

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday 13 October 2022 at 10.00 am in The Telford Room, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY 19 OCTOBER 2022

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY 24 OCTOBER 2022)

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

Also Present: Cllr W L Tomlinson (Liberal Democrats Group Leader), T J Nelson (Conservative Group Representative)

Apologies: Councillor A J Eade (Conservative Group Leader)

CAB- Declarations of Interest 177

None.

CAB- Minutes of the Previous Meeting 178

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CAB- Leader's Announcements 179

The Leader noted that there had been a fantastic response to the petition to the Deputy Prime Minister asking to reverse the decision to downgrade the Princess Royal Hospital, with over 15,000 signatures received. If the proposed plans went ahead, Telford would be the largest town in the country without a fully functioning A&E. Significant concerns regarding the budget gap within the proposals and the impact this would have on Telford.

CAB- Independent Inquiry Update Report 180

The Cabinet Lead for the Independent Inquiry presented the report of the Director: Policy & Governance. The report provided an update in respect of the steps that had been undertaken to support the implementation of the recommendations following the publication of the Independent Inquiry into CSE in Telford on 12 July 2022.

Of the 47 recommendations within the report, 22 were the sole responsibility of the Council, with 6 being the responsibility of the police, 5 of colleges and 4 of the integrated care system. Shortly after the publication of the report, the Leader of the Council confirmed that the Council would implement all recommendations in full and before the deadline which had been sent by Mr Tom Crowther KC.

The proposals in the report set out the governance model to provide oversight of the implementation process. The model included the services of two independent Chairs and an independent facilitator to support the process. The proposals also included regular involvement of the scrutiny assembly.

Progress had already been made on the recommendations, two had been completed with a further four underway. An action plan had been produced which was intended to ensure that all recommendations were completed by the end of 2023, six months earlier than the schedule proposed in the Inquiry's report.

The Representative from the Conservative Group stated that it was their view that the oversight process needed to be completely independent. The Conservative Group would not be putting forward a nomination to sit on the cross-party Members Group. The Leader stated that the request for nominations for this group had been made in August and that this group mirrored that which had been in place during the lead up to publication. Ultimately, the Independent Chair of the Inquiry would assess whether the recommendations had been implemented.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The update contained within the report in respect of the steps taken following publication of the Independent Inquiry into CSE in Telford to ensure the recommendations are implemented be noted;**
- b) **The governance model for implementing the recommendations as set out in Appendix A of the report be noted and endorsed;**
- c) **Authority be delegated to the Director: Policy and Governance to take all steps necessary to engage an independent Chair and independent facilitator for the Strategic Implementation Group as identified within the report;**
- d) **Authority be delegated to the Director: Policy and Governance to take all steps necessary to engage an independent Chair for the CSE Partners Group as identified within this report.**

CAB- Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2025
181

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

The Council had 457 Children in Care (as of 13 September 2022). Through engagement with Children in Care and Care Leavers, a new 'Promise' had

been developed, with the priorities including respect and value, hearing your voice, developing independence and being safe and healthy. This promise was at the heart of the new strategy.

For each identified priority, key actions had been identified and every three months the 'Young Persons' Panel' would meet to make sure that the conversation continued. The report highlighted the achievements of the young people, for example, for GCSE results, the children had received grades six times higher than the average.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report and noted their pride in the children's achievements. It was vital that the children were at the heart of the policy and that the report reflected the voices and wishes of the young people.

In response to a question from the Representative for the Conservative Party, the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families advised that it was difficult with the small cohorts involved to put in place numerical or percentage targets, however, this would be closely looked at to ensure that targets could be monitored effectively.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-23 attached as Appendix A of the report be approved in line with statutory expectations;**
- b) **The following be noted:**
 - i. **The role of Telford & Wrekin Council and partners to advocate on behalf of Children in Care**
 - ii. **The voice of Children in Care at the heart of our work as Corporate Parents**
 - iii. **The high aspirations for Children in Care set out in the strategy, with a focus on positive outcomes.**

CAB-182 Councillors Pride Fund 2021-22 Helping to Protect, Care and Invest in our Communities

The Cabinet Member for Stronger and Safer Communities presented the report of the Director: Communities, Customer & Commercial Services.

The report provided an update on the 2021 fund. A total of 328 proposals had been submitted to Councillors when the fund was open, and a total of 257 were awarded funding. Since the scheme began in 2011, a total of £1,188,000 had been awarded. Applicants were encouraged to seek match funding for their grants. The funding had been used to support the Council's priorities.

Projects that had received funding included:

- Warm Welcome on Wednesday Dementia Support Group in Newport North & West to cover room hire and external agencies providing advice and support.
- Supporting community events, such as Brookside Central Event.

- Installation of electric vehicle charging point and recycling bins.
- A sensory area at Grange Park Primary School for all pupils, but particularly those with additional needs.

Cabinet Members welcomed the variety of projects that had received support from the programme and noted that the funds enabled Councillors to provide flexible support where it was needed.

The Representative from the Conservative Party asked about the programme's audit process and was assured that this was robust and would continue to be rigorous.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The continued impact of the Councillors Pride Fund in supporting Members to deliver the Council's five priorities in their ward to protect, care and invest in order to create a better borough be noted;**
- b) **The importance of this funding in offering a bespoke response to need in individual communities and in supporting community organisations to thrive and offer valued services to residents be noted;**
- c) **The final deadline for applications is 1 February 2023.**

**CAB- Cost of Living Strategy
183**

The Leader presented the report of the Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services.

