the candidate during the interview process, it was unanimously

**RESOLVED** – TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that the post of Managing Director, including appointment to the positions of Head of Paid Service; Electoral Registration Officer (in accordance with Section 8(2) of the Representation of the People Act 1983); and Returning Officer (in accordance with Section 35(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983), be offered to Mr Richard Partington.

Chair.....

Date.....

## **PLANS BOARD**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 16 November 2011 at 6.00pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire**

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

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillor D G Davies (for planning application TWC/2011/0834)

#### **PB-054 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on 26 October 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman

#### **PB-055 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors J Loveridge and A A Meredith

#### **PB-056 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor N A Dugmore declared a personal interest in planning application TWC/2011/0343.

#### **PB-057 DEFERRED/WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS**

None.

#### **PB-058 SITE VISITS**

**RESOLVED** – that a Site Visit takes place on Wednesday, 14 December 2011 at 3.00pm in respect of planning application TWC/2011/0658 - 53 Newport Road, Edgmond, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 8HG.

#### **PB-059 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/2011/0343 and TWC/2011/0834.

(a) TWC/2011/0343 The Coddon Sports & Social Club, Wellington Road, Donnington, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 8AB

This was an outline application relating to the redevelopment of the Coddon Sports and Social Club site, Wellington Road, Donnington, to provide up to 25 houses. Approval was also sought for the access into the site, with all the other matters reserved for subsequent approval at the reserved matters stage. Although this was

only an outline application an indicative masterplan was submitted to illustrate how the site could be laid out.

Miss S Lapsley of the applicant company spoke in support of the application, echoing the detail in the report and highlighting the revision to the masterplan which took into account local views and the significant contribution towards improved or replacement local bowling facilities.

Members generally welcomed the proposals, considering that they would improve the site and welcomed the contribution towards improved or replacement local bowling facilities. However, Members were disappointed at the reduced contribution towards primary education provision and also the reduced level of affordable housing which had resulted from the negotiations.

Members enquired what scope there was to provide a bus shelter at the bus stop outside the adjacent Territorial Army building and, whilst there was no justification to seek a contribution towards this, Officers noted the request for future information.

Members noted that the proposed Bowling Strategy would address the provision of bowling facilities in the borough and requested that the nearby facilities at Wrockwardine Wood be considered within the strategy for expansion or improvement as a result of the contributions.

**RESOLVED** - that with regard to planning application TWC/2011/0343 the Head of Housing & Planning be authorised to grant planning permission subject to the applicants entering into a Section 106 agreement relating to (a) a contribution of £100,000 towards replacement bowling facilities, (b) a contribution of £12,500 towards primary education facilities, and (c) the provision of 4 affordable dwellings, and further subject to the conditions set out in the update report.

(b) TWC/2011/0474 40 Castle Street, Hadley, Telford, TF1 5RA

This was an outline application for the change of use of 40 Castle Street, Hadley to a hot food takeaway (with living accommodation above and the erection of a single storey rear extension), and the erection of six flats at the rear of the site.

Mr T Wong, the applicant's agent, spoke to support the application, referring to the lengthy discussions with the Planning Authority which had resulted in an amended scheme to accommodate concerns, particularly regarding car parking, highway access and environmental issues. Mr Wong was confident that the proposed extraction system would meet the Council's standards and further considered that the proposals would have a positive impact on the area.

In response to questions, Members received legal advice relating to the provisions for a Section 278 Agreement.

Members expressed concern that the application did not refer to any shelter or fencing for the bin store but were generally pleased to see development of this site which had become an eyesore.

**RESOLVED** - that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0474 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report and an additional condition to fence the proposed bin store to be imposed within either the outline consent or a reserved matters approval.

- (c) TWC/2011/0658 53, Newport Road, Edgmond, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 8HG

**RESOLVED** - that determination of planning application TWC/2011/0658 be deferred to allow the Board Members to make a Site Visit.

- (d) TWC/2011/0719 Burnt Hall Lodge, Burnt Hall Lane, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire, TF7 5ER

This application sought planning permission for the erection of a single storey self-contained dwelling to replace the existing garage at the rear of Burnt Hall Lodge. It was to be used as an integral part of the existing dwelling house (Burnt Hall Lodge) and would be occupied by members of the Applicant's extended family.

Members were generally amenable to this application but were concerned to ensure that sub-division of the property did not occur in the future and supported the imposition of a restrictive condition and legal agreement in this regard.

**RESOLVED** - that with regard to planning application TWC/2011/0719 the Head of Housing & Planning 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.

- (e) TWC/2011/0804 Crudgington Primary School, Cold Hatton, Telford, Shropshire, TF6 6JF

This was a retrospective application by the Council for the siting of a replacement boiler room building at Crudgington Primary School. The building contained a 'BioMass' boiler and integral fuel store. The application was retrospective as the boiler room had been installed within the school grounds. Following replacement of the existing oil-fired boilers. Full details were set out in the report.

**RESOLVED** - that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0804 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

- (f) TWC/2011/0824 Traffic Roundabout, Colliers Way, Telford, Shropshire, TF3 4PA

This was a proposal to display three non-illuminated advertisement signs on the traffic roundabout at Colliers Way, adjacent to the Forge Retail Park in Telford.

