

FULL COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council held on Thursday, 26 November 2020 at 6.00 pm in Remote Meeting

Present: Councillors S Bentley, K T Blundell, M Boylan, A J Burford, S P Burrell, E M Callear, L D Carter, E J Carter, G H Cook, S Davies, N A Dugmore, A J Eade, A R H England, N A M England, R C Evans, V A Fletcher, I T W Fletcher, E J Greenaway, C Healy, V J Holt, M B Hosken, T L B Janke, A S Jhawar, J Jones, J E Lavery, A Lawrence, J Loveridge, A D McClements, R Mehta, K Middleton, T J Nelson, R A Overton, S J Reynolds, G C W Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, H Rhodes, K S Sahota, P J Scott, J M Seymour, C F Smith, B J Thompson, W L Tomlinson, K T Tomlinson, C R Turley, P Watling, D R W White and D Wright

Apologies: Councillors C Cassar, R T Kiernan, L A Murray, G L Offland and M J Smith

100 Prayers and Reflections

Anna Parkinson, representing Polski Glos, said prayers.

101 Declarations of Interest

Councillor C Healy declared an interest in minute number 108b Get Building Fund – Stronger Communities – New College, Wellington. She indicated that she would not take part in the debate and would leave the meeting for the determination of this item.

102 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2020 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

103 Leader's Report & Announcements

The Leader stated that the previous few months had been difficult for residents and businesses, and the country was in a second period of lockdown. The Council had been doing all it could to support everyone in the Borough and had worked hard with partner agencies to help those most in need.

The Borough was going to enter the final week of lockdown and it had been announced that Telford & Wrekin would be under Tier 2 restrictions following the national lockdown. The Leader urged all residents to have a Covid-19 test if they had symptoms.

The Leader thanked all Council staff, many of whom had been working in different roles to provide support to residents and businesses. He also

thanked school staff and noted that school attendance in the Borough was encouraging.

The Leader paid tribute to the former Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Eade, and welcomed Councillor Dugmore as the new Leader of the Conservative Group.

104 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor commented upon the engagements he had attended since the last Council Meeting. The Mayor acknowledged that due to the Covid-19 restrictions, engagements had looked very different, however, he had been delighted to attend the VJ Celebrations in the Chelsea Gardens and visit by HRH The Princess Royal.

105 Public Questions

No questions were received.

106 Cabinet Decisions Made Since the Last Meeting of the Council

Members received the report on the Cabinet decisions made since the last meeting of the Council.

107 Councillor Questions On Notice

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

(a) Councillor P J Scott asked the following question of Cllr R A Overton, Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Community Safety and Customer Services:

'Parking around schools in Newport is becoming a big safety issue for many. Enforcement Officers attend occasionally but with little effect. The time has come for more drastic action. The safety of children and residents must be a priority. Would the council consider a form of Traffic Management Order to temporarily restrict any cars from parking close to or within 100-200 metres of a school?'

Councillor R A Overton stated that since 2018, the Council had invested £85,000 into road safety schemes around the Borough. There had been significant engagement with schools to understand their needs and specific concerns around road safety. The focus was on road safety, reducing or eliminating car use as the first choice of school transport and investing in sustainable transport options. Enforcement Officers took a firm but fair approach, giving advice and guidance and it was noted that when an officer was on site, there were high levels of compliance.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Scott asked if there were any plans to increase the size of the enforcement team.

Councillor Overton advised that the Council were promoting community action teams, where enforcement officers were part of this team.

(b) Councillor M Boylan asked the following question of Councillor D Wright, Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport and Infrastructure:

'Since the formation of Telford over 50 years ago, Telford has been a magnet for inward and foreign direct investment from around the World and across Europe, the companies that have come to Telford and grown in Telford have in turn have attracted families to live and work in our Town. With the prospect of a 'no deal' trade agreement with Europe, what impacts does the Cabinet member feel this would have for residents who live in the Borough, travel to the Borough for work, those who employ residents and large and small business'

Councillor D Wright advised that a no deal exit from the European Union would mean an immediate transfer to World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules, which had no provision for services and all exported goods would carry tariffs. Telford exported a higher proportion of goods than almost any other town in the Country and securing a trade deal was vital for the Borough. However, should a deal not be reached, Telford businesses were resilient and the Council would do all it could to support them.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Boylan asked if the Council continued to support a business winning agenda.

