

FULL COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council held on Thursday, 3 March 2022 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, J Gough, 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, A D McClements, R Mehta, K Middleton, L A Murray, T J Nelson, G L Offland, R A Overton, I Preece, 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, P Watling, B Wennington, D R W White and D Wright

In Attendance: K Robinson (Senior Democracy Officer (Scrutiny)), J Rowe (Executive Director: Adults Social Care, Health Integration & Wellbeing) and D Sidaway (Chief Executive)

Apologies: Councillors R T Kiernan

178 Minutes Silence for Councillor J Loveridge

A minutes silence was held following the recent passing of Councillor Jackie Loveridge.

179 Prayers and Reflections

The Reverend Keith Osmund-Smith said prayers.

180 Declarations of Interest

None.

181 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

182 Leader's Report & Announcements

The Leader, with agreement from all Group Leaders, had agreed not to give a Leader's speech but tabled an urgent motion.

- a) Councillor S Davies moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

“This Council condemns the senseless, brutal, and disastrous invasion of Ukraine by Russia and denounces the actions of Vladimir Putin and the Russian Government

We stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people including those in this Borough who may have family and friends living in Ukraine.

This Council resolves:

1. To condemn the illegal and immoral actions of the Putin Regime.
2. To do all it reasonably can to support the displaced Ukrainian people and those affected within the Borough to coordinate our community to support the ongoing relief effort as part of our nation’s humanitarian response.
3. We ask that our Group Leaders write a joint letter on behalf our Council to our MPs calling on them to support all possible diplomatic and economic measures possible by the British Government to restrict Putin’s regime military operations and to maintain the independence and freedom of Ukraine.
4. To express our support to NATO, UN and world leaders in their efforts to bring the matter to a safe and successful conclusion.”

Councillors N Dugmore and B Tomlinson seconded the Motion.

Following debate, it was unanimously:-

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved.

183 Mayor’s Announcements

The Mayor asked Members to note the report on Mayoral Engagements since the last meeting of full Council. Although it had been a quiet start to the year due to the ongoing pandemic, he had attended a number of engagements including the first anniversary celebration of Inflata Nation and the official opening of the new Randle House at Dawley Town Hall. His Mayoral Masquerade Ball would take place in March and he was looking forward to continuing the remainder of his term in office and attending future engagements.

184 Public Questions

No questions were received.

185 Councillor Questions On Notice

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

- (a) Councillor N Dugmore asked the following question of Councillor S Davies, Leader.

“When will the remaining Afghan refugees that after several months are still in temporary accommodation be moved to permanent accommodation?”

Councillor S Davies responded that those who had been evacuated from Afghanistan were currently in temporary hotel accommodation, placed by the Home Office. Consequently, the Council had no involvement or control over this as the Home Office decides on location of final and permanent accommodation.. The Council had permanently placed some families and had written to the Home Office and Secretary of State to ask that urgent steps are taken in order to allocate permanent housing to those who have been placed in hotels for several months.

Councillor N Dugmore asked a supplementary question:

“With the potential arrival of Ukrainian refugees, do you agree the current situation needs to come to a conclusion quickly and the Council should act quickly for houses to be decorated which is something that could easily be resolved by the Council.”

Councillor S Davies responded that the Council were looking after the Afghan refugees whilst they were in the Borough but onward settlement was not in the remit, or control, of the Council as those allocations and decisions were undertaken by the Home Office.

186 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.

No questions of clarification were asked.

187 Council Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26

Councillor S Davies, Leader, presented the report of the Chief Executive in relation to the 2022/23 to 2024/25 Council Plan. The Plan had been refreshed in order to drive the delivery of the Council’s vision to protect, care and invest to create a better Borough and set out the focus during the next three years.

During the debate, the focus was on equal homes for all, enforcement action to be taken against landlords who failed to meet good standards of rented accommodation, education attainment in both primary and secondary education, trees and the green agenda.

Upon being put to the vote it was:

RESOLVED – that the Council Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26 be approved.

Councillor R C Evans, Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services, presented the report of the Director: Finance & Human Resources (Chief Financial Officer) which set out how the Council would deliver the Strategy and its five key priorities. It sought approval of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for the next four years together with the budget framework for 2022/23. A one year funding settlement had been received and there was increased demand for key services. There was a freeze on council tax for the next two years and the Council continued to invest in the Borough to make it an attractive place to live, work, learn and visit.

A debate followed which focussed on investment in key services, affordable homes, borrowing, improving the highways, footpaths, cycleways, green spaces and the freezing of council tax.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations as follows:-

For (37)

Councillors K T Blundell, M Boylan, A J Burford, E M Callear, L D Carter, G H Cook, S Davies, A R H England, R C Evans, C Healy, V J Holt, T L B Janke, A S Jhavar, J Jones, J E Lavery, A D McClements, R Mehta, K Middleton, L A Murray, G Offland, R A Overton, I Preece, G C W Reynolds, S J Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, H Rhodes, K S Sahota, P J Scott, C F Smith, M Smith, K T Tomlinson, W L Tomlinson, C R Turley, P Watling, B Wennington, D R W White and D Wright

Against (12)

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

Abstain (1)

Councillor E J Carter

And it was:

RESOLVED – that Full Council:

- a) approve the MTFs for 2022/23 – 2025/26 and the budget framework for 2022/23 set out in this suite of reports.
- b) approve a 2 year freeze of the general Council Tax level.
- c) apply the Government's 1% Adult Social Care Precept in 2022/23.
- d) approve the investment of a further £5.16m into Adult Social Care in 2022/23 rising to £6.96m in 2023/24.

