

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 6 January 2022 at 10.00 am in Telford Room, Third Floor, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 12 JANUARY 2022

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 17 JANUARY 2022)

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

Also Present: Councillors N A Dugmore (Conservative Group Leader) and W L Tomlinson (Liberal Democrats / Independent Group Leader)

Apologies: Councillor R A Overton

CAB- Declarations of Interest 122

In respect of Item 9, Councillor S Davies declared an interest in that he was Chair of the Wrekin Housing Group and that he would not take part in the discussion and would leave the room whilst that item was discussed.

CAB- Minutes of the Previous Meeting 123

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CAB- Leader's Announcements 124

The Leader noted that the meeting was taking place in an altered format to mitigate the risk of Covid-19 with non-decision makers joining the meeting digitally where possible. The Deputy Monitoring officer confirmed the meeting was being held lawfully in accordance with the applicable legislation.

CAB- 2021/22 Financial Monitoring 125

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services presented the report of the Director: Finance & H.R. (Chief Financial Officer).

The Council continued to face increasing costs for, and demands on, services: this included Adult Social Care and Children's Safeguarding. The projected outturn position for the Authority was expected to be £1.06m over budget at

year-end – a deterioration of £0.56m compared to the last report position in November 2021.

Projected service pressures were £5.24m. The £1m anticipated funding shortfall relating to business rates took the total pressure to £6.24m against which the Council's £5.18m emergency response funding allocation would be applied. This left a residual projection of £1.06m overspend by year-end. After covering the shortfall, the projection was that there would be £2.89m left in the contingency at year-end.

The capital programme totalled £73m for 2021/22. This included all approvals since the budget was set. At the time of compiling, the projected spend was 88% of the budget allocation.

RESOLVED – that Cabinet

- a) **Note the 2021/22 revenue budget position**
- b) **Note the position in relation to capital spend and recommend that Full Council approve the changes to the capital programme detailed in Appendix 3**
- c) **Note the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger**

CAB-126 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services presented the report of the Director: Finance & H.R. (Chief Financial Officer).

Cabinet was presented with the draft medium term financial strategy for the Authority. As a large, complex, organisation delivering important services it needed to plan for the medium term. The strategy presented was a four year one prioritising frontline services through a combination of savings, working innovation, and income generation. The government had provided authorities with a single year financial settlement and this posed difficulties in planning for the longer term.

There were key demands in the areas of adult social care and children's safeguarding.

Members would be aware of the increasing pressures on residents with increased taxes, energy costs, and inflation. However, as a result of the Council's robust financial management, it would not increase council tax in the Borough for two years. The only increase would be the 1% social care precept dictated by government. Telford and Wrekin Council would again have the lowest level of council tax in the Midlands region.

Due to sustained robust financial management, the Council were able to make a number of significant investments to further 'Protect, Care and Invest' in the Borough. These included:

- Net investment of £0.66m in Children's Safeguarding in the next year;
- £4.9m in to Adult Social Care next year rising to £6.7m by 2023/24;
- £10m for affordable housing initiatives;
- In excess of £20m additional investment in NuPlace for a total investment up to £130.9m;
- The creation of a £20m capital investment fund;
- £37m additional investment in the Telford Growth Fund to protect existing jobs in the Borough and to attract new jobs through inward investment; and
- A range of other capital investments that included road maintenance.

Since 2009, the Council had delivered savings totalling £133.7m. The report also advanced new proposals that would deliver ongoing savings, including additional income of £143.7m by 2023/24.

The Council had consistently stated that it would protect the most vulnerable in society and prioritise the protection of services to vulnerable adults and children in the community.

Members welcomed the report, in particular the continued protection of services for the vulnerable, and noted the sound financial management of the Authority despite the pressures that local authorities had faced in the previous ten years.

The Leader of the Conservative Group welcomed the 0% tax increase proposed and noted the positive effect of the government's Covid-19 grant.

The Leader of the Council called upon the Fire Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner not to levy any increase to their respective precepts.

RESOLVED – that Cabinet

- a) **Approve the proposed Medium Term Financial Strategy set out in this report for consultation between 7 January 2022 and 6 February 2022..**
- b) **Note the high level of uncertainty relating to the medium term financial outlook for the Council due to :-**
 - **the Government's one year provisional local government finance settlement not extending beyond the end of March 2023; and**
 - **the significant potential changes to the local government finance system which may be introduced from April 2023.**

The high level of uncertainty required the Council to retain flexibility by limiting new ongoing investments to the highest priorities and retention of as much one-off resource as possible whilst identifying additional budget savings to ensure a balanced budget for the next year.

**CAB- 2022/23 School Funding Formula
127**

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, and Families presented the report of the Director: Education & Skills.

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) was allocated to local authorities by the Department for Education (DfE) in four blocks; Schools, High Needs, Early Years and Central School Services, using the following bases:

- Schools Block: Calculated by multiplying the number of pupils at the preceding October census (i.e. October 2021 for 2022/23) by a unit of funding, which was different for each local authority. The 2022/23 allocation for Telford & Wrekin Council was approximately £143m.
- High Needs Block: Calculated by a combination of historic allocations and a national funding formula. The 2022/23 allocation for Telford & Wrekin Council was approximately £30.5m.
- Early Years Block: Calculated from the average pupils in the relevant two January censuses (i.e. January 2022 and January 2023 for 2022/23) and multiplied by a unit of funding. The 2022/23 allocation for Telford & Wrekin Council was approximately £13m.
- Central School Services Block: Calculated by a mixture of historic expenditure levels and number of pupils. The grant was introduced in 2018/19 and replaced the abolished Education Services Grant. The 2022/23 allocation for Telford & Wrekin Council was £1.1m.

