

FULL COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council held on Thursday, 22 July 2021 at 6.00 pm in The Place, Limes Walk, Oakengates, Telford, TF2 6EP

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, R C Evans, V A Fletcher, I T W Fletcher, E J Greenaway, C Healy, V J Holt, M B Hosken, A S Jhawar, J Jones, R T Kiernan, J E Lavery, A Lawrence, J Loveridge, A D McClements, R Mehta, K Middleton, T J Nelson, G L Offland, 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, M J 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, N A M England, T L B Janke and L A Murray

144 Prayers and Reflections

Les Pointer, representing the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, said prayers.

145 Declarations of Interest

Councillors V A Fletcher and I T W Fletcher declared an interest in minute number 153b Response to review of Parliamentary Boundaries as it affected the ward they represented.

146 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

147 Leader's Report & Announcements

The Leader welcomed newly elected Councillors I Preece and J Gough to their first Council meeting. The Leader reflected on the coronavirus pandemic and stated that everyone had been impacted by the virus, which had not gone away and noted that the pandemic was not over.

The Leader discussed the fire at the recycling centre in Ketley and expressed his thanks to partners in the fire and rescue service. Thanks to the efforts of the Council and partners the fire took weeks to extinguish not months. He noted that the Council had, on multiple occasions, refused planning permission on the site, but this had been overturned by the planning inspectorate.

The Leader noted that he had written to the Secretary of State for Local Government in regards to the Levelling Up Fund. Telford had been placed in tranche 3, behind places like Oxford, Shropshire and parts of Essex and expressed his frustration with this.

The Council had secured £22.3m from the Towns Fund and the Leader thanked all partners and staff involved in the bid for this. All the funding would be spent in the Borough and the Council had managed to secure £100m of matched funding.

The Leader announced that the Council had been awarded the Cooperative Council of the Year award and was a finalist in the Local Authority of the Year awards with the MJ.

148 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor noted his engagements since the last meeting. He noted that he had been delighted to attend many events around the Borough, including BikeFest in Wellington, National Armed Forces Day in Donnington and the opening of the new Veterinary Education Centre at Harper Adams University where Her Royal Highness, Princess Anne was in attendance.

The Mayor announced that his chosen charities for this year would be Telford Crisis Support and the Midlands Air Ambulance.

149 Public Questions

No questions were received.

150 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.

Telford & Wrekin Council Becoming Carbon Neutral Action Plan Annual Review

Councillor N A Dugmore asked if there was a target for the number of electric vehicle charging points to be provided.

Councillor D Wright responded that he would provide a written response with the exact figures. He stated that the Council would be producing a comprehensive strategy and would look to identify priority sites.

151 Councillor Questions On Notice

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

(a) Councillor T J Nelson asked the following question of Councillor S Davies, Leader:

‘With the announcement that the Council has submitted over a million pages of evidence to the Telford Child Sexual Exploitation Inquiry, does the leader and his fellow councillors still claim that the CSE Inquiry was not needed?’

Councillor S Davies responded that it was too early to say if the inquiry had achieved what the Council had wanted it to. The administration had asked for a Government Led Inquiry, which was declined, so it was felt that a council commissioned inquiry was better than no inquiry at all. The Council commissioned inquiry did not have statutory powers and could not compel witnesses to attend or answer questions.

Councillor Nelson asked a supplementary question in regards to the amount of evidence submitted by the Council.

Councillor Davies stated that the way the inquiry had been run was managed by the Chair of the Inquiry as it is completely independent. The Council had released all information it had been asked to do so. The Leader stated that he would be asking questions of who didn’t provide evidence or attend the inquiry.

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

‘What changes have been made following the review of the relationship between APT and the planning authority announced in January?’

Councillor Wright responded that the report was due to conclude within the next few weeks and would be brought before Scrutiny.

(c) Councillor S Bentley asked the following question of Councillor C Healy, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Green Spaces, Natural and Historic Environment:

‘Since the publication of the Boroughs’ climate change strategy the Shropshire Star reported that there has been a 33 percent reduction in carbon emissions across the Borough in the last 12 months. What is the largest contributing factor to this reduction?’

