



## **FULL COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council held on Tuesday 12 November 2024 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG**

**Present:** Councillors E Aston, S Bentley, M Boylan, A J Burford, S P Burrell, E M Callear, L D Carter, C Chikandamina, G H Cook, P Davis, F Doran, N A Dugmore, A J Eade, A R H England, N A M England, S Handley, Z Hannington, C Healy, A S Jhawar, J Jones, G C W Latham-Reynolds, L Lewis, G Luter, A D McClements, R Mehta, K Middleton, H Morgan, T J Nelson, R A Overton, I Preece, S J Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, H Rhodes, R Sahota, S Syrda, G Thomas, P Thomas, J Thompson, W L Tomlinson, K T Tomlinson, K Tonks, R Tyrrell, J Urey, O Vickers, P Watling and D R W White

**Apologies:** Councillors K T Blundell, E Davies, S Davies, T L B Janke, L Parker and P J Scott

#### **26 Prayers and Reflections**

Father Ravi Bosco sent apologies.

#### **27 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor S Bentley declared an interest in minute number 11 Recommendations from Boards and Committees – Review of Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy due to him holding a gambling licence. He indicated that he would not take part in the debate and would leave the room.

#### **28 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

#### **29 Leader's Report & Announcements**

The Leader addressed Members regarding the uncertainty and conflict taking place throughout the world and concluded that the best response would be to remain positive, lead by example and do his best for the community, particularly during uncertain times.

The Leader remembered those who had been lost and commemorated during the Remembrance Sunday services and Armistice Parades that had taken place throughout the borough. There was now a greater focus on the cost of war and it brought into focus their sacrifice and commitment.



The Leader announced that it was with great sadness that the Council had lost Councillor Turley during the summer and as this had been the first time that Members had met as a Council since his passing, the Leader asked that Members remained silent for a few moments as a mark of respect. Councillor Turley had served in the armed forces and as a Councillor being a valued member of the Council and it was pleasing to see that the Armed Forces flag had been flown to mark his distinguished career in the services. Councillor Turley had been proud of the borough and that a lot could be learnt from his way of doing things and the Council would do its very best for the community regardless of people's background and beliefs.

The Leader praised the work taking place in the borough in relation to recent flash floods where the community came together in a moment of crisis. This brought out the very best of human nature and this should inspire us to do better. The Leader would continue to progress the Council's vision to ensure the borough was the best place to live, work and do business for each and every resident.

The Leader set out some of the work that had taken place since the last meeting including the opening of numerous family hubs, providing additional school places, the progression of Station Quarter for learning opportunities and the start up business centre. It was a great honour to have welcomed Her Royal Highness, the Princess Royal, who had officially opened the Quad building, almost 40 years since she had officially opened Telford Ice Rink.

The Council had extended the £2 bus fares on seven Council run bus services, with some 350,000 passenger trips during the last year. Free green waste collections would continue as well as free parking to remain on parking spaces across the borough and it was intended to keep council tax at the lowest possible. As part of the pledge commitments, the Council had helped and protected the most vulnerable in the community. Support had been given to 600 pensioners to help claim pension credit and £100 had been given to 6,000 pensions to help support them through the winter months and he would continue to ensure over the winter months that the community knew about the wide range of support provided by the Council and trusted partners.

The Leader considered that there would be challenging times ahead but despite these difficulties, with the right ethos and ethics, there were plenty of reasons for optimism and as the Council headed towards Christmas and a brand new year, this would hopefully bring forward further opportunities and success as the Council continued to deliver its vision to protect, care and invest to create a better Telford and Wrekin.



### **30**      **Mayor's Announcements**

Since the last Full Council meeting in July the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor had attended a huge number of engagements. In the summer the Mayor attended the Telford Balloon Fiesta, where it was amazing to see many residents get together. He thanked the events team for running such a wonderful weekend. Other events attended were the opening of new businesses such as my little play place, little pioneers' nursery and the YMCA new college accommodations and it was encouraging to see businesses in Telford grow.

The Mayor announced that sadly he had to cancel his Charity Launch due to an injury but details would be forthcoming shortly of a rescheduled event and he looked forward to welcoming everyone. The Mayor gave his thanks to the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Eileen Callear for attending many events on his behalf during the year and for those events that they had been unable to attend, he hoped to arrange visits in the new year.