**RESOLVED - that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0824 advertisement consent be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.**

(g) TWC/2011/0834 Plowmans, Dale Road, Coalbrookdale, Telford, Shropshire, TF8 7DT

This was a proposal to erect a detached garage on the frontage of the property, and retrospective permission was sought for the installation of replacement upvc windows to the dwelling. The application was a resubmission of a similar application (Ref: TWC/2010/0725) which was refused under delegated powers in February 2011. A planning appeal had been made against the previous refusal, however the Planning Inspectorate determined that the appeal was invalid because a Design and Access Statement was not submitted as part of the original application.

Councillor D G Davies spoke as Ward Councillor noting that there were two main issues addressed by this application, the replacement uPVC windows and the flood risk presented by the proposed garage. With regard to the uPVC windows, he noted that they replaced windows of a similar design and claimed that there was no evidence that wooden windows were the norm and that they represented no impact on the street scene. By way of compromise, he indicated that the applicant was willing to change the colour of the window frames. With regard to the proposed garage, Councillor Davies raised valid neighbour concerns regarding the flood risk which the Applicant contended was presented by the River Severn rather than the Coal Brook. He also noted neighbour concerns regarding traffic congestion which may ensue from the tight turning and access into the proposed garage.

Mr S Graham, a local resident, spoke against the application on the basis that the proposed garage would compound the flood risk to his own and neighbouring properties. He referred to extensive damage which had been caused to these properties following a major flood from the Coal Brook in June 2007 and the Chair allowed the circulation of photographs to illustrate the extent of the damage.

The Planning Officer detailed the drainage works within the area which had been undertaken since the flooding in 2007 and indicated that there were no objections to the proposals from the Council's drainage engineer or the Environmental Agency. Both parties were experts and this, therefore, had to be taken into account during consideration of the application. However, the Planning Officer contended that the prominent siting of the proposed garage did not serve to preserve or enhance the Ironbridge World Heritage Site. Similarly, with regard to the installation of uPVC windows, the Planning Officer referred to the Article 4 Direction which had been put in place to protect the character of the World heritage Site and Conservation Area. Whilst other properties benefited from the installation of uPVC windows, these had been installed prior to the Article 4 Direction or without consent and did not, therefore, set a precedent for approval.

The Head of Housing and Planning emphasised the importance of preserving the World Heritage Site, which was of significant economic importance to the Borough. Upon questioning, he also explained the background to using this application as a test case if the applicant lodged an appeal.

Members noted that the site was located in flood risk zone 2, classed as less vulnerable, and therefore suitable for this proposed development. Nevertheless, Members were concerned by the flood risk, considered that the proposed garage would be detrimental to the attractiveness of the area and were also concerned that allowing the installation of the uPVC windows would set a precedent. Members, therefore, considered that the attractiveness and preservation of the World Heritage Site was of paramount importance and that the proposals would be visually intrusive.

**RESOLVED** - that planning application TWC/2011/834 be refused for the following reasons:-

- (a) **The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposed garage represents an unacceptable development by reason of its siting and appearance forward of the house and adjacent to the highway where the building would be a visually intrusive element in the street scene, detrimental to the character and amenity of the surrounding area in this part of Dale Road. Therefore the development would neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the Severn Gorge Conservation Area or the Ironbridge World Heritage Site. Accordingly the proposal is contrary to Policy CS14 in the LDF Core Strategy, “saved” Policies UD2, SG1 and HE3 of the Wrekin Local Plan and national guidance contained in PPS5.**
- (b) **The Local Planning Authority seeks to control the installation of replacement windows in the World Heritage Site, in the interests of protecting the special historical character of the area. The Local Planning Authority considers that the upvc windows installed in the dwelling are of an unacceptable design and appearance which fail to enhance the dwelling and therefore neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the Severn Gorge Conservation Area or the Ironbridge World Heritage Site. Accordingly, the alterations are contrary to the objectives of Policy CS14 in the LDF Core Strategy, “saved” Policies UD2, SG1 and HE3 of the Wrekin Local Plan and national guidance contained in PPS5.**

(h) TWC/2011/0864 12 Church Croft, Lawley Village, Shropshire, TF4 2FJ

This application from an elected member related to the erection of a conservatory to the rear of the property measuring 4m x 3.3 and 3m in height. The structure was to be constructed using matching facing bricks and beige coloured upvc.

Members noted that the only reason this application was before Board was that it had been made by an elected member.

**RESOLVED** - that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0864 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

**PB-060      URGENCY RESOLUTION – SECTION 100B(4), LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

The Chairman of the meeting made the following statement:

“I am of the opinion that the following items of business should be dealt with as a matter of urgency at this meeting to avoid any unnecessary delay.”

**PB-061      PLANNING APPLICATION TWC/2011/0815 - ST GEORGES C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL, LONDON ROAD, ST GEORGES, TELFORD, SHROPSHIRE, TF2 9LJ**

This was a Council application for the erection of one new permanent classroom block to replace the existing two timber demountable structures. The proposed building, to be constructed of brickwork with a duo-pitch roof with concrete interlocking tiles and including triple glazed windows, would be located at the rear of the main school building to provide three classrooms. The new building was proposed adjacent to the existing demountables, located closer to the main sports field on land that was grassed and formed part of the periphery of the playing fields.