- e) approve net investment of £1.31m in to Children's Safeguarding in 2022/23
- f) approve the budget savings listed in Appendix 13 totalling £5.656m in 2022/23 rising to £8.34m (after "leakage") in 2023/24.
- g) approve the continuation of work with partner organisations, including Town & Parish Councils and Voluntary Sector and Community Groups to seek to identify ways to mitigate the impact of some of the cuts to services that we can no longer afford and to note the availability of the Invest to Save/Capacity Fund which is available to support partnership working.
- h) approve the base budget in Appendix 6.
- i) approve the use of £0.220m special fund balances for works at Castle Green Cemetery
- j) approve the use of £250k from the Invest to Save/Capacity Fund to support the development of "shovel-ready" schemes to maximise the Council's ability to receive funding from national challenge funding opportunities.
- k) approve the policy framework for Reserves and Balances and their planned use outlined in Appendix 9.
- l) note the CFO's robustness statement in Appendix 10.
- m) approve the Risk Register included at Appendix 3.
- n) endorses the Council Tax Reduction Scheme a link to which is included within Appendix 14, for adoption by Full Council on 3 March 2022, ready for implementation from 1 April 2022.
- o) approve the continuation of a Council Tax Reduction Hardship Assistance Policy within Appendix 14.
- p) approve the revenue implications of the medium term capital programme for the period 2021/22 - 2025/26 set out in the Capital Strategy and Programme reports also on this agenda.
- q) approve a delegation to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Leader, to allocate the Capital Investment Fund to individual schemes and to incur associated expenditure.
- r) grant delegated authority to the Director: Finance & Human Resources, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Service to action any virements required following the final allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant and other Grants and following completion of NNDR1 and final estimates of Business Rates Income as long as they are within the budget and policy framework.
- s) grant delegated authority to the Executive Director: Adults Social Care, Health Integration & wellbeing after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health,

Integration and Transformation, to enter into appropriate Section 256 and Section 75 Agreements under the NHS Act 2006 (as amended).

- t) authorise the Associate Director: Policy & Governance to execute all necessary contract documentation including the affixing of the common seal of the council as appropriate to enable the council to enter into appropriate Section 256 and Section 75 Agreements under the NHS Act 2006.
- u) approve this suite of MTFS reports as the Council's Efficiency Strategy for 2022/23, including the document at Appendix 16, to enable new capital receipts generated in the three year period starting 1 April 2022 to be used to fund the revenue costs of reform as assumed throughout these reports.
- v) note the initial projections for the potential budget gap through to 2025/26 and to start work in order to identify options for how this could potentially be bridged.
- w) approve that once all final outstanding grant allocations are received, authority to amend the use of balances in 2022/23 to accommodate any difference in funding between that currently assumed and the final grant allocations be delegated to the Director: Finance & H.R. after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance & Customer Services.
- x) approve the Pay Policy for 2022/23 included as Appendix 15
- y) approve the proposals for a revised formulae for the distribution to member authorities of any accumulated surplus of the WME Joint Committee set out in Appendix 17.
- z) To grant delegated authority to the Director: Finance & HR after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance & Customer Service, to make changes to the Service & Financial Planning Strategy with immediate effect to reflect all grants received from Government, including that in respect of the "£150 council tax energy rebate for properties in council tax bands A to D", and any associated spend.
- aa) approve the additional recommendations contained in the other reports included in this suite of Medium Term Financial Strategy reports included on this agenda.

189 Formal Council Tax Resolutions 2022/23

Councillor R C Evans, Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services, presented the report of the Director: Finance & Human Resources (Chief Financial Officer) which sought to determine the levels of Council Tax for Telford & Wrekin 2022-23 and took account of the requirements by Telford & Wrekin Council, the West Mercia Police and Crime

Commissioner, Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority, together with the Parish and Town Councils.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations as follows:-

For (51)

Councillors S Bentley, K T Blundell, M Boylan, A J Burford, S P Burrell, E M Callear, E J Carter, L D Carter, G H Cook, S Davies, N A Dugmore, A J Eade, A R H England, R C Evans, I T W Fletcher, V Fletcher, J Gough, 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, A D McClements, R Mehta, K Middleton, L A Murray, T J Nelson, G Offland, R A Overton, I Preece, G C W Reynolds, S J Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, H Rhodes, K S Sahota, P J Scott, J M Seymour, C F Smith, M Smith, B J Thompson, K T Tomlinson, W L Tomlinson, C R Turley, P Watling, B Wennington, D R W White and D Wright

Against (0)

Abstain (0)

And it was:

RESOLVED – that Full Council approve the formal resolutions to determine the levels of Council Tax for 2022/23 as detailed in the report.

