

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 11 July 2019 at 4.00 pm in Meeting Rooms G3/G4, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 24 JULY 2019

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 29 JULY 2019)

Present: Councillors S Davies (Chair), R A Overton (Vice-Chair), A J Burford, L D Carter, R C Evans, C Healy, R Mehta, H Rhodes and D Wright.

Also Present: Councillor A J Eade (Conservative Group Leader)

Apologies: Councillor S A W Reynolds and W L Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat/Independent Group Leader).

CAB-11 Declarations of Interest

None.

CAB-12 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CAB-13 Report from the Commissioning Body - Appointment of the Chair and General Update

Key Decision identified as **Part B of the Final Commission and General Update** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 28 June 2019.

Councillor L D Carter, Cabinet Member for Finance, Commercial Services & the Borough Economy presented the report of the Commissioning Body in conjunction with the reports submitted at minute number CAB-14 and CAB-15.

The Commissioning Body's previous report presented to Cabinet on 14 February 2019 had explained that the Commissioning Body's Final Commission would be split into two parts, Part A being the process for the recruitment of the Chair of the Independent Inquiry into Telford Child Sexual Exploitation and Part B being the final Terms of Reference and design of the inquiry process, with input from the Chair of the Inquiry. The Final Commission was split in this way to enable the recruitment of the Chair to proceed without delay, whilst allowing work on Part B to continue, ready to be finalised soon after the appointment of the Chair in order to minimise any possible delay.

The report detailed the Commissioning Body's recruitment process which had led to the appointment of Tom Crowther QC as Chair and set out a general update on the Commissioning Body's work to date.

Councillor Carter stated that the Council would do everything it could to facilitate the work of the Inquiry and would provide information as quickly and as efficiently as possible. He continued by encouraging stakeholders to do the same and witnesses to come forward. He thanked all those whose efforts had resulted in bringing together this stage of the Inquiry.

The Leader noted that many, if not all, of the individuals present may give evidence to the Inquiry and, therefore, it was not deemed appropriate for comments to be taken on the three reports covered at minute numbers CAB-13, CAB-14 and CAB-15.

RESOLVED that the Commissioning Body's update on the recruitment and appointment of the independent Chair, and the general update on progress with establishing the Inquiry, as set out in the Appendix B Report, be noted.

CAB-14 Report from the Commissioning Body on the design of the Inquiry Process

Key Decision identified as **Part B of the Final Commission and General Update** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 28 June 2019.

Councillor L D Carter, Cabinet Member for Finance, Commercial Services & the Borough Economy presented the report of the Commissioning Body, which addressed the inquiry design process, in conjunction with the reports submitted at minute number CAB-13 and CAB-15.

As at the date of the report, neither the Chair nor the Commissioning Body had received any documentation that may be relevant to the Inquiry. That was not necessarily unexpected given that the Inquiry's Terms of Reference had yet to be finalised. The Chair and the Commissioning Body also have a limited understanding as to how many witnesses might have relevant evidence to provide, and be willing to engage with its work. As a result, the scale of the work that faced the Inquiry remained unknown. Designing an inquiry process with a fixed timetable was, therefore, challenging. It was also acknowledge that unexpected issues might arise in the course of the Inquiry which could impact any timescale. The process had, therefore, been designed with a degree of flexibility and was set out at Annex 1 to the report.

RESOLVED that the inquiry process, which forms part of the Final Commission, Part B, as proposed by the Chair and the Commissioning Body and set out in Annex 1 to the report, be noted.

CAB-15 Report from the Commissioning Body on the Inquiry's Terms of Reference

Key Decision identified as **Part B of the Final Commission and General Update** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 28 June 2019.

Councillor L D Carter, Cabinet Member for Finance, Commercial Services & the Borough Economy presented the report of the Commissioning Body in conjunction with the reports submitted at minute number CAB-13 and CAB-14.

The report detailed how the Commissioning Body began working with the local Survivors Committee in Telford earlier in 2019 to start discussions in relation to the Inquiry's Terms of Reference. This early engagement with the Survivors Committee had been a priority, to help understand the main issues to be considered when designing the Terms of Reference. The Commissioning Body, however, recognised that wider consultation on the Terms of Reference was important to ensure that all victims and survivors, stakeholders and members of the public, had an opportunity to comment on the scope of the Inquiry's work, and to ensure that the final Terms of Reference were as informed as possible. Details of the consultation that had taken place in a time period of just over three weeks (ending on 5 July 2019) were included in the report along with the outcome and the proposed Terms of Reference.