The Mayor reported on the attendance at remembrance services across the Borough where it was heartening to see everyone come together to reflect on those who served, sacrificed and fought for our freedoms.

The Mayor looked forward to continuing his term in office, attending many forthcoming engagements and the start of the festive season.

### **31**      **Councillor Questions On Notice**

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

- a) Councillor W L Tomlinson asked the following question on behalf of Councillor T Janke of Councillor, to the Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member: Highways, Housing & Enforcement:-

“As stated under The Civil Enforcement of Parking Conventions, a scheme Telford & Wrekin Council adopted in 2022, the council appears to have enforcement powers to address traffic obstructions and pavement parking under sections 62 and 92. Can the cabinet member responsible for enforcement clarify if the council does indeed have such enforcement powers and will neighbourhood enforcement officers take action against offenders, particularly in well-known hotspots such as those found in my ward of Newport South?”

Councillor R Overton responded that the Council had a range of enforcement powers for both residents and businesses. In relation to double yellow lines, Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers worked hard to ensure that restrictions were adhered to and penalties issued. The Council had worked successfully



in partnership with the Town and Parish Councils but recently Newport Town Council had discontinued its enforcement package and this could have contributed to the issues.

b) Councillor A Eade asked the following question to the Leader:-

“Following on from questions I raised at the Full Council Meeting of Thursday 29th of February to the then Cabinet Member for Economy and Neighbourhood Services (now the Leader of the Council) concerning severe flooding at Church Aston, would Councillor Carter give an update on the outcome of promises he made to in response to my questions?”

The Leader responded that since the previous question had been raised, he had worked with the landowner’s representatives to push for a solution at the earliest opportunity. Regular contact had taken place and this had resulted in assurances being given that work would start in April. The Leader set out that despite this, it was clear that the landowners were not acting at the required pace. A letter before action was sent in July with a view to taking enforcement action under powers from the Land Drainage Act if a robust and timely plan was not implemented. The landowner had responded setting out a number of actions and timescales. The Leader had been personally tracking these actions in order to achieve a satisfactory outcome. The landowner had set out an intention to complete the improvement works in November, although there had been a slight delay due to the harvest in October, and the Council would continue to ensure the work was undertaken or would take the most robust legal approach that it could within the powers it had. Officers would keep Councillor Eade updated of progress.

Councillor A Eade thanked the Leader for getting the issues resolved as it was having a devastating effect. He asked a supplementary question that as the trigger point had now passed and new crops had been sewn in the field the landowner had no intention of repairing the drainage within the field, whether legal powers could be used to take enforcement action on the landowner or commission the work to be done and re-charge the costs to the landowner accordingly as a matter of urgency due to the onset of winter.

The Leader stated his disappointment that this work appeared not to be completed and a robust legal approach would be taken as a matter of urgency to pursue every avenue to ensure the owners undertook the work promised.

c) Councillor N Dugmore asked the following question to the Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance & Customer Services:-

“By how much will the 31st October budget measures increase annual employment costs for Telford and Wrekin Council based on the current number of employees?”



Councillor Z Hannington responded that there would be no additional costs to the Council as the government would be funding this.

Councillor N Dugmore asked a supplementary question as to what support would be extended to the Council's contractors and if they would end up with extra costs and a reduction of services?

Councillor Z Hannington responded that there would not be a reduction in services.

d) Councillor R Tyrrell asked the following question to the Leader:-

“This Council will recall I raised the issue of the ongoing environmental issues at the Potters Landfill site at Granville at our meeting on 18th July 2024. Residents continue to suffer. Please can the Leader write to the Environment Agency and the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food & Rural Affairs to review the operation and licence of this site?