The Planning Officer explained that liaison with Sport England was continuing in an attempt to resolve their objections.

**RESOLVED** – that the Local Planning Authority is minded to grant planning permission and subject to Sport England withdrawing their objection with regard to the loss of an area of the sports pitch, delegated authority is given to the Head of Housing & Planning to grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in the report. However, in the event of Sport England not withdrawing their objection, then the application will be referred to the Secretary of State with a recommendation to grant planning consent.

The meeting ended at 7.04 pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **PLANS BOARD**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 14 December 2011 at 6.00pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford, Shropshire**

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

#### **PB-062      MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Plans Board held on Wednesday, 16 November 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **PB-063      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors J Loveridge and A A Meredith

#### **PB-064      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **PB-065      DEFERRED/WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS**

None.

#### **PB-066      SITE VISITS**

None.

#### **PB-067      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/2011/0658 - 53 Newport Road, Edgmond, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 8HG

This application had been deferred at the meeting of the Plans Board on 16 November 2011 to enable Members to undertake a site visit. The application was for the erection of a single storey rear extension to a semi detached bungalow and all details were set out in the report.

Councillor R Higginson, Vice-Chair at Edgmond Parish Council, spoke in opposition to the application focussing on the size of the development, loss of light to the neighbouring property and a breach of the 45° rule. Councillor Higginson also argued that the recent rental history of the property presented concerns regarding the potential for student accommodation and the probable loss of affordable housing in the locality.

Ms L Blagden, a local resident, expressed her opposition to the proposals specifically regarding loss of light, breach of the 45° rule and the possible availability of the property for rent to increasing numbers of tenants which would impact upon highway use and traffic safety.

The Applicant, Mrs R Snaith, addressed the Board asserting that the property was intended to be a retirement home for the applicant and the extension was intended to create living space. During discussions with the architects, the applicant had been considerate of neighbours and hoped that when the applicant occupied the property it would be possible to tidy the appearance and landscape the garden.

The Planning Officer explained the significance of the 45° rule to the Board Members who noted that the rule was a guideline and not set in legislation. Members considered whether a condition could be included to ensure the extension was not used for a bedroom but noted that this would not be appropriate in the circumstances. Members were also mindful of the larger units which could be erected on the land within permitted development.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0658 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.

(b) TWC/2011/0764 - The Priorslee, Priorslee, Telford, Shropshire, TF2 9SW

This was a retrospective application seeking consent to display 14 advertisements on and around the Priorslee Public House off Priorslee Avenue in Priorslee. All the signs were direct replacements for ones which were approved in 2006 and 2007 and which were displayed in and around the site until early in 2011. Full details of the signs were set out in the report and photographs were displayed.

Councillor I T W Fletcher, Ward Member, had requested that the application be determined by the Plans Board. Councillor Fletcher addressed the Board in opposition to the application expressing his dismay that this was a retrospective application although he was appreciative of the enforcement action which had taken place that had resulted in the original, larger, sign being taken down. The large sign on Priorslee Avenue in particular caused particular visual intrusion due to its garish colour scheme, and he believed it had a detrimental impact.

Members were disappointed that the applicant had erected the signs without planning permission but the majority of Members did not consider them visually intrusive and did not believe there were grounds to refuse the application. However, the Head of Housing and Planning agreed to clarify with colleagues in the Property Unit as to whether the land was in fact Council owned and whether consent had been given to erection of signs on Council owned land.

**RESOLVED** – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0764, subject to two free-standing signs being relocated outside the adopted highway, the Head of Housing & Planning be authorised to grant advertisement consent subject to the conditions set out in the report.

- (c) TWC/2011/0811 - Greenfields Farm, Brockton, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 9EP

The application site (Greenfields Farm) was also known as Warner's Roses and consisted of a rose business and farm with a single storey dwelling and several timber and block outbuildings, a glass house, garaging and a Dutch barn. It was proposed to move the rose business to Devon and erect 14 no. near zero-carbon footprint age-restricted dwellings (8 x 2 bedroomed houses, 2 x 3 bedroomed houses and 4 x 3 bedroomed flats) and 14 garages (with a practice bowling green on the roof) to include 4no. affordable dwellings together with associated gardens/allotments and 14 gardening sheds, a bin buggy storage, bin store, 7 visitor spaces and the erection of 1no. double garage to be used in conjunction with the existing dwelling and improvements to the existing access. Full details of the proposals were set out in the report.

Members considered that this was not an appropriate site for the proposed development and also raised concerns regarding highways and flooding.

