

## **FULL COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council held on Thursday, 14 July 2022 at 6.00 pm in The Place, Limes Walk, Oaken gates, Telford, TF2 6EP**

**Present:** Councillors S Bentley, K T Blundell, M Boylan, A J Burford, E M Callear, L D Carter, E J Carter, G H Cook, S Davies, N A Dugmore, A J Eade, A R H England, N A M England, R C Evans, J Gough, C Healy, V J Holt, M B Hosken, T L B Janke, A S Jhawar, J Jones, J E Lavery, A Lawrence, J Loveridge, A D McClements, R Mehta, K Middleton, L A Murray, T J Nelson, 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, B J Thompson, W L Tomlinson, K T Tomlinson, C R Turley, P Watling, B Wennington and D Wright

#### **In Attendance:**

**Apologies:** Councillors S P Burrell, V A Fletcher, I T W Fletcher, E J Greenaway, R T Kiernan, G L Offland, M J Smith and D R W White

#### **209 Prayers and Reflections**

Mr Suleman from the King Street Mosque said prayers.

#### **210 Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **211 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

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

The Independent Inquiry, that published its report into child sexual exploitation on Tuesday 12 July 2022, highlighted the pain and distress victims and survivors had gone through.

The Leader thanked them for sharing their experiences with the Inquiry; their tenacity and resilience in speaking up was extraordinary.

The Leader stated the Council was deeply sorry for the pain and suffering that had been caused.

He also thanked The Sunday Mirror and Geraldine McKelvie for shining a light on child sexual exploitation in Telford and supporting the victims and survivors in telling their personal and harrowing stories.

Additionally, the Council acknowledged the hard work of the Inquiry chair, Tom Crowther QC, and his team who worked on the Inquiry.

The report, commissioned by the Council, dated back to 1989 and it heard evidence dating back to the 1970s.

In 1989, the Leader was 3 years of age. He was proud to come from Telford and it had been a wonderful place to grow up.

However, it clearly was not the same for many children and young people. This brought great sadness.

As a Telford dad and a corporate parent, the Leader was more determined than ever to make this a safe and happy place for future generations.

The report had found areas where more could have been done over the last three decades to support victims and survivors and their families.

Even though the Inquiry acknowledged significant and transformational improvements since 2016, and the inquiry specifically stated that services today were good, the Council fully accepted and would act on all of the Inquiry's recommendations in full.

It was for all; every elected Member, Council officer, and every partner to ensure these recommendations were fully implemented.

The Leader would be speaking to the Conservative and Liberal Democrat group leaders and the Police & Crime Commissioner about how they could work together to take the recommendations forward.

One early concern from victims and survivors was the funding of the CATE team, the team of dedicated professionals who were at the forefront of the response to tackling child sexual exploitation, and who were commended throughout by the Inquiry. The report proposed that the team was properly funded for the next 5 years. The Leader made a commitment that funding would be protected, not just for the next 5 years but also beyond as long as Labour led the Council.

The Leader was humbled and thankful in equal measure that survivors Holly Archer and Scarlett Jones had agreed to be part of the implementation process moving forward. Working together, they would co-design the Council's response to the Inquiry's recommendations; to make sure it was doing the very best it could for those people who needed it the most.

He thanked Scarlett and Holly for holding the Council to account and for agreeing to be part of the Authority's journey moving forward.

Together, everybody could ensure that a future that we can be proud about is built, a future that ensured that children and grandchildren, now and for generations to come, were safe and happy in Telford and share in the positive

experiences a child growing up here in Telford and Wrekin should experience.

### **213 Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor asked Members to note the report on Mayoral Engagements since the last meeting of full Council.

This was the Mayor's first Full Council meeting since his appointment and it had been a busy start to his mayoral year. He had enjoyed attending many High Street Celebrations which was a fantastic way to start his term.

The Mayor had continued to enjoy attending new business openings, family fun days, and awards and presentation events. This included the launch of the Queen's Award for Enterprise and a very special Garden Party hosted by the Lord-Lieutenant of Shropshire and celebrated the extraordinary contributions made by individuals within their local communities throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

As a Town, local communities celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and it was a pleasure to witness so many events taking place.

In the Autumn, the Mayor would be officially launching his Charity Appeal and he was looking forward to attending forthcoming engagements.

### **214 Public Questions**

No questions were received.