Over the last few months residents of Priorslee, St Georges, Donnington, Muxton, and beyond have suffered from the effects of the Potters Group Landfill site at Redhill, including the unpleasant odour and potential adverse effects to health arising from the hydrogen sulphide emitting from the site. This has resulted in the relevant agencies, the Environment Agency, the Health Security Agency and this Council's Environmental Health team, working in partnership to find a solution. I understood that a landfill cell at the site which should have been sealed and capped last year, had not. That work was apparently finally completed in September, but it seems it may not have been completed after all. I have been pushing for the health concerns to be addressed and understand the Council has now acquired test equipment to monitor odour and gases itself. We all await those results. However we continue to receive numerous complaints regarding the odour from the site and the problem has not been resolved. My residents are rightly expecting me to pursue this on their behalf and are seeking a speedy resolution, given their patience for almost 12 months already.”

Councillor R Overton responded as the lead Cabinet Member for Environmental Protection and was sorry to hear that issues were continuing on this site. He was in contact with the Environment Agency who were the lead agency for landfill operations. The Environment Agency had inspected the site at the end of October and they would continue to actively monitor the site as part of its permit and residents were asked to report odours directly to the Environment Agency. Back in March a letter was sent to the Secretary of State Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, but the Council would write to the Labour government and ask for their support in relation to the landfill challenges here in the borough.



Councillor R Tyrrell asked a supplementary question if it was an opportune time to review the Planning Application which was granted in relation to the operation of the site until 2030 and the decision notice issued in November 2021 and does the site continue to comply with the conditions of the decision notice.

Councillor R Overton replied that if the site did not comply with the decision notice that the planning department would be dealing with that and that he would follow this up with them.

e) Councillor R Tyrrell will ask the following question of Cllr O Vickers, Cabinet Member for The Economy:-

“The Procurement Act 2023 came into force on 1 October 2024, and aims to reset EU based law and simplify public sector tendering procedures.

The introduction of the Act followed a lengthy period of public consultation which commenced with the publication of a Green Paper - Transforming Public Procurement - in December 2020 seeking input from stakeholders on a range of proposals to reform and simplify the EU-based rules.

The Former Government received 619 responses to the Green Paper from public bodies, suppliers to Government, and from other interested parties such as academics, legal professionals and members of the public. The Former Government's response to the consultation was published on 6 December 2021. Overall, respondents were positive about the proposed changes but the Government nevertheless shifted its position in a number of areas in the light of comments received during the consultation.

The British Chambers of Commerce new Procurement Tracker, based on data from Tussell, reveals that just 20% of direct procurement was awarded to SMEs in the last year. The Act places a shift from pure economic value to Social Values. This means considering the wider benefits for the community, such as creating local employment opportunities, carbon emissions reduction or using a local supply chain.

Given that the Chancellor in her Budget sought to place the highest increased tax burden on employers and business; what can this Council do to support our local businesses to ensure our local economy thrives? In particular also creating opportunities for less traditional business entities.”

Councillor O Vickers responded that the new Procurement Act removed bureaucratic barriers for small businesses meaning they could potentially compete for more procurement opportunities. These procurement opportunities would allow better visibility for local businesses to search for





potential future business more easily. The procurement team were currently undertaking a programme of change in order that the new Act was complied with. This included revising documentation and signposting training opportunities for all council staff ensuring compliance giving greater transparency of opportunity for local businesses. The Council was currently refreshing its social value offer ensuring the Council was realising its maximum social value, which included climate change measures, employment and upskilling local people.

Councillor R Tyrrell was pleased to hear that this had prompted a review of the Council's procedures and opportunities for business and asked a supplementary question as to what percentage of Telford and Wrekin business contracts or how many were awarded directly to local SMEs within the borough and how did the Council envisage that changing in the future.

Councillor O Vickers responded that he would write to Councillor Tyrrell on with the answer to her question. The Council had awarded 367 grants through Pride in Your High Street and helped 65 new start up businesses and were bucking the national trend on empty shop units.

f) Councillor G Luter will ask the following question of Councillor O Vickers, Cabinet Member for The Economy:-

"After working with the Council to help reinstate council run bus services from my ward to Wellington Town Centre and the Princess Royal Hospital, I welcome the Council's decision to cap Council-run bus service fares at just £2 for adults, and £1 for children. Can you confirm how many residents across Telford and Wrekin will benefit from the continued £2 fare cap?"