190 Recommendations from Boards and Committees

- a) 2021/22 Treasury Update Report and 2022/23 Treasury Management Strategy

Councillor C Smith presented the report of the Chief Finance Officer regarding the Treasury Management activities during 2021/22 to date and the Treasury Strategy 2022/23 which had been recommended for adoption at Full Council by Audit Committee on 25 January 2022.

RESOLVED that full Council approve the Treasury Strategy, including the Annual Investment Strategy for 2022/23 together with the associated Treasury Prudential Indicators, sources of borrowing and the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, which will apply from 2021/22 onwards.

- a) Revised Constitution

Councillor C Smith presented the report of the Associate Director: Policy & Governance which gave details of a recent review of the Constitution. Following a meeting of the Council Constitution Committee held on 17 February 2022 it was recommended that the revised Constitution be adopted by Full Council.

RESOLVED – that Full Council adopts the new, revised Constitution.

(a) 2021/22 Treasury Update Report and 2022/23 Treasury Management Strategy

Councillor C Smith presented the report of the Chief Finance Officer regarding the Treasury Management activities during 2021/22 to date and the Treasury Strategy 2022/23 which had been recommended for adoption at Full Council by Audit Committee on 25 January 2022.

RESOLVED that full Council approve the Treasury Strategy, including the Annual Investment Strategy for 2022/23 together with the associated Treasury Prudential Indicators, sources of borrowing and the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, which will apply from 2021/22 onwards.

(b) Revised Constitution

Councillor C Smith presented the report of the Associate Director: Policy & Governance which gave details of a recent review of the Constitution. Following a meeting of the Council Constitution Committee held on 17 February 2022 it was recommended that the revised Constitution be adopted by Full Council.

RESOLVED – that Full Council adopts the new, revised Constitution.

191 Notices of Motion

a) Councillor R A Overton moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

“This Council is deeply concerned about the cost of living crisis, which is having a devastating impact on household budgets across Telford and Wrekin – with every sign that things will only get worse.

This Council condemns the Conservative government’s lack of action to support families and households across our Borough, instead, being focused on defending the alleged law breaking in Downing Street.

This Council believes that this government have continued to fail our residents by:

- Scrapping the £20 uplift for those on universal credit
- Increasing National Insurance by 10%
- Freezing personal tax allowances – which will see more people pay more income tax than ever before
- Introducing a forced loan to every household energy bill rather than provide real support via an energy windfall tax

Whilst energy and tax bills will increase for the typical family to over £1,000 per annum, a £150 ‘rebate’ is simply just a ‘drop in the ocean’ whilst this government writes off £4bn of fraud.

We therefore call on the Government and our Telford and The Wrekin MPs to do more to help households rather than letting off fraudsters and defending rule breaking in Downing Street” The Motion will be seconded by Councillor G C W Reynolds”

Councillor G C W Reynolds seconded the Motion.

Following a robust debate, it was:-

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved.

b) Councillor S Davies moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

““Telford and Wrekin Council reaffirms its strong objection to any merger with Shropshire Council and opposes the Government’s proposal of an elected Mayor for Shropshire. There are no circumstances where a merger or an elected Mayor of Shropshire is in the best interests of our residents of Telford and Wrekin. On behalf of our residents we will not consent to such a move. A Telford and Wrekin Council, under a Labour administration, is on the side of our residents and there are no circumstances where such a merger or an elected Mayor of Shropshire is acceptable for our residents. Telford and Wrekin Council will continue to put Telford and Wrekin first.”

Councillor E Callear seconded the Motion.

Following a debate a recorded vote was requested by the requisite number of councillors and that vote was as follows:

For (50)

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

Against (0)

Abstain (1)

Councillor E J Carter,

RESOLVED - that the motion be approved.

c) Councillor A Eade proposed the following Motion:

“This Council notes with concern the inadequate policies within Telford and Wrekin Councils' local Plan to control the construction of solar farms in the Borough and resolves to correct this deficiency within the current local plan review.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor J M Seymour.

Councillor R Overton then moved an amendment, with additional words shown in bold and underlined and removed words shown struck through.

This Council notes ~~that~~ with concern the inadequate policies within Telford and Wrekin Council's local Plan ~~are used~~ to control ~~control~~ **determine planning applications for** the construction of solar farms in the Borough and resolves to **strengthen the policy position, and continue support, for low carbon energy generation** ~~correct this deficiency~~ within the current local plan review.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor C Healy.

At the end of the debate regarding the amendment, a vote was taken and it was:-

RESOLVED – that the amendment be carried and become the substantive motion.

There being no further debate, the amended motion was put to the vote and it was unanimously:-

RESOLVED - that the amended Motion be approved.

The meeting ended at 8.52 pm

Chairman:

Date: Thursday, 19 May 2022