**RESOLVED** – that planning application TWC/2011/0811 be refused for the following reasons:-

- (a) **The Local Planning Authority considers that the erection of 14 additional dwellings on this highly unsustainable site is unacceptable as it is outside the settlements of High Ercall, Tibberton and Waters Upton. Furthermore, no information has been received to demonstrate that there are material considerations 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 national guidance contained within PPS1, PPS3 and PPS7.**
- (b) **The Local Planning Authority considers that the proposed development has the appearance of a modern housing scheme more suited to the urban area. Therefore, the proposed development fails to respect or relate positively to its context and fails to enhance the quality of the local environment through high quality and, appropriate and distinctive design. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to “saved” policies UD2 of the adopted Wrekin local Plan 1995-2006 and policy CS15 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, 2007 and national guidance contained within PPS1 and PPS3.**
- (c) **The Local Planning Authority considers that proposal to erect 14 new dwellings in the open countryside would exceed 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.**

- (d) **The Local Planning Authority considers that insufficient information has been submitted to demonstrate that the trees and any protected species on the site will not be adversely affected by the proposed development. Accordingly, the proposal is deemed contrary to “saved” policy OL11 of the adopted Wrekin local Plan 1995-2006, policy CS12 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, 2007 and national guidance contained within PPS9.**

(d) TWC/2011/0894 - Station House, Barkers Court, Madeley, Telford, Shropshire, TF7 5AL

This was a Council application which sought planning permission for the change of use of a Day Service Resources Centre to create a single residential dwelling with associated landscaping. The proposals were set out in full in the report.

**RESOLVED – that with respect to planning application TWC/2011/0894 planning permission be granted subject to the conditions as set out in the report.**

**PB-068      ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair made a number of announcements:-

- (a) An additional meeting of the Plans Board had been arranged to take place at 6.00pm on Tuesday, 10 January 2012 in the Reception Suite;
- (b) The meeting on 15 February 2012 had been moved to 22 February 2012; and
- (c) Members were reminded of the guidance which should be followed regarding site visits to ensure transparency and fairness. The Chair raised particular concerns regarding informal site visits and requested Members to avoid any informal site visits and make every effort to attend officer-organised formal site visits. He also reminded Board Members to demonstrate an open-mind if they became subject to lobbying regarding planning applications. Details of the site visits for the major planning applications in Newport would be disseminated as soon as arrangements had been made.

The meeting ended at 6.51pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

### **Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> November 2011 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:** Jonathan Rowe, Head of Environmental Services, Dave Hanley, Service Delivery Manager Environment and Open Space; Stuart Freeman, Service Delivery Manager - Highways and Transport; Dave Bell, Public Realm Manager; Chris Butler, Highways & Engineering Service Delivery Manager; Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist; Tracy Clarke, Scrutiny Officer.

#### **SMB-11 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on the 13th September 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **SMB-12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr. Miles Hosken

#### **SMB-13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **SMB-14 HIGHWAYS ISSUES**

The Scrutiny Management Board had previously agreed to review three items related to highways issues: winter maintenance, pothole repairs and the quality of repairs, and the condition of footpaths for wheelchair users.

##### **Winter Maintenance**

The Environment and Open Space Service Delivery Manager presented an overview of the report and recommendations on changes to the Winter Service which had been agreed by Cabinet on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2011.

The context of the recommendations was the national shortage of salt stocks and the bad winter conditions in 2010/11 which had led to a review of the operation and effectiveness of the winter service.

The recommendations were that:

- Following a review of the road network for salt treatment, coverage would remain the same with the addition of the access routes to Harper Adams College. Benchmarking with the Midland Service Improvement Group (MSIG) of 19 authorities showed coverage in Telford & Wrekin was 41%

compared to an average of 39%. A clear policy was stringently maintained to mitigate the risk of challenge, but localised gritting was done where conditions justified and stocks were available.

- The existing Grit Bin Policy would remain but there would be close working with Parishes and community groups for local co-operative opportunities. Parishes were provided with the grit bin inventory and had the option to purchase additional bins if required for local sites. The Parish Council was responsible for the purchase and replenishment of the bins.
- The concentration of salt spread would be reduced from 15g per m<sup>2</sup> to 10g per m<sup>2</sup> for frost prevention and from 30g per m<sup>2</sup> to 20g per m<sup>2</sup> for snow prevention. Benchmarking with the MSIG showed that Telford & Wrekin was gritting at a higher rate than other Councils. The emergency services and PCT had been consulted on the reduced concentration levels which were within DfT and Highways Agency guidelines. Storage capacity had been increased over the previous 2 years from 1400 to 2700 tonnes to protect the network from shortages and distribution problems with road salt. Last winter grit had been mixed with salt (25% grit to 75% salt) to increase the spread rate, but the grit had blocked gullies and could be hazardous so would not be used again this winter.
- There would be continued improvements to communication and access to information with residents and businesses. Members had been texted the previous evening with an alert about gritting that evening.

The cost of winter maintenance had exceeded normal levels for the third consecutive year and there had been an overspend in 2010/11 of £228k. This had been funded from specific service reserves and the corporate contingency. There had not been as many turnouts, but double-gritting had been needed for snow events with meant more salt than average was used.

In response to members' questions, the following information was given:

- The base budget is set based on average winter conditions. The overspend was due to unusual adverse weather conditions, and the additional funding had been drawn from corporate contingencies.
- A grit bin costs £40 and three refills costs £100.
- There were 460 grit bins on the network and specific criteria were applied to the sites for the bins such as steep slopes or severe bends, and only on adopted roads. Grit was only provided for roads and not for footpaths as there was a cost issue and incidents of grit being used on footpaths should be reported. The Policy stipulates that the Council provides what is "reasonably practical" and the policy could be made available to scrutiny.
- A pilot scheme for volunteer Snow Wardens was being considered as part of the Co-operative Council. Models in other authorities were being reviewed for examples of good practice that could be developed. This would help free up TWS staff for snow clearance, but stocks would need to

be monitored. Members suggested that Health and Safety issues would need to be considered, and that concerns about possible litigation would need to be allayed to encourage people to volunteer. There were DfT guidelines so that if a volunteer had acted correctly, it was unlikely that any action would be taken in the event of an accident.

