

CABINET

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

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2021

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 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: Councillors N A Dugmore (Conservative Group Leader) and W L Tomlinson (Liberal Democrats / Independent Group Leader)

CAB- Declarations of Interest **108**

In respect of Item 6, Councillor R A Overton declared that he was a councillor on Donnington and Muxton Parish Council and that he would not take part in the discussion on that item and leave the room whilst that item was discussed.

CAB- Minutes of the Previous Meeting **109**

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 October 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CAB- Leader's Announcements **110**

The Leader refuted ongoing criticism from the MP for Shrewsbury and Atcham surrounding the Council's opposition to Future Fit. Telford & Wrekin Council stood firmly on the side of residents in Telford and surrounding areas of Shropshire that would be negatively impacted by the Future Fit proposals. The proposals would leave Telford as the largest town in the country without an A&E.

The Leader called upon the Leader of Shropshire Council and the county's five MPs to accept his offer of a roundtable to discuss a joint proposal that worked for all of Shropshire – a new super-hospital located between Telford & Wrekin and Shrewsbury.

CAB- Empty Property Strategy and Action Plan **111**

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

The report built on the Council's Housing Strategy and focussed specifically on empty properties. It introduced the Council's strategy to address long-term empty properties by providing a new framework for bringing such properties back into use across the Borough. It set the challenge to bring 375 long-term empty properties back into use over the lifetime of the strategy.

There would be a range of support and assistance measures to enable owners to refurbish, let, or dispose of properties, but there were also enforcement measures included within the strategy. Through Telford & Wrekin Homes, part of NuPlace, the Council could acquire or take on management of appropriate properties for rent to meet local housing needs. These interventions were designed to influence the market and meet affordable housing needs.

The Authority was keen to intervene at the correct time to prevent properties falling into the hands of rogue landlords.

£1 million would be allocated to the strategy to bring the numbers of long term empty numbers down, tackling the blight that they wrought upon communities.

Members welcomed the report and acknowledged the necessity of tackling long-term empty housing to combat anti-social behaviour in communities and to provide for the Borough's housing needs.

The Leader of the Conservative Group welcomed the report and noted that the 375 home target was ambitious given the timescale. The Leader of the Liberal Democrat/Independent Group also welcomed the proposals.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport & Infrastructure acknowledge the target was challenging stating that it was important to set such a challenge.

RESOLVED – that Cabinet

- a) **Approve and adopt the Council's Empty Property Strategy 2021-2026.**
- b) **Recommend to Full Council a new allocation of £1m prudential borrowing in 2021/22 to support the Empty Property Strategy, with delegation to allocate this funding to the Director, Housing, Employment & Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy, Housing, Transport & Infrastructure and the Director, Finance & H.R, and associated changes are made to the Capital Programme.**

CAB- Donnington & Muxton Neighbourhood Development Plan –

112 Approval to go to Referendum

Councillor R A Overton left the meeting before the item discussion began.

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

The Council had worked closely with Donnington & Muxton Parish Council to develop the Neighbourhood Development Plan and to take the necessary steps to get the plan and its proposals ready, to be put to a referendum. Support for the neighbourhood plan process was expressed.

RESOLVED – that

a) Cabinet agreed with the Independent Examiner that, subject to the modifications recommended by him being made, the Donnington & Muxton Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan met the “basic conditions” and all other legal requirements as summarised in this report and in the Independent Examiner’s report;

b) Cabinet agreed that the required modifications should be made to Donnington & Muxton Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan and that the Donnington & Muxton Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan Referendum Version (September 2021) should proceed to Referendum;

c) Cabinet agreed that the Referendum Area should not be extended beyond the designated area to which the Donnington & Muxton Neighbourhood Development Plan relates; and

d) The Chief Executive proceed to exercise all the relevant powers and duties and undertake all necessary arrangements for the Donnington & Muxton Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (Referendum Version) to proceed to Referendum and for the Referendum to take place asking the question whether the voter wanted Telford & Wrekin Council to use this neighbourhood development plan for the Donnington & Muxton Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan area to help it decide planning applications in this neighbourhood area.

