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## CABINET

**Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 23 September 2021 at 10.00 am in Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT**

**PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 29 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2021)**

**Present:** Councillors R A Overton (Vice-Chair), A J Burford, E M Callear, L D Carter, R C Evans, C Healy, S A W Reynolds, P Watling, D Wright and S Davies (Chair).

**Also Present:** Councillor N A Dugmore (Conservative Group Leader)

### **CAB-92    Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **CAB-93    Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### **CAB-94    Leader's Announcements**

The Leader announced that the Council had won the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) Council of the Year award. He thanked all of the Council's staff, Councillors, and partners for their work. It was noted that this was a significant achievement to be recognised in a year in which authorities nationwide had performed exceptionally in the face of the Covid19 pandemic. This award was in addition the Co-Operative Council of the Year award the Council had received and a nomination for the MJ Council of the Year award where the Council was amongst the top 6 Councils across the United Kingdom.

Tribute was paid to Jo Britton (Executive Director: Children's & Family Services) after winning the MJ Corporate Director of the Year award.

The Leader noted that the Borough had the highest COVID rates in the West Midlands. This was concerning and there was some debate as to why this was the case. He reiterated the need for residents to keep being tested, washing hands, and to isolate if testing positive. The Authority was looking to Government to understand what support would be available if the situation continued.

Those arriving from Afghanistan had supported the UK and deserved help in their time of need. The Administration called upon the Home Office and the

Government to ensure support for the Council, community, and Afghan refugees.

The establishment of a Secretary of State for Levelling Up was welcomed, though the Administration questioned Telford's priority ranking within the levelling up agenda. The Council would be working to secure fair funding for Telford & Wrekin.

### **CAB-95 Learning Disability Strategy**

Councillor P Watling, Cabinet Member for Co-operative Communities, Engagement & Partnerships presented the report of the Director: Adult Social Care.

The report had been delayed as a result of the pandemic but this had influenced the report that was presented. The consultation embodied the approach of the Council as a Co-operative Council, engaging key stakeholders cross the area. Users had been involved in the process, with Telford Voices playing a key role in development and in monitoring the implementation of the action plan.

Painstaking work had been undertaken to ensure people were treated as individuals, talking to them, their families, and carers to ensure a personalised approach.

Three focuses had arisen from the consultation: getting 'out and about', providing the right support, and access to respite.

Members welcomed the report and the strategy employed in its creation, it was of the utmost importance that the voices of those served were heard.

The Leader of the Conservative Group expressed support but noted a desire for measurable objectives to ensure progress continued and targets were met.

### **RESOLVED that –**

- i. The content of the report and appendices be noted;**
- ii. The proposals for the draft Learning Disability Strategy and Action Plan within this report, noting the specific changes following consultation (Page 9, point 6.5) be approved; and**
- iii. Delegated authority be granted to the Director: Adult Social Care in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and the Telford and Wrekin Learning Disability Partnership Board to take the necessary steps to implement these recommendations.**

### **CAB-96 Tibberton & Cherrington Neighbourhood Development Plan – Approval to go to Referendum**

The Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport & Infrastructure presented the report of the Director: Housing, Employment & Infrastructure.

This report related to a neighbourhood plan for Tibberton & Cherrington that had been developed by the parish council with local residents and Telford & Wrekin Council. The report sought the authority to put the proposals to a local referendum. The plan would then sit within the development plan framework for the Borough.

If the referendum result affirms the adoption of the plan,, there would be another report to Cabinet on the insertion of the plan into the wider Telford & Wrekin plan.

Cabinet was supportive of the process and would support other parishes in developing their own plans.