### **215 Councillor Questions On Notice**

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

- (a) Councillor P Scott asked the following question of Councillor A Burford, Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, Integration and Transformation

*"Residents in Newport and all over the Borough are often having extreme difficulty getting a doctor's appointment due, I believe, to the surgeries still operating under Covid guidelines. Often we are held in a queue for a long time to be triaged by a receptionist before being offered a call back by a GP. Some people cannot afford to stay on a phone for up to half an hour or beyond. Others give up and go across to A & E which in itself causes other problems.*

*Is there anything we as a council can do to get surgeries back using the pre Covid appointment guidelines"*

Councillor A Burford responded that he had raised this issue at every avenue possible and that some practices performed better than others and there was currently a staffing crisis. He confirmed that this was at the top of the list for

the Scrutiny Work Programme and he acknowledged the frustration and anxiety it caused.

Councillor P Scott asked a supplementary question

*“The CCG would not allow surgeries to go against covid guidelines, their argument is people with underlying illnesses still need to go to attend at the surgery and appointments. Are you aware that the covid guidelines are being forced upon surgeries and Health England”*

Councillor A Burford responded that in relation to the covid guidelines the number of face to face appointments was increasing and there was a new normal which was a mix of telephone consultations and face to face appointments, determined by the initial consultation. This was now the preferred way of dealing with appointments but he did understand the frustration of not being able to get a face to face appointment if wanted or needed. He confirmed that the guidelines were still in place for GP surgeries

**216      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.

**217      Financial Monitoring 2022/23**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services presented the report of the Director: Finance and Human Resources which provided Members with the latest financial monitoring position for the year in relation to the revenue budget, capital programme and income collection.

**RESOLVED – that:**

- a) the 2022/23 revenue budget position and approve the allocations of the contractual inflation contingency be noted;**
- b) the position in relation to capital spend be noted;**
- c) the changes to the capital programme detailed in Appendix C be approved; and**
- d) the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger be noted.**

**218      Recommendations from Cabinet**

- (a)      2021/22 Financial Outturn Report**

(a) 2021/22 Financial Outturn Report

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services presented the report of the Director: Finance and Human Resources in relation to the 2021/22 Financial Outturn.

The estimated revenue outturn for the last financial year would be within budget by £48,000. The year end position had allowed some funds to be set aside to support the medium term financial strategy. Capital spending at year end was £57m against an approved budget of £73m. The programme of spending continued to be affected by the coronavirus pandemic. However all schemes were now in progress with some being rephrased into the current year creating treasury management benefits. The pandemic continued to have an impact on collection rates for 2021/22, however at the end of the year income collection was ahead of the target set for Council tax and business rates. Collection rates in relation to the sales ledger was slightly behind target.

The unaudited accounts generated for Nuplace showed a generated profit of £407,000 with a dividend of £163,000 paid to the council as its sole investor. An additional sum of £1.8m from net additional interest and marginal costs had also been received with the financial benefits being invested into front line services. Since 2009 the council had achieved savings of £133m including £7m during the last financial year. Despite the continued financial pressures, the council had ended the year within budget.

**RESOLVED** - that:

- a) the Revenue outturn position for 2021/22, which remains subject to audit by the Council's external auditors, and related virements in Appendix 3 be approved;
- b) the transfers and changes to reserves and associated approval to the relevant members of the Senior Management Team (as determined by the Chief Executive) and after consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member to spend the reserves detailed in section 5 and Appendix 5 be approved;
- c) the Capital outturn position and related supplementary estimates, re-phasing and virements showing Appendix 4 and as summarised in the report be approved;
- d) delegated authority to the Director: Finance & HR to make any changes required, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance & Customer Services be granted;
- e) the performance against income targets be noted; and
- f) the 2022/23 Public Health Grant and update to the 2022/23 budget strategy be approved.

**219            Recommendations from Boards and Committees**

a) Annual Scrutiny Update

Councillor S J Reynolds presented the Annual Report for information.

Councillor C R Turley seconded the report.

Councillor A J Eade asked:

- a) *Children are finding it hard to learn, due to gaps in their learning and prolonged periods of isolation – do we have any figures on how many children are affected by that; and*
  
- b) *The Committee heard that the authority had worked hard during the pandemic to ensure vulnerable children were in schools” – Again do we have any figures regarding that and how many children are in fact missing from school in the borough.*

Councillor N Dugmore asked:

*On the Transport Strategy could he be given a figure on the number of Council owned electric vehicle charging points both private and public within the Borough.*

Written responses to these questions would be provided.

**RESOLVED - that the Annual Scrutiny Report 2021/2022 be noted.**

**220            Notices of Motion**

Councillor A Eade withdrew the motion pending publication of the Council’s Fair Cost of Care survey results to enable the administration to publish its findings.

The withdrawal of the motion was seconded by Councillor N Dugmore and agreed by all Members.

The meeting ended at 6.34 pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:**            Thursday, 10 November 2022