Following the conclusion of the item, Councillor R A Overton returned to the meeting.

**CAB- Telford and Wrekin Borough Climate Change Action Plan
113 and Consultation**

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Green Spaces, Natural & Historic Environment presented the report of the Director: Communities, Customer & Commercial Services.

It was COP26 at the time of the meeting and the Council was present at COP26 via the LGA Pass the Planet campaign. Locally, the Council was undertaking a number of COP26 related events, such as the Ocean Fish Trail.

The Council continued to make progress towards its net zero 2030 target, carbon emissions for the year 2020/21 had been reduced by 33% on the previous financial year. This was in part a result of new ways of working, with less travel involved in council activities and more work carried out via Microsoft Teams.

However, the Council's own carbon footprint was only part of the wider picture for the Borough. The Council had continued to play an active role in the Borough's Climate Change Partnership, helping to develop a draft action plan and completing a consultation on the plan. The consultation period had finished and included input from 525 people including children and young people. Additionally, a £1 million community bond scheme was to be established to support environmental projects in the Borough.

Members welcome the report praising the positive steps that had been made.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat/Independent Group stated support for the policy but noted that he would wish to see greater funding for tree planting initiatives to combat the impact of ash dieback.

The Leader of the Conservative Group welcomed the report but noted that the impact of lockdowns would have to be taken into account with regard to the reduction in the Council's carbon emissions in the year 2020/21.

RESOLVED – that

a) The progress the Council had made over the past 12 months in its journey to become carbon neutral by 2030 and how the Council would continue to work to reduce carbon emissions from the Council's operations and activities and influence carbon reduction Borough-wide be noted;

b) The launch of a £1 million Community Bond as detailed in this report be approved and authority delegated to the Director: Finance and Human Resources to agree terms and any documentation to give effect to the implementation of the bond and any projects as detailed in the report.

c) That it be noted that the report was in relation to the Council's response to the Climate Emergency Declaration and would be referred to Full Council for information as part of the 'Matters Determined by the Cabinet' report.

The Cabinet Member for Council Finance & Governance presented the report of the Director: Finance and Human Resources.

This was the second financial monitoring report since the beginning of the financial year. There had been additional demands and costs for services and the Council expected to be £0.5 million over budget, this was higher than the position reported in July 2021.

There were total pressures of £5.68 million, with a residual projection of £0.5 million overspend. This did not include any Covid-19 grant funding or the use of any contingency funds.

Variations from the approved budget were primarily in children's safeguarding & family support and adult social care.

While there were plans from government for an additional £12 billion in funding for health and social care over the coming three years, there was no indication that councils would receive any of the funding.

The government spending review that would inform the Council's 2022/23 budget and the medium term Service & Financial Planning Strategy was announced after the report being presented was finalised. The outcome of the review would not be known until later on in 2021. This made planning difficult.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report noting that social care continued to be a significant funding issue and called upon the government to do more to solve the issue.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat/Independent Group noted the significant need for a resolution to social care funding.

The Leader of the Conservative Group sought clarification on the sustainability of borrowing in the long term.

In response to the query of the Leader of the Conservative Group, the Leader of the Council noted that borrowing spread the cost of major projects over the life span of projects and that this was standard practice that allowed other day-to-day operations to continue.

RESOLVED – that

a) The 2021/22 revenue budget position which continued to be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic be noted and recommended that Full Council approve the use of balances detailed in section 5.1

b) The position in relation to capital spend be noted and recommended that Full Council approve the changes to the capital programme detailed in Appendix 3

c) The collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger be noted.

The meeting ended at 10.45 am

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Anthea Lowe
Associate Director: Policy & Governance
Date: **Wednesday, 10 NOVEMBER 2021**

Signed

Date: Thursday, 2 December 2021