The comments of the CSE Inquiry Member Advisory Group in relation to the Terms of Reference had been circulated and all comments had been incorporated into a revised draft which had also been circulated.

RESOLVED that the Terms of Reference be noted

CAB-16 Telford & Wrekin Council 4 Year Programme to Protect, Care and Invest To Create a Better Borough

Key Decision identified as **Telford & Wrekin Council 4 Year Strategy to Protect, Care and invest To Create a Better Borough** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 25 June 2019.

Reserved for Council.

Councillor S Davies, Leader, presented the report of the Managing Director which set out a refreshed high level Council programme to drive the delivery of a series of community commitments as the Council's strategic focus through to 2023 which were adopted by Cabinet on 30 May 2019.

Underpinning the delivery of these community commitments, was the ambition for Telford and Wrekin to be a family friendly borough and that Telford & Wrekin Council would seek to protect, care and continue to invest in services. To drive delivery of the commitments and this ambition, the Council's strategic programme (set out at Appendix One to the report) had been revised, setting out a borough vision and 8 priorities as detailed in the report.

The programme would provide clarity for the community and partners what the Council would seek to deliver with the resources available. The programme was also an important part of communicating the organisation's ongoing development with the workforce.

The second part of the programme set out how the organisation was going to continue to transform to deliver the priorities in the face of significant challenges including those set out in the report relating to delivery of savings, uncertainty over the government's funding model for Local Authorities and the lack of certainty over the future of Adult Social Care

The transformation strategy was called "Be the Change" and was detailed in the report.

Underpinning the delivery of these priorities were the Council's co-operative values.

Since adoption of the Community Commitments a number of actions had taken place to drive delivery. These were comprehensively detailed in the report. Work would continue to drive the delivery of the priorities through service planning (at Assistant Director level) and the development of a performance framework which will be reported to Cabinet twice each year.

RESOLVED - that

- (a) the programme be **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** for approval;
and
- (b) progress to date in delivering the commitments be noted.

CAB-17 Financial Management 2019/20

Key Decision identified as **Financial Management 2019/20** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 12 June 2019.

Reserved for Council.

Councillor L D Carter, Cabinet Member for Finance, Commercial Services and the Economy presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance & Human Resources, Chief Finance Officer.

Cabinet Members noted that the net outturn position for 2019/20 was currently projected to be within budget at year end after applying funding from the Council's contingency. The centrally held contingency was available to meet funding pressures and any unforeseen costs with any balance remaining at year-end used to support the medium term service and financial planning strategy in future years. The current projection was that £3.6m of the contingency would still be available at year-end.

This was a positive position as £6.1m savings were required to balance the 2019/20 budget although significant pressures were being experienced in a number of service areas. The aim was to reduce the impact of those pressures and improve the overall position further during the remainder of the year.

Adult Social Care was currently projected to be £0.492m (or 1.2%) over budget and close monitoring and active budget management would continue throughout the year. Children's Safeguarding & Family Support continued to be a key area of focus and was currently projecting to be £1.598m (5.2%) over budget. A cost improvement plan was in place which was actively monitored on a regular basis by senior managers and Cabinet Members.

There were a number of variations from the approved budget, including some beneficial variances as set out in the report.

The funding outlook for the medium term was still very uncertain with significant changes to the local government finance system due to be implemented from April 2020 but very little information available about what impact these changes would have on the Council. However, using the limited information available, it was currently anticipated that the Council would need to identify around £25m further savings over the next 2 years (2020/21 – 2021/22) on top of the £123m already delivered to the end of 2019/20.

A four-year programme to invest in, protect and care for the Borough was approved at Cabinet on 30 May 2019. That report identified the Council's strategic focus through to 2023 and a number of key investments were now put forward for approval which enabled delivery of the commitments made to the Community. Details were set out in section 5.2 of the report.

The Capital programme totalled £70.18m which included all approvals since the budget was set. Projected spend was 92.25% of the budget allocation. There were a number of new allocations and slippage which required approval and these were listed in Appendix 3 to the report.