The DfE was calculating the 2022/23 Schools Block funding allocations to local authorities by a National Funding Formula (NFF). This revised methodology replaced the existing historically based allocations in 2018/19. Between 2017/18 and 2020/21, the increase for T&W was 6.8% per pupil. In 2020/21, the DfE also allocated a general increase to local authorities that exceeded 4% per pupil and a further 3% increase in 2021/22.

In 2022/23 there would be an increase of just under 3% per pupil. Mainstream funding per pupil in T&W would be around the national mid-point, but higher than the average for non-London authorities.

Total schools block funding for T&W had increased from £107.5m in 2017/18 to an estimated £143m in 2022/23.

Schools continued to be protected by the national Minimum Funding Guarantee, which for 2022/23 set the minimum increase per pupil at 0.5%. Telford & Wrekin Council proposed a local protection that amended this to 2%, the maximum allowable level of protection.

It was noted that despite funding increases budget pressure continued. Notwithstanding this, the Council continued to offer the most effective service possible.

RESOLVED – that

the 2022/23 funding formula for Telford & Wrekin mainstream schools, consulted on with the Schools Forum, be approved.

The formula:

- distributes an estimated £143m;

- includes a guaranteed increase per pupil of 2%, the maximum allowable by government;

- where appropriate, supports growing schools by using estimated pupil numbers to determine funding, to avoid a lag in money reaching growing schools.

**CAB- Supported and Specialist Housing - SPD
128**

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, Integration and Transformation presented the report of the Director: Housing, Employment & Infrastructure.

Housing was a major contributor to good health and well-being. It was also the foundation upon which individuals can achieve quality of life and maintain healthy ageing. The Council's vision was of homes and communities that were inclusive, offering people places to live that met their needs and provided them with independence, choice and control over their lives.

The report sought to drive developers to provide homes fit for those with specialist requirements and it set out how the Council would work with developers.

Telford & Wrekin Council was amongst the first to adopt a comprehensive planning document of the kind presented and had already led a number of innovative projects in the area.

The Council had an excellent record of delivering affordable housing in the Borough, consistently meeting its affordable housing target with 30% of all new homes in the Borough being available for affordable rent, social rent or shared ownership.

More was required from government to meet the transformation required in housing but until that point, the Council would do what it could to provide for the Borough.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report noting, in particular, the impact of housing on health inequalities and the need to address the issue directly.

The Leaders of the Conservative and the Liberal Democrat groups welcomed the report.

RESOLVED – that Cabinet approve the use of the Homes for All Supplementary Planning Document for use in determining planning applications within the Borough of Telford & Wrekin.

CAB- Borough of Telford & Wrekin (Glebe Street Wellington) CPO
129 2021

This item was heard as Item 10, the final item. Councillor S Davies left the meeting at 11:17.

Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, Regeneration and the High Street presented the report of the Director: Prosperity and Investment.

The report was a technical one that requested that Cabinet note progress made on development proposals at Glebe Street, Wellington and to seek Cabinet approval for the making of the Glebe Street/High Street Compulsory purchase Order 2022

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group noted the need for sensitivity for residents at the site. The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, Regeneration and the High Street stated that this was a matter that was being monitored and that this concern was shared by Cabinet.

RESOLVED – that Cabinet

- a) **Note the progress Wrekin Housing Group had made with their development proposals at Glebe Street/High Street, Wellington;**
- b) **Authorise the Council to make and advertise a compulsory purchase order of the land edged red and coloured pink on the plan at Appendix 1 under section 17 Housing Act 1985 (“the CPO”) for the reasons set out in the draft Statement of Reasons (Appendix 3) prepared in support of the CPO; and**
- c) **Authorise the Director; Prosperity & Investment and the Associate Director; Policy & Governance to take all necessary steps to secure the making (including making such further amendments to the draft Statement of Reasons prepared in support of the reasons for making the CPO as are necessary) confirmation and implementation of the CPO, including the publication and service of all relevant notices, the presentation of the Council’s case at any local public inquiry and the resolution of any compulsory purchase claims including, if necessary, by way of making (or responding to) a reference to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber).**

CAB- Green Guarantee

This item was received at Item 9.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Parks, Green Spaces, Natural and Historic Environment and Cultural Services presented the report of the Director: Prosperity and Investment.

The report reaffirmed the protection of spaces in council ownership. Since the strategy had been adopted in 2015, Cabinet had protected 200 sites covering 557 hectares and sought to identify further sites for protection. The report was largely to clarify the approvals process for new Green Guarantee sites – previously renewals and new agreements would have to go through Cabinet. The new process, set out in the report, would delegate the powers to directors in consultation with the Cabinet Member. Disposal of sites would still be a matter for Cabinet decision.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group expressed support for the scheme and queried whether sites adjacent to nature reserves could be adopted to the nature reserves. The Cabinet Member informed the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group that this was a matter under investigation.

The Leader of the Conservative Group queried whether Green Guarantee land leased out would come at a cost to public access.

At sites partially leased, any remaining space would remain open to the public and be subject to investment.

RESOLVED – that Cabinet

- a) **Endorse the continued promotion of the use of the designated Green Guarantee sites for use by the public;**
- b) **Authorises the Director; Prosperity & Investment and the Associate Director; Policy & Governance in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Green Spaces, Natural and Historical Environment and Cultural Services to grant relevant leases and licences and other interests in accordance with paragraph 4.7 of the report; and**
- c) **Confirms that any decision that did not meet the requirements set out within paragraph 4.7 of the report, including freehold disposals, would remain decisions to be taken by Cabinet.**

The meeting ended at 11.19 am

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Anthea Lowe
Associate Director: Policy & Governance
Date: **Wednesday, 12 JANUARY 2022**

Signed

Date: Thursday, 17 February 2022