Councillor Healy indicated she would provide a written reply.

- (d) Councillor S Bentley asked the following question of Councillor D Wright, Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport and Infrastructure :

‘What tonnage of freight has the Donnington Rail Freight terminal handled during the 12 months leading up to lockdown?’

Councillor Wright advised he would provide a written reply.

- (e) Councillor S Bentley will ask the following question of Councillor S Davies, Leader:

‘Following the £1.3m investment in 110 homes within the Borough to create a social rented arm of NuPlace ,can the leader guarantee these properties will provide accommodation to residents of the Borough whose limited opportunities for social housing have existed for many years? ’

Councillor Davies stated he would provide a written response.

- (f) Councillor Eric Carter asked the following question of Councillor D Wright, Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport and Infrastructure :

‘Could I ask the Cabinet Member for Transport why neither he nor any officers attend the most effective and influential rail organisation in the Area, namely the Marches Strategic Rail Group?’

Councillor Wright would provide a written response.

152 Recommendations from Cabinet

- (a) 2020/21 Financial Outturn Report

Councillor R C Evans, Cabinet Member for Council Finance & Governance, presented the report of the Director: Finance & Human Resources (Chief Financial Officer).

RESOLVED - that:

- a) The revenue outturn position for 2020/21 which remains subject to audit by the Council’s external auditors, and related virements in Appendix 3 of the report be approved**
- b) The transfers and changes to reserves and associated approval to the relevant members of the Senior Management Team (as determined by the Chief Executive) and after consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member to spend the reserves detailed in Section 5 and Appendix 5 of the report be approved**

- c) The Capital outturn position and related supplementary estimates, re-phasing and virements shown in Appendix 4 of the report and as summarised in the report be approved
 - d) Authority be delegated to the Director: Finance and HR to make any changes required as the outturn is finalised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Council Finance and Governance
 - e) The performance against income targets be noted
 - f) The 2021/22 Public Health Grant be approved and the 2021/22 budget strategy be updated accordingly.
- (b) 2021/22 Financial Monitoring

Councillor R C Evans, Cabinet Member for Council Finance & Governance, presented the report of the Director: Finance & Human Resources (Chief Financial Officer).

RESOLVED – that the changes to the capital programme as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

153 Recommendations from Boards and Committees

- (a) Annual Scrutiny Update

The Lead Scrutiny Member, Councillor Derek White, presented the Annual Report for information.

RESOLVED – that the Annual Scrutiny Report 2018/19 be noted.

- (b) Response to review of Parliamentary Boundaries

Councillor Richard Overton, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Community Safety and Customer Services presented the report of the Associate Director: Policy & Governance.

RESOLVED- that:

- a) A representation is made to the Boundary Commission for England ('BCE') that the title of the proposed Newport and Wellington constituency does not properly reflect local identity and that the constituency should retain the name of 'The Wrekin'
- b) Representations to be made to the BCE that the Council supports the initial proposals for the neighbouring constituencies of North Shropshire, Shrewsbury and Ludlow & Bridgnorth
- c) Representations to be made to the BCE that the Council agrees that The Wrekin constituency should incorporate the areas of Cheswardine and Hodnet from the existing North Shropshire constituency.
- d) Representations to be made to the BCE that the Council agrees with the majority of the proposals in relation to the boundaries for the Telford and The Wrekin (Newport & Wellington) constituencies save that the Council proposes:-
 - i- That the area of Priorslee should comprise part of The Wrekin constituency; and
 - ii- That the area of Hadley & Leegomery should comprise part of the Telford constituency with both of these proposals being made to better reflect community ties.

e) **Authority be delegated to the Chair of the Boundary Review Committee to write to the BCE in the terms set out above.**

(c) Adoption of Member Development and Support Strategy

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

RESOLVED- that the Member Development and Support Strategy as attached at Appendix A of the report be adopted with immediate effect.

(d) Code of Conduct

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

RESOLVED- that the Code of Conduct as attached at Appendix A of the report be adopted with immediate effect.