Councillor O Vickers thanked Councillor Luter for his hard work on the campaign. It had taken over two years to tender for the bus services and the were key for rural and urban residential areas as well as key links for education, businesses, local centres and the Princess Royal Hospital. There were seven council operated bus routes with fares capped at £2 for adults and £1 for children and the tariff had been in place prior to the previous government introducing capped fares. Since December 2022, the Council's bus service had completed 350,000 passenger trips and patronage had been increasing month on month. The number 100 bus (work express) connected residential homes to main employment sites and operated from 5am to 11pm. The Council was proud of the work being undertaken improving connectivity for all. The Council welcomed the £1bn funding boost for buses from Government in areas such as Telford and Wrekin together with the commitment to local authorities to take buses back under their control in the future.



### **32 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 raised.

### **33 2024/25 Financial Monitoring Report**

Cllr Z Hannington presented the 2024/25 Financial Monitoring report which provided up to date information on the projected outturn position for 2024-25 against the approved budget.

Nationally, councils continued to face extreme challenges with unprecedented pressures driven by high costs and high demand for services, particularly in adult social care, children's safeguarding and school travel assistance. The projected year-end revenue position was summarized at 4.1.8 in the report and set out that before use of contingencies, there was a projected overspend of £4.498m at year end. Good financial planning and management had ensured there would be a one-off contingency earmarked specifically for social care pressures of £1.959m, which together with the use of part of the general budget contingency, brought the overall position into balance. The general budget contingency would have a residual balance of £1.4m after meeting the in-year pressures.

The key pressure continued to be adult social care, which currently required and additional investment of £4.3m which related to the cost of providing care packages across all client groups. The service continued to work on delivering care in order to maximise prevention and independence where possible and prioritised looking after the most vulnerable in the community. It was pleasing to see that none of the budget strategy reserve had been used and this remained at £21.7m.

The capital programme totalled £102.4m and schemes were in progress with spend currently projected to be in line with budget at year end. Changes to the capital programme were set out at Appendix C to the report and included new allocations and slippage into future years which required formal approval from Council. Despite the pressures identified, due to strong financial management and budget planning the Council was in a good position. The council had an excellent track record of managing its financial position and work would continue during 2024/2025 to manage budgets effectively and address the pressures.

Councillor B Tomlinson welcomed the report and commended the local authority on its ability to balance its budgets as local authorities up and down





the country were experiencing the same financial pressures. Comparing this Council's decisions to those of neighbouring local authorities, he was grateful for what had been achieved. With the Labour government now in charge, he felt they had been generous with regards to the NHS and extra funding but was interested to see the budget settlement. Further funding was required for adults and children's services or this would need to be raised from Council Tax. As a Council it was important to do as much as possible to influence government's decisions to support local authorities.

Councillor N Dugmore asked if there was a contingency fund held centrally for contractual and pay inflation and what was the amount and the size of the contingency. He also asked how much money was held back for pay equality between the sexes. In relation to the overspend on social care, he commented that care costs would impact the budget and this would get significantly higher in years to come.

Councillor Z Hannington confirmed that those figures would be supplied following the meeting. In relation to adult social care, the Council continued to monitor closely the services who work on delivering care in order to maximise prevention and independence were possible whilst prioritising the care of the most vulnerable in the community.

**RESOLVED – that**

- a) **the 2024/25 revenue budget position be noted; and that the use of £0.216m Special Fund balances for additional lighting works to be undertaken in the Special fund areas be approved;**
- b) **the position in relation to capital spend be noted; and the changes to the capital programme detailed in Appendix C and all associated changes to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, including Treasury and Prudential Indicators be approved;**
- c) **the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger be noted;**
- d) **the current position in relation to Treasury & Prudential Indicators be noted; and**
- e) **delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader or the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Finance, to approve bids from the Invest to Save/Capacity Fund.**



**34**            **Treasury Management 2023/24 Annual Report and 2024/25 Update**

Councillor H Morgan presented the report on Treasury Management activities for 2023/24 and which detailed the position for 2024/25 to 31 May 2024.

**RESOLVED** – that

- a) the contents of the report be noted; and
- b) the performance against the Prudential Indicators be noted.

**35**            **Recommendations from Boards and Committees**

- (a) Review of Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy

Councillor J Thompson presented the report following a statutory review of the Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy which was required every three years.