Councillor Wright advised that Enterprise Telford business support team were available to support businesses and encouraged those in the Borough to get in contact with them.

(c) Councillor K Middleton asked the following question of Councillor R A Overton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Community Safety and Customer Services:

'White Ribbon day was yesterday, I know Telford has been a White Ribbon Town since 2011 when it was first awarded this status by White Ribbon UK. This recognises Telford and Wrekin council's on-going commitment to raising awareness of and tackling the issue of Domestic Abuse and in the case of our White Ribbon commitment speaking out about violence against women. Could Cllr Overton tell me what action the Council has been taking to raise awareness of our White Ribbon Commitment and to involve our partners during the past few weeks?'

Councillor R A Overton replied that the White Ribbon campaign centred on men wearing a white ribbon to signify that abuse should be challenged. The Council worked with the community to raise awareness of domestic abuse

and an annual White Ribbon event was held, this year's event had been run virtually, on Twitter and Facebook.

(d) Councillor C R Turley asked the following question of Councillor S Davies, Leader:

'I have received so many messages from residents in my ward since the start of this pandemic thanking Telford and Wrekin Council for the fantastic support they have given to residents during these difficult times. I know that this authority has also been working with local groups, charities and businesses and its volunteer base to assist vulnerable residents, together with providing a Community Support Line to help those most in need. However, I am sure that there has been so much that has gone unnoticed by everyone and would be grateful if the Leader could inform me what the support the Council has undertaken from March 2020, including the current lockdown.'

Councillor Davies thanked all residents who had followed the advice and had worked to keep the number of COVID infections down; the latest published figures showed a 20% decrease in cases. The Council had provided direct support to one in five households in the Borough through a range of measures including telephone calls, delivering food, walking dogs and providing free school meals to the doors of vulnerable children. The Council had also delivered PPE to the residential care sector, processed business support grants and provided business rate relief.

(e) Councillor R Mehta asked the following question of Councillor D Wright, Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport and Infrastructure:

'Does the Cabinet Member with responsibility for strategic planning agree with me that the planning reforms proposed by government will lead to remote, standardised and formula based decision making led from Whitehall and in that context we should call on the government to abandon its existing proposals and ensure that the principle of local decision making is central to the whole planning process.'

Councillor D Wright agreed that the reforms would be a complete overhaul of the planning system, which would be a downgrade of local planning decisions and would take local decision making away from local people. Councillor Wright stated that under the proposals some forms of developments would automatically be granted in some areas.

(f) Councillor N A Dugmore asked the following question of Councillor R C Evans, Cabinet Member for Council Finance and Governance:

'To reduce the burden of having to set a budget retaining 6 months precept in reserves would Telford and Wrekin Council reimburse Parish and Town Councils quarterly as opposed to every six months as at present?'

Councillor R C Evans advance that Town and Parish Councils were paid at the start of the year and half way through the year, in two equal instalments

both paid in advance. Councillor Evans stated that the Council had good relationship with Town and Parish Councils and stated that there was an active parish charter group where Town and Parish Councils could raise any requests such as these.

(g) Councillor N A Dugmore asked the following question of Councillor D Wright, Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport and Infrastructure:

'What is a reasonable timescale for roads on new developments to be adopted by Telford and Wrekin Council?'

Councillor Wright advised that adoption of roads was dependent on a number of factors, and acknowledged there had been some difficulties with a number of sites. The process of adoption had been completely reformed since 2017 and roads were being adopted faster than previously, the issue would also be considered as part of the review of the local plan.

In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Wright advised that Councillor Dugmore to send him details of any unadopted roads for further consideration.