154 Notices of Motion

(a) Councillor T L B Janke will propose the following Motion:-

Councillor W L Tomlinson formally moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

‘Council resolves to:

- Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Transport requesting that the Government’s response to the ‘Pavement Parking: Options for Change’ consultation now be published as promised over 3 months ago.
- Ask the relevant officer to conduct a survey amongst the elected members of this Council asking members to identify streets within their ward where nuisance pavement parking occurs.
- Ask the relevant Cabinet Member to bring to a future meeting of this Council a report with the findings of this survey and details of the enforcement action that this Council proposes to take, taking account of any new powers the Government promises to make available to local authorities in their published response to the consultation’

The Motion was formally seconded by Councillor K T Tomlinson.

Following a robust debate, the Motion was approved by a majority vote.

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved.

(b) Councillor A McClements will propose the following Motion:-

Councillor A D McClements formally moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

‘This Council joins the growing opposition against phasing out of the £20 uplift in Universal Credit in September and calls on the Government for the uplift to remain in place permanently. This funding has been a life saver for many families during the pandemic,

many of whom are in work or want to be in work. The Government's plans to cut Universal Credit will hit the lowest paid hardest and hurt our economic recovery. Over six million families, which include 6,205 families in Telford & Wrekin, are set to lose £1,000 a year, with 16 of our 29 wards in Telford and Wrekin seeing an over 100% increase in claimants from March 2020, whilst out of work support has been left at its lowest level in decades.'

The Motion was formally seconded by Councillor K Middleton.

Following a robust debate, the Motion was approved by a majority vote. In accordance with Committee Procedure Rule 9.5, a recorded vote on the motion was taken, the voting being as follows:

For: Councillors A J Burford, E Callear, L D Carter, G H Cook, S Davies, A R H England, R C Evans, C Healy, V Holt, A S Jhawar, J Jones, J E 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 F Smith, M J Smith, B J Thompson, K T Tomlinson, W L Tomlinson, C R Turley, P R Watling, D R W White, D Wright.

Against: 0

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

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved.

(c) Councillor D Wright will propose the following Motion:-

Councillor D Wright formally moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

'This Council believes that local democracy should be at the heart of the planning system which includes the rights of communities to object to individual planning applications.

The Government already exercise major control over local planning matters, often overturning locally made decisions on appeal. We are therefore concerned that these new proposals announced by the Government in the Queen's Speech aim to change both the current and strategic approach to the planning system.

This Council believes that the Government reforms will lead to a further loss of local control and will give local residents less opportunity to actively participate in and directly influence the planning process. The planning reforms will lead to remote, standardised and formula based decision making led from Whitehall and in that context this Council calls on the government to abandon its existing proposals and ensure that the principle of local decision making is restored to the whole planning process.'

The Motion was formally seconded by Councillor C F Smith.

Following a robust debate, the Motion was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved.

(d) Councillor E Callear will propose the following Motion:-

Councillor E Callear formally moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

'This Council wishes to again put on record our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for all of our frontline key workers from doctors, nurses, the armed services, carers, teachers, police, council staff, including all our volunteers across Telford and Wrekin and so many, many more local heroes who have worked tirelessly on the frontline to care for all our residents during the pandemic. They have and continue to be truly inspirational and we have been humbled by the selflessness and dedication during these unprecedented and challenging times for our borough – thank you to each and every one of them! This Council also recognises the incredible achievement of our England Football team. Their leadership, determination, generosity and performance has brought our community together after one of the most difficult years our country has faced in peacetime.'

In the spirit of cross-party co-operation, Councillor Callear agreed that the following sentence would also be included in the motion:

'This Council also deplores the actions of those individuals who choose to use social media to make derogatory comments against individuals on the grounds of their ethnic background.'

The Motion was formally seconded by Councillor G Offland.

Following a robust debate, the Motion was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved.

(e) Councillor N A Dugmore will propose the following Motion:-

The Motion proposed at agenda item 12(e) was withdrawn by Councillor N A Dugmore with the agreement of Councillor S Bentley (seconder).
The meeting ended at 8.44 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: Thursday, 18 November 2021