- The reduction in the concentration of salt spread per m<sup>2</sup> was within recommended DfT guidelines.
- The cost of gritting was approximately £800 p.a. for 1-1.5 miles. This would include 20-30 grits. There were around 1000 km of roads in the network.
- Parishes could be quoted a price for additional gritting so the cost could be compared with the cost of them buying and refilling their own grit bins but the Council's resources would need to be reviewed.
- The Grit Bin Policy had been circulated to Parish councils earlier in the year, but at members' suggestion, a reminder would be sent out.

### **Pothole repairs**

A scrutiny suggestion had been made to review pothole repairs and the quality and durability of repairs. The Environment and Open Space Service Delivery Manager presented a report on the issue.

In addition to the information included in the report, the following information was highlighted:

- Potholes appear when the road surface breaks to expose the layers beneath. One factor was traffic, but the main cause of potholes was water ingress which freezes, thaws and causes cracking so potholes were mainly a winter problem. Potholes did not mean that there was a problem with the road construction.
- Potholes were assessed to determine whether a permanent or temporary fix was required. Where possible a permanent fix was done, but temporary repairs were carried out where substantial traffic management was required to provide a safe working environment to complete the permanent repair or where the road was scheduled for resurfacing or programmed patching work in the coming weeks or months. A temporary repair could last a number of weeks or months.
- The Pothole Buster machine was used to fix shallow potholes and completed around 20-30 seals a day. A larger area than the initial hole was excavated, filled with bitumen macadam and compacted using the Pothole Buster.
- It was important to ensure the seal between the old and new surfacing did not create a hazard for cyclists and motorbike riders. Bitumen sealant had been used to over band or surface seal joints, but a number of accidents had been caused by the lack of skid resistance of the sealant so that it was

no longer used. It had taken the industry a number of years to come up with a suitable solution, but alternative treatments which incorporate aggregates for skid resistance were now available. All treatments had to comply with DfT specifications. A cold applied resin treatment was currently being trialled, and a trial of a heat applied sealant was being planned.

- The quality of repair was key. Seals should be level with the road and long-lasting. Around 10,000 repairs were carried out per year. Random quality checks were carried out and all reports of sub-standard reinstatement were investigated. Repairs were guaranteed by the contractor for 12 months and faults were remedied at the contractor's expense. Members and the public should report any sub-standard work giving precise details of the location so the complaint could be investigated. When a pothole is inspected, the condition of the road was assessed to see whether further repairs were required to reduce the long term cost of returning to the road at a later date.

Following the presentation there was a discussion about members' concerns.

- Members were very concerned about the quality of repair achieved by the Pothole Buster and the fact that repairs could re-open within weeks or months. Members were informed that the method of repair depended on the depth and extent of the pothole, and traditional excavation and reinstatement was used for deeper holes. Each pothole was assessed to determine the best method of repair and the aim was to get it right first time. The Pothole Buster was good for shallow repairs and could carry out around 20-30 burns a day, although its productivity was limited and it was not suitable for potholes in confined spaces. Alternative methods were being explored to find the best methods for the borough. The cold applied resin treatment was being trialled with a view to extending the pilot into other areas. The heat applied sealant using "hot boxes" was being considered as an invest to save trial, and work would be done with the contractor to take this forward.
- Members agreed that a further report should be brought to scrutiny on the results of the hot box trial, and that there was a further piece of work that scrutiny could do to look at options being used by other authorities. This would be discussed further with officers.
- Members were concerned about the very poor public perception about pothole repairs and suggested that there needed to be better communication to improve awareness of the issues and the reasons why temporary repairs were made.
- As the majority of potholes were caused by water damage, members wanted to know what was being done to address the underlying cause of poor water drainage. This would be addressed as part of the highways capital programme which included the construction of roads. Highways engineering had been joined up with flood risk and surface water management as part of the restructure, so that these issues would be

addressed through an integrated approach.

- In response to questions about how potholes were prioritised for repair, members were informed that repairs were carried out either as part of a scheduled programme of maintenance or in response to reports. Holes were inspected, and defects categorised and prioritised for repair. There were three levels of response time: 24 hours for urgent repairs, and 5 or 20 days depending on the assessment. This could create a perception that potholes are taking a long time to be repaired for shallower holes.
- Feedback was not always given to people reporting potholes as it was not always required, but customers who had an enquiry logged on the CRM system would receive feedback.
- Members noted that the Council was only responsible for repairs on adopted roads, and were concerned that Members and residents may not know which roads are adopted and which are private. Members suggested a list of adopted roads in the borough is posted on the Members' Information Point and on the website. Information about who was responsible for un-adopted roads was not available.

### **Condition of footpaths for wheelchair users**

A suggestion had been made to scrutiny to review the condition of footpaths for wheelchair and mobility impaired users as disrepair and the lack of dropped kerbs was a barrier to accessing services.