### **RESOLVED –**

**i That Cabinet agree with the Independent Examiner that, subject to his recommended modifications, the Tibberton & Cherrington Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan meets the “basic conditions” and all other legal requirements as summarised in this report and in the Independent Examiner’s report;**

**ii That Cabinet agree that the required modifications be made to Tibberton & Cherrington Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan and that the Tibberton & Cherrington Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan Referendum Version (August 2021) should proceed to Referendum;**

**iii That Cabinet agree that the Referendum Area should not be extended beyond the designated area to which the Tibberton & Cherrington Neighbourhood Development Plan relates; and**

**iiii That the Chief Executive proceed to exercise all the relevant powers and duties and undertake all necessary arrangements for the Tibberton & Cherrington Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (Referendum Version) to now proceed to Referendum and for the Referendum to take place asking the question whether the voter wants Telford & Wrekin Council to use this neighbourhood development plan for the Tibberton & Cherrington Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan area to help it decide planning applications in this neighbourhood area.**

### **CAB-97 Annual Customer Feedback and Complaints Reports**

The Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Community Safety & Customer Services presented the report of the Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services.

The purpose of this report was to set out amendments to the Complaints policies for Corporate, Children's Statutory and Adult Statutory Complaints and to update Cabinet on the Council's response to complaints between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021.

The Council's complaint policies had been in place for some time and had been refreshed and updated to reflect latest best practice.

In total there were 491 complaints received across the Council in 2020/21 from 473 complainants. This was against a backdrop of millions of service transactions that took place every week including 10.2 million refuse collections and 229,000 calls to the Authority's call centre each year. These numbers included new services provided to support residents during the Covid pandemic. The total number of complaints therefore remained a small proportion of transactions.

There had been an overall reduction in the number of complaints received by 16%. In addition, there had been a 35% increase in customers that had complimented Council services, with 392 received compared to 290 in 2019/20.

The Leader of the Conservative Group raised concerns over the condition of the My Telford app.

In response to the Leader of the Conservative Group's concerns, the Leader of the Council clarified that an updated version of the app was due to launch in the near future. Telford and Wrekin Council was one of the first Council's to launch such an app nationwide and was possibly the first to have developed a second version of its own app which was due to roll out shortly.

### **RESOLVED –**

- i. That the changes to the new Complaints Policies available online at Appendix A, B and C be approved. These policies would be introduced with immediate effect;**
- ii. That delegated authority be granted to the Director for Communities, Customer & Commercial Services in consultation with the Lead Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Community Safety and Customer Services to make amendments to these policies going forward in line with changes to the appropriate legislation;**
- iii. That Cabinet review the Customer Feedback and Statutory Complaints Reports for 2020-21 in respect of Adult Statutory, Children's Statutory Complaints and Corporate Customer Feedback and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Review Letter 2021; and**
- iiii. That the significant reduction in complaints received in 2020/21, the increase in positive feedback and the improvement in complaint handling performance be noted.**

## **CAB-98 Councillors Pride Fund - Update Report**

The Cabinet Member for Co-operative Communities, Engagement and Partnerships presented the report of the Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services.

The report provided an update on the Councillors' Pride Fund, which allowed each ward Member to allocate funding to projects that would make a difference in their local area. The report summarised what the fund had achieved to date and set out how it would be delivered over the following two years.

The report recommended that each Councillor's Pride Fund allocation be increased by £3,000 per year to £5,000 per year. The scheme had been a success and received positive feedback from the community and Members alike. It was deemed an important area to provide funding given the events of the previous year, with support for small groups vital.

Members were proud of the fund; it had a real impact on communities, with even a small amount able to have a large effect for small groups.

The Leader of the Conservative Group expressed support for the Pride Fund concept with its tailored support for individual wards.

### **RESOLVED –**

**i That an additional £3,000 allocation per member per year for the periods 2021-22 and 2022-23 funded from the Covid-19 Recovery Reserve be noted;**

**ii That the continued impact that the Councillors' Pride Fund (previously Ward Cooperative Fund) has had since it was launched in 2011 be noted;**

**iii. That the change in deadline for this year's applications as set out in section 4.2.5 be noted; and**

**iiii. That delegated authority be granted to the Group Manager of Community Services in consultation with the relevant ward Member(s) to assess and approve or refuse applications for funding in accordance with the grant criteria.**

## **CAB-99 Local Government Association Corporate Peer Review**

The Leader presented the report of the Chief Executive.