Across the UK, people were facing an unprecedented cost of living crisis. Inflation rates had increased significantly over recent weeks, due to a number of factors, including the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, however, the situation had been made worse by the actions of the new Government. The increased costs of energy, food, road fuel, rents and other essentials were having a disproportionate impact on those who could least afford it.

The report summarised a range of measures that the Council had already delivered or funded to support residents and businesses within the Borough, however, a comprehensive package of new measures had been established to support residents and businesses through the crisis, which were outlined in the report.

Cabinet Members expressed their concern at the current situation nationally and noted the real impacts that were being seen across the Borough, Members discussed conversations they had had with residents regarding the impact of the crisis. Members welcomed the range of support measures that the strategy offered but noted that central government needed to change their strategy and restore confidence back into the markets.

In response to a question from the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group, the Leader confirmed that faith groups could be provided with Grants from the Council for various initiatives within the strategy.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The Cost of Living Strategy be approved and the support already delivered or funded by the Council to be date be noted, and the additional support and funding proposed in the strategy be endorsed;**
- b) **That authority be delegated to the Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services, in consultation with the Member Cost of Living Group chaired by the Leader, to take the necessary steps to implement these recommendations, including the approval of spending the Household Support Fund Grant allocations and Council Tax Hardship Fund;**
- c) **That authority be delegated to the Director: Housing, Employment and Infrastructure, in consultation with the lead Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services, Employment and the High Street, to take the necessary steps to implement the proposed additional support for businesses set out in this strategy.**

CAB- 2022/23 Financial Monitoring Report
184

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

Since the approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) at Full Council on 3 March 2022, there had been significant changes to the economic climate. A rapid increase in the rate of inflation, interest rates and increased demand for services made the Council's financial position more uncertain than before.

Before application of contingencies included in the overall revenue budget, the projected outturn position was expected to be over budget by £3.261m at year end. The majority of general contingencies would be required to fund the projected pressure, which left £1.673m of uncommitted contingency funds to meet any further pressures which may arise during the remainder of the year.

Variations from the approved budget were primarily in children's safeguarding & family support and adult social care. The Council had an excellent track record of strong financial management, however, the Council was not immune to the economic climate.

Cabinet Members discussed the lack of funding in relation to Adult Social Care and the potential impacts that a lack of investment within this area could have on acute health services.

The Representative from the Conservative Group queried the capital investment into the proposed new swimming pool in Dawley and asked if some provision for Children in Care could be bought in house. In regards to the provision of children's services, work was ongoing in respect of bringing some provision in house.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The 2022/23 revenue budget position be noted;
- b) The allocations of the contractual inflation contingency detailed at Section 5.4.2 of the report be approved;
- c) The position in relation to capital spend be noted;
- d) **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that the changes to the capital programme as detailed in Appendix C of the report be approved
- e) The collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger be noted.

CAB- Digital Strategy Update
185

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services presented the report of the Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services.

The report provided an update on the Digital Strategy, including the actions delivered since the strategies launch.

The strategy was progressing well, 15 of the 37 actions for 2021/22 had been completed, with a further 17 in progress.

Tom the Chatbot had been launched and had answered 12,530 queries since it had gone live. A 98.5% satisfaction rating had been achieved by this service, which operated 24/7 and received 33% of queries outside of office hours.

The delivery of full fibre infrastructure capable of supporting 5G was on target. In partnership with Virgin Media O2 Business, the scheme would boost digital infrastructure, employment and skills within the Borough.

Cabinet Members welcomed the strategy and noted that this strategy ran alongside the Council's customer strategy. The strategy acknowledged that not everyone was able to or wished to use digital means to contact the Council and that all channels for access would be kept open and this was welcomed by both the Liberal Democrat Group Leader and the Conservative Group Representative.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The update to the Digital Strategy be approved, with the progress delivered to date be noted and the refreshed action plan as set out in Appendix A of the report be endorsed;
- b) Authority be delegated to the Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services to take the necessary steps to implement the actions contained in Appendix A of the report.

**CAB- Telford Land Deal Update
186**

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

The report set out the achievements of the Telford Land Deal. Since the Deal began a total of 29 commercial sites and 23 sites for residential development had been sold, supporting the delivery of 1926 new jobs and 1284 new homes.

In the first quarter of 2022/23, 1 commercial sale site had been completed, with a further 5 commercial sites and 1 residential site currently in negotiations.

The first development phase of Ni-Park, the new employment park to the south of Newport, had been completed.

Cabinet Members noted that the Land Deal allowed the continued protection of green spaces in the Borough.

RESOLVED that the outcomes achieved during the 2021/2022 financial year and overall since the Land Deal commenced in 2015 be noted.

**CAB- Vision 2032
187**

The Leader presented the report of the Executive Director: Housing, Communities & Customer Service.

The report set out the ten year vision for the Borough. The vision had been developed through careful data analysis, engagement with partners and residents. The vision had four ambitions:

- All neighbourhoods are connected, safe and clean
- Everyone is able to live a healthy, independent life
- Everyone benefits from good education and can fulfil their potential in a thriving economy
- The environment is protected for the benefit of everyone.

The vision described the ambitions and aspirations for the Borough against these main themes.

Cabinet Members noted that the strategy had been developed with partner agencies and residents and that stakeholder events had been well attended. This strategy allowed planning on a longer term basis than the electoral cycle.

RESOLVED that:

- a) **The ten year vision presented in Appendix 1 of the report be adopted;**
- b) **The proposed partnership approach to the delivery of the vision be adopted;**
- c) **The proposed timescale to report progress on delivery of the vision be approved.**

The meeting ended at 11.59 am

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Anthea Lowe
Director: Policy & Governance
Date: **Wednesday 19 OCTOBER 2022**

Signed

Date: Thursday 3 November 2022