The Highways and Transport Service Delivery Manager presented the report on the condition of footpaths for wheelchair users. In addition to the information provided in the report, the following points were highlighted:

- The Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) had been adopted by the Council in April 2011. The promotion of sustainable transport modes to support access to key services was a key objective, under which residents' concerns about the condition of footpaths and consistency of approach to dropped kerbs had been recognised as a barrier to accessing services and facilities.
- Funding was a key challenge to infrastructure development and maintenance. There were 2 blocks of funding under the LTP3 capital allocations: Integrated Transport (IT) block and maintenance. There has been a significant reduction in the IT block from £2,115k for 2010/11 to £880k for 2011/12. The current capital programme included £619k for footway maintenance and £40k for footway improvements (£30k for dropped kerb provision and £10k for new footway links). The majority of maintenance funding was spent on slurry sealing to repair the surface of footpaths which had a lifespan of 8-10 years. The £30k budget for dropped kerbs would cover around 20 new dropped kerbs. Regeneration schemes had provided opportunities to improve the strategic footway network, and members of the public and the Disability Forum had been consulted on the design.
- The Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) had identified the value of

Council assets, their current condition and what should be done in terms of whole life-cycle management. There were around 1400km of footways with highways' status in the borough with an estimated value of £110 million (12% of the total value of Council assets). The TAMP estimated the investment required to maintain the footways at £1m per year for the next 5 years, below the current allocation of £619k. The average design life of a footway was 25-30 years, but current levels of spend meant that footways in the borough could only be reconstructed every 50-60 years.

- Public satisfaction levels with the condition of footpaths was 50% (compared to 30% for carriageway conditions) and Telford & Wrekin scored well compared to other authorities on satisfaction with accessibility around the borough. Feedback from residents on slurry sealing had been that it was not always adequate, and reconstruction needed to be considered. However, the cost of slurry sealing was £1.50p per m<sup>2</sup> and the cost of construction was £23 per m<sup>2</sup>. Consultation on the next capital programme would include consultation with the town and parish councils on the issue of slurry sealing.
- The Council had been asked to consider a target of 100% accessibility of footpaths for wheelchair users over 10 years for the LTP3, but this was not possible with the physical constraints (e.g. gradient in Ironbridge) in parts of the borough and with current resources.

Following the presentation, there was a discussion about members' concerns.

- Members wanted to know whether the number of requests for dropped kerbs exceeded what could be funded. Dropped kerbs had recently been installed on Wombridge Road, Bridgnorth Road, Madeley and King Street, Wellington. The number of requests can exceed the budget, but requests were accommodated wherever possible and the costs absorbed from elsewhere. It was acknowledged that dropped kerbs played a critical role in enabling people with mobility issues to access local services, and has benefits not only for the person, but can reduce the Council's care costs.
- Members had received complaints from residents and had observed poor quality slurry sealing which dripped over the edge of drains or pedestrians had walked over wet slurry. This could be taken up with the contractor to ensure works are properly supervised.
- Members wanted to know how accessible footways could be incorporated within the cost of new developments, including BSF. The capital programme would be developed with an holistic approach to dovetail with new developments and discussions were underway about this. Members agreed that development planning should come back to a future meeting for investigation.

Officers left the meeting, and members discussed the information they had read and heard on the three issues. On the basis of the evidence provided, members agreed a number of recommendations.

## **RECOMMENDED**

- **That the Grit Bin Policy should include clear, consistent guidance for Town & Parish Councils about what the Council funds and what the Town & Parish councils are responsible for. The Policy should be communicated at the right time to enable Town and Parish Councils to make provision in their budget for grit bins.**
- **A clear role for Snow Wardens should be developed for each Town & Parish Council and members of the public should be made aware of who their local Snow Warden is and their role.**
- **The fact that grit in grit bins should be used on roads and not on footpaths must be publicised and communicated to the public.**
- **A reminder of the Winter Maintenance Policy should be sent to all Members at the beginning of winter so that they are aware of the Policy and able to give a consistent response to queries from residents.**
- **A list of adopted roads in the borough should be posted on the Members' Information Point so that members are aware of which roads the Council is responsible for when dealing with residents queries about potholes.**
- **Where possible, a list of who is responsible for un-adopted roads should be posted on the Members' Information Point so Members know who to refer queries to.**
- **Awareness should be raised with the public so they understand more about road repair work and why some pothole repairs are carried out on a temporary basis.**
- **There should be closer monitoring of the contractor to ensure the neatness of slurry sealing on footpaths and that the contractor supervises the work to ensure the public do not walk on wet slurry.**

## **SMB-15      CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE**

The Chairman drew members' attention to the fact that agreement for key decisions not on the Forward Plan to be taken by Cabinet must be sought from the relevant Scrutiny Committee Chairman. Report authors must ensure they have spoken to the relevant Scrutiny Chairman, and the Chairmen must assure themselves of the reasons for the urgency of the decision before requests are agreed.

It was noted that the next meeting would be on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> December.

The meeting ended at 16.50pm

**Chairman:**

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**Date:**

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## **SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

### **Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at 2.00pm in the Civic Offices, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors D. White (Chairman), V. Fletcher, G. Green, A. McClements, C. Turley.