Thanks were extended to each member of the review team from the Local Government Association (LGA).

The Council was not complacent in opening itself up to review and this one had produced an exceptionally positive report. The report, alongside the awards recently awarded to the Authority, demonstrated how well the organisation was performing. Telford & Wrekin Council was striving to deliver for residents and was proud of the Borough's COVID response. One of the highlights of the report was the esteem with which partners held the Authority.

While Telford & Wrekin would continue to seek out best practice and strive to improve, there was a sense that there was an opportunity for the Council to share its experience with other councils.

It was requested that scrutiny monitor the report recommendations implementation.

Members thanked staff for their hard work and praised the positive relationships that the Authority had built with its partners.

The Leader of the Conservative Group stated a desire for clear objectives and expressed concern at 26% of residents living within nationally recognised areas of deprivation.

In response to the concerns of the Leader of the Conservative Group, the Leader called upon the Government to do more to fight poverty and to reconsider the proposed end of the COVID uplift to Universal Credit. The Council provided 'Outstanding' primary education and supported crisis networks, which helped to alleviate poverty, but it could not eliminate poverty alone.

**RESOLVED that –**

**Cabinet endorse: The LGA Corporate Peer Review report that highlights that:**

- **the Council is a high performing organisation**
- **has strong and effective leadership together with a committed workforce**
- **is valued by partners as an organisation that gets things done**

ii. **The proposed approach to addressing the Peer Review report recommendations and the timescale for reporting progress to Cabinet.**

**CAB- Telford Hockey Club - Supporting Investment in Pitch  
100 Facilities**

The Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Visitor Economy presented the report of the Director: Prosperity & Investment.

The Council had a commitment to meet the sporting needs of the community in Telford across a range of sports. This report sought approval to assist

Telford Hockey club to replace their aging all-weather surface on their dedicated hockey pitch at St Georges Recreational Ground.

Telford Hockey Club had secured £68,811 of their own funding (include fundraising), and gained a National Hockey Foundation grant of £50,000 (which was time limited), in addition to identified S106 contributions; however, there remained a shortfall. The Hockey Club sought financial assistance from the Council by way of a loan agreement for up to £50,000, to be repaid over a 25-year period in order to address the matter, providing a safe pitch that met the identified needs of the Borough.

The new pitch would allow the provision of the sport to continue and provide increased potential for the development of sport in the Borough.

The loan was made on the proviso that the hockey club give up its pitch at the Town Park, which they had rented to the rugby club.

Members expressed their support for the report and their hope that the new facilities would engage young people and encourage people to stay active. It was seen as an opportunity to develop the sporting culture of the town and provide a source of community pride.

The Leader of the Conservative Group queried the terms of the provision of 100 hours free hire and 100 hours of subsidised coaching.

The Cabinet Member for Leisure, Culture and Visitor Economy clarified that both would be provided over the full 25-year term of the loan.

**RESOLVED that –**

- i. A financial loan agreement to provide Telford Hockey Club up to £50,000 to be repaid over a maximum of 25 years to meet the shortfall in funding, to enable the resurfacing of the hockey pitch be approved;**
- ii. Delegated authority be granted to the Director: Finance and HR to agree the terms of the loan agreement in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance & Governance; and**
- iii. Delegated authority be granted to the Associate Director: Policy & Governance to execute all legal and other documentation and undertake all procedural steps necessary to enable completion of the loan and its repayment.**

The meeting ended at 10.55 am

**Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices**

Richard Phillips  
Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy  
Date: **Wednesday, 29 SEPTEMBER 2021**

Signed .....

Date: Thursday, 7 October 2021