The Income monitoring position was noted; income collection in relation to NNDR was ahead of target, while collection for Council Tax and Sales Ledger were slightly behind the target. Total cash collected was over £3.5m greater than at the same point in the previous year.

Councillor Carter commended the efforts of the Chief Financial Officer and all Council teams delivering services to the people of Telford & Wrekin. A number of Cabinet Members expressed concern over the uncertainties outlined in the report.

RESOLVED –

- (a) that it be noted that 2019/20 revenue spending is currently projected to be within budget and work will continue with SMT to**

sustain this position; and the use of the contingency detailed in section 5 of the report be approved;

- (b) to **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that the investments listed in Section 5.2 of the report be approved and the Medium Term Financial Strategy is updated to reflect these;
- (c) the position in relation to capital spend be noted and to **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that the changes to the capital programme detailed in Appendix 3 of the report be approved; and
- (d) the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger be noted.

CAB-18 Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-24 and Shropshire Hills AONB Terms of Reference

Key Decision identified as **Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-24 and Shropshire Hills AONB Terms of Reference** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 12 June 2019.

Councillor H Rhodes, Cabinet Member for Parks, Green Spaces & The Natural Environment presented the report of the Assistant Director: Business, Development and Employment.

The Council had committed to protect, enhance and extend the network of green spaces within Telford and Wrekin which characterised the Town and provided accessible spaces for local communities to enjoy and support the Council's health and wellbeing agenda. The Borough's Green Network extended to over 2500 hectares and under its recent Green Guarantee and Local Nature Reserve initiatives the Council had identified, retained and protected over 1000 hectares of important green spaces valued by the local community.

The Wrekin Forest formed significant links between Telford's urban green network to the north and the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage Site to the east and was an integral part of Telford's green infrastructure and 'Forest City' heritage. The Wrekin and Ercall hills were regional landmarks and the Council provided protection to this 'strategic landscape' which also included flanking woodlands and villages including Little Wenlock and New Works, through planning policy.

It was estimated that up to 120,000 people visited the Wrekin per year. This massive popularity reflected its attraction for those leading healthy lifestyles, providing the facilities and the environment for all ages to enjoy. The work of Discover Telford and the 'smart packaging' of the area's tourism offer focussed on the Wrekin forming part of a wider package of visitor experiences including guided walks, trails and 'multi-centre' experiences such as wider heritage and nature itineraries linked with the Ironbridge Gorge, the local woodlands managed by the Severn Gorge Countryside Trust and the Local

Nature Reserves and Public Parks in the urban heart of the borough. The approach aimed to increase visitor dwell time, return and benefits to all.

A small part of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) fell within The Wrekin Forest Strategic Landscape and this report sought Cabinet approval for the 2019-2024 AONB Management Plan and the revised Terms of Reference for the AONB Partnership which were both appended to the report.

Local Authorities with an AONB in their boundary had a statutory requirement to produce a Management Plan. The Management Plan set out the priorities for conserving and enhancing the AONB for a five year period. As the AONB extended outside the borough's boundary and impacts on a wide range of stakeholders the AONB Partnership was established as a joint advisory committee to both Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council. The Council was represented on the Partnership at Officer and Member level. The Partnership had led the update of the Management Plan which had been subject to consultation with the public and a wide range of partner organisations. The amendments to the Partnership's terms of reference reflected the need to ensure an effective management structure while maintaining links with wider stakeholders.

The Vision for the AONB set out in the Management Plan was that :-

"The natural beauty of the Shropshire Hills landscape is conserved, enhanced and helped to adapt - by sympathetic land management, by co-ordinated action and by sustainable communities; and is valued for its richness of geology, wildlife and heritage, and its contribution to prosperity and wellbeing."

The revised Management Plan recognised the unique qualities of the element of the AONB that sat within the Borough and the key management policy maintained the protection of the area through planning policy and promoted the ongoing support of local partnerships including the Wrekin Forest Partnership established in 2007.

Collaboration and partnership working would continue to be key to the success of the management and evolution of the AONB in the borough.

RESOLVED – that

- (a) the Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-24 be approved; and**
- (b) the revised Terms of Reference for the AONB Partnership be approved.**

The meeting ended at 4.21 pm

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Joanthan Eatough
Assistant Director: Governance, Procurement & Commissioning
Date: Wednesday, 24 July 2019

Signed

Date: Thursday, 12 September 2019