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Nigel Newman, Corporate Communications Manager; Stephanie Jones, Scrutiny Group Specialist; Tracy Clarke, Scrutiny Officer.

#### **SMB-16      MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board held on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **SMB-17      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr. M. Hosken, R. Sloan.

#### **SMB-18      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

#### **SMB-19      COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

At the previous meeting Members had requested an item to discuss what changes could be made to the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions to make it clearer to Members and the public what decisions Cabinet will be taking. The Chairman reported that he had had a meeting with the Interim Chief Executive and the Head of Governance and that a review of the Forward Plan was being undertaken and options would come back to the Scrutiny Management Board for discussion.

#### **SMB-20      SCRUTINY SUGGESTIONS**

Three new suggestions had been received to be considered for the Scrutiny Work Programme and had been circulated to Members as Appendix B.

The suggestions had been put forward by Mr. Peter Chadwick who was in attendance at the meeting and the Chairman invited Mr. Chadwick to present the suggestions to the Scrutiny Management Board.

The first suggestion was to review the application of Section 106 agreements, and the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), on developments in Telford and Wrekin so that the costs of infrastructure work

arising from developments are funded by the developer rather than the Council and hence indirectly by the Council Tax payer. It was suggested that this was a value for money issue for the Council. The question put forward in the suggestion was whether the Scrutiny Committee was satisfied that the guidance from the 2009 scrutiny review of Section 106 Agreements was being properly applied, particularly with regard to the CIL, where major developments were coming forward across Telford in general, including, but not only limited, to Newport.

The Chairman replied that scrutiny was not able to scrutinise planning decisions and that policies, processes or issues would only be scrutinised on a borough-wide basis and not on an individual development basis. The Scrutiny Group Specialist pointed out that the 2009 scrutiny review of Section 106 Agreements had included information about the CIL but had not drawn any conclusions or made any recommendations about its implementation in Telford and Wrekin.

Members discussed the suggestion and agreed that the use of Section 106 agreements and implementation of the CIL should be included as a topic in the scrutiny work programme, and that the suggestion would be referred to the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee.

The second suggestion related to how and when Town and Parish Councils should be consulted when the Borough Council considers disposal of any Council assets. The suggestion referred to recommendations made in a previous scrutiny review of the Sale of Assets relating to communication with Town & Parish Councils, and questioned the application of the process relating to the sale of land off Station Road in Newport.

The Chairman reiterated that scrutiny would only review policies, processes or issues on a borough-wide basis and would not look at specific issues relating to an individual development. Cllr. Green had taken part in the scrutiny review of the Sale of Assets and pointed out that the review had focused on communication with Ward Members and had not made any recommendations relating to communication with Town & Parish Councils.

It was agreed that the suggestion would be referred to the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee for further consideration.

The third suggestion related to whether the proposed disposal of land holdings off Station Road, Newport together with disposal of interests in other land in Newport, is providing value for money for Council Tax payers when taking into account the proposed changes to financing of local authorities. There was a broader suggestion made to review whether there is a process in place to ensure value for money on the management, or sale, of Council assets.

The Chairmen reiterated that scrutiny would not investigate a specific case in Newport. The Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee monitors capital receipts on a regular basis and may be one aspect of the Committee's work in scrutinising the forthcoming budget proposals. It was therefore agreed that

this issue would be dealt with as part of the on-going work of the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee.

### **RESOLVED**

- **That suggestions 1 and 2 be referred to the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee to consider as part of the work programme**
- **That suggestion 3 would be dealt with as part of the on-going work of the Budget & Finance Scrutiny Committee**

### **SMB-21      PROGRESS REPORT ON THE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Group Specialist presented the progress report on the Scrutiny Work Programme. This summarised scrutiny activity to date and progress on delivery of the Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Council's Constitution and Scrutiny Handbook had been updated to reflect the new scrutiny arrangements. 57 scrutiny suggestions had been received and considered by the Scrutiny Management Board and Scrutiny Committees to agree the work programme. The Chairman had presented the 2010/11 Scrutiny Annual Report to full Council on 24<sup>th</sup> November. A total of 21 Scrutiny Committee meetings had been held between 23<sup>rd</sup> June and 5<sup>th</sup> December, and the report highlighted the key work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees and the outcomes. Scrutiny resources had been affected by a maternity leave and career break so that current resources were slightly below the 2.1FTE allocated in the restructure at 1.8FTE.

Members agreed that the report demonstrated the breadth of work being carried out by the Scrutiny Committees and requested that a copy of the report be sent to all Scrutiny Assembly and Cabinet Members, and to Town & Parish Councils with a list of contact details for the Scrutiny Chairmen to keep them informed about scrutiny work.

### **SMB- 22      SCRUTINY AND THE MEDIA**

The Corporate Communications Manager had been invited to the meeting to discuss ways in which scrutiny could raise its profile with members of the public and what support could be provided to the Scrutiny Chairmen as media-spokespeople for the Scrutiny Committees.

There was a wide-ranging discussion and the following key points were agreed:

- General articles about scrutiny had been put in Council publications in the past. However, it was agreed that scrutiny is a difficult concept to grasp, and that a more productive approach would be to use specific pieces of scrutiny work on issues that are of interest to the public to raise awareness

about scrutiny and how it can make a difference.