108 Recommendations from Cabinet

(a) LGA Response & Recovery Panel

Councillor S Davies, Leader, presented the report of the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED that the LGA Response & Recovery Panel report that highlights the strength of the Council's response to the pandemic and its ambition to drive and support recovery be endorsed.

(b) Council Plan

Councillor S Davies, Leader, presented the report of the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED that the new Council Plan 'Protect, Care & Invest to Create a Better Borough 2020 and onwards' be approved.

(c) Financial Management Report 2020/21

Councillor R C Evans, Cabinet Member: Council Finance & Governance, presented the report of the Director: Finance & HR.

RESOLVED that the changes to the capital programme and use of balances detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

(d) Get Building Fund - Stronger Communities - New College, Wellington

Prior to the determination of this item, Councillor C Healy left the meeting.

Councillor D Wright, Cabinet Member: Economy, Housing, Transport & Infrastructure, presented the report of the Director: Prosperity & Investment.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The formal acceptance of the Get Building Fund award, appropriate changes to the capital programme as set out in paragraph 6.2 of the report, and the entering into a back to back Funding Agreement with the delivery partner as recommended by Cabinet on 5 November 2020 be approved**
- b) **Authority be delegated to the Director: Prosperity & Investment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Economy, Housing, Transport & Infrastructure, to enter into all necessary legal agreements to enable this programme to proceed as recommended by Cabinet on 5 November 2020**
- c) **The tender and procurement of a contractor for the delivery of the development proposals as detailed in the report be noted and endorsed**
- d) **Cabinet approval for the sale of land at New College as set out in paragraph 5.6 of the report be noted.**
- e)

Following determination of this item, Councillor C Healy return to the meeting.

- (e) Housing Investment Programme - Business Case

Councillor D Wright, Cabinet Member: Economy, Housing, Transport & Infrastructure, presented the report of the Chief Executive.

Councillor I T W Fletcher asked if a contingency plan was in place for the contractor. Councillor Wright advised that Lovell were contracted through a competitive process and the market would be tested prior to the scheme taking place.

Councillor I T W Fletcher further asked why only 11.8% of homes in the scheme were affordable, when the local plan stated that 20% of properties should be so, he also raised a question in respect of state aid and the contingency plans for if some selected sites did not receive planning permission.

Councillor Wright advised that Nuplace offered an affordable, sustainable portfolio of homes, with more affordable and sustainable homes being built, which would continue to be an objective of the scheme. The scheme met all legal requirements and all sites would have to go through the planning processes. There would be a list of alternative sites if one or more of the indicative sites did not progress.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The revised Business Case included at Appendix 1 of the report be noted**

- b) The allocation of £38.5m from the Regeneration and Investment Fund to support the developments as set out in the report be noted
- c) The extension to the Nuplace Loan Facilities Agreement of £36m, the rate and terms to be delegated for approval to the Council's s151 Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Council Finance & Governance be approved
- d) The delegation of authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Housing Investment Programme Board be noted, to:
 - i) Agree and enter into, where necessary, any documents, as required, to implement the recommendations contained within the revised Business Case
 - ii) Agree and enter into, where necessary, any agreements, as required, for the disposal or acquisition of land required to give effect to the recommendations contained within the Business Case
- e) The delegation of authority to the Associate Director: Policy & Governance to seal or sign any documents required to give effect to the recommendations contained in this report be noted.

109 Recommendations from Boards and Committees

- (a) Statement of Licensing Policy

RESOLVED that the updated policy be approved.

110 Notices of Motion

- (a) Councillor N A Dugmore formally moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

“This Council declares its support for the Government’s consideration of introducing Unitary Councils across the Country and notes the apparent potential for huge efficiency savings in doing so.

However, and in line with the past two Conservative Group Motions which received unanimous support across this Local Authority; this Council undertakes to oppose any move to merge Telford & Wrekin Council and Shropshire Council into one Unitary Authority”

The Motion was formally seconded by Councillor A Lawrence.