The current gambling policy was due to expire on 31 January 2025 and the Public Protection Team had undertaken a review which had been considered and adopted by the Licensing Committee on 24 October 2024 with a recommendation that the updated Policy be approved and adopted by Full Council.

A consultation exercise had been carried out between 22 July 2024 and 23 September 2024 and no representations had been received from any consultees or members of the public. If Members were minded to approve the Policy, it would be published on 6 January 2025 and would take effect from 31 January 2025.

**RESOLVED** – that the updated Statement of Gambling Policy, which was approved by Licensing Committee on 14 October 2024, with effect from 31 January 2025 be adopted.

**36**            **Motions on Notice**

- (a) Councillor K Middleton moved, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 7, the following Motion:

“This Council fully pledges to do all it can to support local pensioners including distributing £100 vouchers to 6,000 pensioners, continuing to lead the record sign up of Telford & Wrekin pensioners entitled to pension credit, providing



increased support for our local Age UK and maintenance of travel and leisure discounts.

This Council fully recognises the £22 Billion black hole left by the previous Government and the new Governments attempts to restore stability to the nation's finances and welcomes the Government's decision to maintain the pension triple lock which will see an uplift of up to £470 in the state pension and the extension of the Household Support Fund.

This Council positively encourages the Government to continue to do it all can to support the most vulnerable pensioners including those just above the pension credit threshold.”

Councillor R Overton seconded the Motion.

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

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

(b) Councillor R Tyrrell proposed the following Motion:-

“Following the Government’s 2024 Budget on 30th October and the £25 billion increase in Employer National Insurance contributions to 15% and reduction in the secondary threshold from £9,100 to £5,000 due to be implemented by April 2025; this Council confirms its commitment to support employers in Telford & Wrekin. Telford & Wrekin Council continues to recognise that this Borough is home to a high proportion of SMEs and start-ups and that this Council will support employers to ensure they continue to create quality employment opportunities within the Borough. This Council recognises that by creating a healthy economic environment for employers, this in turn supports households with quality employment and remuneration, and ultimately increasing household income creating a thriving local economy. This supports the Council’s policy of “everyone benefits from a thriving economy”. Combined with the increase in the National Living Wage and other measures associated with the Make Work Pay agenda, businesses are being asked to shoulder the brunt of the tax burden.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor N Dugmore.

Following the debate, the Motion was unanimously approved.

**RESOLVED – that the amended Motion be approved.**

(c) Councillor T Nelson proposed the following Motion:-

“This Council calls on the Leader to write to the PM and Secretary of state, to reverse the damaging increase of the bus fare cap by 50%, from £2 to £3,



translating to £480 pa for an average bus commuter. This Council has declared a Climate emergency and as part of Active Travel and Sustainable transport, bus travel plays a key role in the Councils emissions reduction objectives. This swinging increase will have a devastating effect on rural bus use, adversely affecting those least able to afford alternatives, and those relying on the service to get to work and healthcare appointments.”

The Motion was seconded by Councillor R Tyrrell.

Councillor R Overton then moved an amendment, with additional words shown in bold and underlined, that was seconded by Councillor O Vickers.

This Council **welcomes the decision to continue to offer £2 bus fares on its 6 council subsidised routes and** calls on the **Leader to engage with the Government in their review of bus services as the positive impact of the council routes shows the added value residents get when the council is in control of its bus services.** **The Council calls on the Leader to** write to the PM and Secretary of state, to **consider alternative proposals to the proposed increase and to make sure that the current proposed increase is frozen for the future years to encourage bus travel.** This Council has declared a Climate emergency and as part of Active Travel and Sustainable transport, **and recognises** that bus travel plays a key role in the Councils emissions reduction objectives. **This Council will continue to monitor what impact the proposed government** increase will have on rural bus use, **as it may** adversely **affect** those least able to afford alternatives, and those relying on the service to get to work and healthcare appointments.

Following a lengthy debate a vote was taken on the adoption of the amendment put forward by Councillor R Overton which was unanimously approved and it was:-

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

Following the debate on the amended motion, it was put to the vote and it was:-

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

The meeting ended at 7.33 pm

Chairman: .....

Date: Thursday 23 January 2025