- Press releases on scrutiny recommendations should pre-empt the publication of reports and recommendations being presented to Cabinet. The more controversial scrutiny's position was, the more likely the press would be to issue a release.
- That given the lack of a training budget and limited resources, training would be provided by PR to Scrutiny Chairmen on a one-to-one basis as required to meet specific immediate needs.
- Scrutiny Chairmen should consider the items on their Committee's work programme and come forward with their ideas about possible PR opportunities for specific pieces of work.
- The Scrutiny Media Protocol was in need of updating. A draft would be prepared by the scrutiny team in consultation with PR for approval by the Chairman. This would be sent to all Scrutiny Assembly members as a reminder about protocol for Members on talking to the media.
- There needed to be more communication with Town & Parish Councils.

**RESOLVED**

**That the Scrutiny and the Media Protocol will be updated as discussed at the meeting.**

**SMB- 23      FORWARD PLAN AND ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

An update report had been circulated to Members on the Green Deal. Further information was requested on the potential partnership arrangements with private organisations to be circulated to Members.

It was agreed that the next meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> January would be about Choose Your Home in the wider context of the Housing Strategy.

The meeting ended at 3.43 p.m.

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....

## **STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on Thursday, 8 December, 2011 at 6.05 p.m. at Civic Offices, Telford**

**PRESENT:** Councillors S. Davies, C.B.A. Elliott, A.D. McClements and R.J. Sloan;  
Mr A. Selvaratnam (Chair) (Independent Member);  
Councillors D. Edwards, P. Fairclough, R. Wickson and R. Williams (Parish Council representatives)

#### **ST-13        MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 21 September 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

#### **ST-14        APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillors T.J. Hope and A.J. Stanton  
Mr F Beasland (Independent member)

#### **ST-15        DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **ST-16        LOCALISM ACT 2011 UPDATE**

The Head of Governance & Monitoring Officer presented a report which provided the Committee with details of the Localism Act 2011 so far as they related to standards. Views were also sought on the future ethical framework for councillors at Telford & Wrekin, and an additional paper setting out a suggested approach was circulated at the meeting.

The Localism Act, which received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011, made numerous changes to the Councillor Code of Conduct regime. Standards Board for England would be abolished as would model codes and the undertaking to comply with the codes. The requirement for a Standards Committee would also be removed. In their place, Councils were required to adopt a code of conduct which must be consistent with 7 named principles, but it was up to each authority to adopt its own code. The Council had to have arrangements for investigations and consideration of investigation reports for complaints against Borough and Town/Parish Councillors. The Council would have to appoint an Independent Person who would be consulted during an investigation. However, this person could not be a member of the Standards Committee. New rules concerning Members' interests would be brought in, including a new criminal offence for failure to disclose defined pecuniary interests and taking part in decisions relating to the matter.

Regulations and guidance from Government, not yet published, would provide more detail, but in the meantime the Committee needed to look at the new legislation and make suggestions to full Council on a new regime. It was proposed that the next programmed meeting of the Committee on 8 March 2012 be brought forward to mid February to allow any recommendations to be considered at the full Council meeting on 1 March 2012.

Members then discussed the paper that had been tabled by the Monitoring Officer. In response to questions, the Monitoring Officer advised that there was no longer a requirement for a Standards Committee to have Independent members, nor Parish/Town Council representatives. The Borough Council would have to have arrangements for the investigation of complaints against Parish members, but any findings or recommended sanctions would not be binding on Parish Councils. A number of the Parish representatives felt that it was important for Parish and Town Councils to continue to be involved in some way in the new standards regime, particularly as some of these authorities would be taking on extra powers. The Monitoring Officer advised that some options might be available, and these could be explored during the consultation process. It was proposed to hold a Member workshop (for Borough and Town/Parish members) to explain the implications of the Localism Act, and views could also be sought at the next Parish Forum meeting. It was also suggested that a draft terms of reference for a new Standards Committee could be sent to the current Parish representatives in order to generate further discussion.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) that the Monitoring Officer be instructed to develop a new ethical framework for the Council to accommodate the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, such a framework to be based on the following principles/approaches:**
- **the appointment of a Standards Committee consisting of 7 elected members, politically balanced and including at least one member of the Executive;**
  - **the appointment of a Hearings Sub-Committee of 3 members;**
  - **consultation with town and parish councils on the appointment of parish councillors as co-opted, non-voting members of the Committee and Sub-Committee;**
  - **paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the existing Code of Conduct be used as a template in drafting the new Code of Conduct for Telford & Wrekin Council;**
  - **the proposed arrangements for dealing with complaints of a breach of the Code of Conduct set out at paragraph 8 of the tabled report;**
  - **the proposed terms of reference set out at paragraph 10 of the tabled report.**
- (b) that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to undertake a recruitment process for an Independent Person (and 2 reserves),**

and that a sub-committee of three members (including at least one independent member) be established to interview candidates;

- (c) that authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair, to determine the appropriate allowances/expenses payable to the Independent Person (and reserves);
- (d) that the Monitoring Officer bring a report containing final proposals for a new ethics framework and a new version of the Code of Conduct to a meeting of the Standards Committee in February 2012 (date to be confirmed).

The meeting ended at 7.02 pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:** .....