Councillor R C Evans moved the following amendment, with additional words shown in bold and underlined:

“This Council **acknowledges that some may wish to support** the Government’s consideration of introducing Unitary Councils across the Country. However in line with **previous motions** which received unanimous support across this Local Authority; this Council undertakes to oppose any move to merge Telford & Wrekin Council and Shropshire

Council into one Unitary Authority and calls upon both of our MPs to actively support us in this endeavour.”

The amendment was seconded by Councillor A D McClements.

A vote was taken on the proposed amendment, which was carried, becoming the substantive motion. The vote was as follows:

For: 36

Councillors K T Blundell, M Boylan, A J Burford, E Callear, L D Carter, G H Cook, S Davies, A England, N England, R C Evans, C Healey, V Holt, T Janke, A Jhavar, J Jones, J Lavery, J Loveridge, A D McClements, R Mehta, K Middleton, G Offland, R A Overton, G C W Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, S J Reynolds, H Rhodes, K S Sahota, P J Scott, C Smith, J Thompson, K Tomlinson, W L Tomlinson, C R Turley, D White, D Wright.

Against: 0

Abstentions: 12

Councillors S Bentley, S P Burrell, E J Carter, N A Dugmore, A J Eade, I Fletcher, V Fletcher, E J Greenaway, M B Hosken, A Lawrence, T J Nelson, J M Seymour

At the end of the debate, a vote was taken on the amendment put forward by Councillor Evans which was CARRIED.

RESOLVED - that the amended Motion be approved

b) Councillor P R Watling formally moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

‘Through this motion, as a Council we recognise the difficulties experienced by commonwealth veterans in receiving leave to remain in the UK when their service is complete, many are left with extortionate charges to remain here.

Through this motion we request the leader of the council to write on behalf of the Council to the Prime Minister, Kevin Forster the Minister of State for Immigration, and Johnny Mercer the Minister of State for Veterans Affairs outlining this councils support for

- All commonwealth veterans who have served a minimum of 4 years being granted automatic and free of charge right to remain in the UK and
- Any veteran who completes 12 years of service to be automatically be granted British Citizenship.

Further, we request the Leader of the Council to write to Lucy Allan MP and Mark Pritchard MP on behalf of this council, to ask that they press the government for a change in the legislation that affects those that have served diligently and honourably for this Country.'

The Motion was formally seconded by Councillor C R Turley.

During a robust debate, Members thanked all those who served for this Country.

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved

c) Councillor T L B Janke formally moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

“This Council notes:

a) The ‘School Streets’ initiative aims to protect children from air pollution and road danger on the way to/from school, and a shift towards greener, more active forms of transport (which in turn reduces carbon emissions).

b) This is achieved by closing streets next to schools to motor traffic at “school run” times. Children may get to school by walking, cycling, etc. Vehicles may park further away from school, and children and parents walk in. Exemptions exist for residents accessing properties.

c) School Streets are growing fast: London has gone from 81 to 383 School Streets since April.

d) In 2019, this council resolved to become carbon neutral by 2030.

e) This council has announced a £2.6m investment into sustainable travel measures.

f) Further information regarding School Streets can be found via this useful video of a successful scheme introduced in Hackney Council area. <https://youtu.be/dlyLZ3IT6jU>

This Council resolves to work collaboratively with councillors, schools, and local partners to:

a) Swiftly identify schools in the Borough that could benefit from a ‘School Streets’ scheme.

b) Following consultation, implement ‘School Streets’ at these schools as soon as possible, taking advantage of experimental traffic orders and statutory guidance over fast-tracked TROs.

c) Look to improve cycling and walking infrastructure where necessary, so such schemes are safely and practically accessible.

d) Introduce measures to promote walking and cycling in schools not suitable for 'School Streets'.

The Motion was formally seconded by Councillor W L Tomlinson.

The Speaker ruled that this matter came within the remit of the Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee, and the motion would be referred directly to Scrutiny for consideration without discussion.

The meeting ended at 7.35 pm

Chairman:

Date: Thursday, 14 January 2021