

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday 11 April 2024 at 10.00 am in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL 2024

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY 22 APRIL 2024)

Present: Councillors S Davies (Chair), R A Overton (Vice-Chair), E M Callear, L D Carter, N A M England, C Healy, R Mehta, K Middleton, P Watling and T J Nelson (as substitute for A J Eade).

Apologies: Councillors S A W Reynolds, A J Eade and W L Tomlinson.

CAB-54 Declarations of Interest

None.

CAB-55 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED - that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CAB-56 Leader's Announcements

The Leader announced that following a year of delays he was continuing the battle to request a review of the decision to close Telford's A&E. No response had been received to the letter he had written three months ago asking that the term "A&E local" was no longer used and this had been followed up today. He was deeply distressed and disappointed that despite this, and conversations with the NHS locally, that no confirmation had been received that "A&E" local would not be used and that an alternative title for the downgrade of the A&E department had been offered.

The Leader reported that Shropshire Council had planned to close the Bridgnorth household recycling centre and that he had been clear that they should not close the facility. This would mean that residents from Bridgnorth and the surrounding area would be more likely to visit the facilities based in the Madeley area and residents in the borough would have to pick up the bill. The Leader had been clear with Shropshire Council that they should not close the facility. If this were to happen, the Council would have no option but to charge Shropshire Residents to access the facilities in South Telford but he was clear that there would be no charges for residents in Telford and Wrekin Council and further that no charges would be introduced for local residents for the collection of green bins.

The Leader praised Network Rail for the work they undertook with Telford and Wrekin staff and partners in order to reopen the railway in a time for Easter.

CAB-57 Annual Public Health Report

The Cabinet Member: Healthy, Safer & Stronger Communities & Partnerships presented the report of the Director: Health & Wellbeing (Statutory Director of Public Health).

The report asked Cabinet to endorse the recommendations as set out in the Annual Public Health Report 2024 which aimed to improve the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people in the borough. It sought to ensure all children felt valued, visible and emotionally well and were able to access opportunities to achieve their aspirations and lead happy fulfilling lives.

An update on the local position across the Public Health Outcomes Framework provided a picture of the population health indicators across the life course.

Important work being undertaken included the Youth Year of Wellbeing campaign which celebrated projects and initiatives which supported and developed young people's emotional health and wellbeing. A targeted, community-based approach to improving outcomes was aligned to Government guidance.

Cabinet Members commented that it was important that children and young people get the best start in life and that they were supported emotionally. It was important that their views were listened to. Working alongside partners progress was being made but there were still challenges ahead.

The Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group welcomed the report but noted there was some uncomfortable reading. He highlighted that the figures for the young people not in education, employment or training (NEETS) of 16/17 year olds was now better than the England average and that vaccination rates were good. Consultation with young people themselves was a good approach and following the initial set of responses, 81 male and 16 female he felt that more could be done to encourage better female response rates. It was encouraging that the number of young people in contact with alcohol and drug services had reduced.

The Leader confirmed that the Council would continue to look at public health with a long lens and would continue to be creative and innovative in relation to youth employment, health and the economy.

RESOLVED – that the recommendations set out in the Annual Public Health Report 2024, improving the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people in the borough be endorsed.

CAB-58 Draft Carers Strategy

The Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care & Health Systems presented the joint report of the Director: Adult Social Care and Director: Children's Safeguarding & Family Support which set out the approach to producing a place based, All Age Carers Strategy.

The role of carers continued to be vital to the whole social care system providing significant support to the people they cared for and the vision continued to recognise and value carers and support them in an impactful and meaningful way. It was necessary for partners to work together to ensure carers did not have to spend valuable time navigating a complex health and care system with various points of contacts but had accessible advice, information and support.

Engagement had taken place locally through a variety of methods which were set out in the report.

The key areas of the strategy were to develop the all age approach to supporting carers to enable them to have good physical and mental health and wellbeing, empowering carers to co-produce and drive change across the borough and to work in partnership with the wider community to promote a carer friendly borough.

Cabinet was asked to note that reference to a six-week consultation at 12.3 in the report. This was an error, and it should be a nine-week consultation as set out at 1.2 in the report.

Cabinet Members commented that the strategy needed to support a mix of carers and noted the number of children under 16 who were caring. It was important that young carer's education was not left behind and an all-age strategy was fully supported. They looked forward to receiving the consultation feedback.

The Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group welcomed the strategy and the current approach to supporting the navigation of complex health and care systems and he felt there was a need to rationalise and simplify this. It was requested that the consultation included all residents. As the strategy was 22 pages long, it was asked if an executive summary for lay people could be considered. He asked if the Council could support carers falling foul of the DWP in relation to carers allowance and benefits being stopped due to any changes.

The Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care & Health Systems confirmed that there was a carers' wellbeing guide used widely across the borough. The first points of contact document was produced in different formats including easy read and this would be revisited following the consultation. Different formats for the consultation would hopefully allow good participation. With regard to carers benefits being stopped, the council ensured that carers had a carers assessment which took them through the process and helped them to understand and navigate the system.

RESOLVED – that

- a) the approach set out in paragraphs 12.2 and 12.3 of the report in relation to consultation and engagement with unpaid carers be agreed;**
- b) a nine-week consultation period starting on 18 April 2024 be approved; and**
- c) delegated authority to the Director of Adult Social Care and Director of Children’s Safeguarding and Family Support in consultation with the Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care and Health Systems to receive the outcome of the consultation and update the All-Age Carers Strategy be agreed.**

CAB-59 Visit Telford Destination Management Plan 2024 -2029

The Cabinet Member: Education, Employment and Visitor Economy presented the report of the Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services.

The report highlighted the current approach to supporting visitor economy within the borough and set out recent progress in raising awareness of Telford & Wrekin as a visitor destination.

It set out the five-year Destination Management Plan (DMP) for Telford & Wrekin which was underpinned by a detailed action plan guiding the Council to further grow the visitor economy and provided a framework for partnership work with key stakeholders, memberships and visitors.

Cultural events were a major draw locally, regionally and nationally and the Council would continue to build on their strong foundations.

Proposals to establish a new Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP), working collaboratively with Shropshire Council and key partners were also detailed in the report. This would help support the visitor economy to thrive and bring community and economic benefits ensuring people stayed longer and spent more. The LVEP would bring added benefits of access to funding and support from Visit England and Visit Britain.

Following a consultation, 92% of residents who took part felt tourism had a positive impact and was an important part of the plan which focused on local residents and attracting visitors from further afield.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report. Ironbridge Gorge was a very important destination for the borough and region with attendance from visitors and local people as days out were vital and gave a real boost to the local economy. LVEP would bring forward good opportunities for the future. It was

important to showcase what was on offer and develop other areas around the borough in order that people stay longer to have a greater impact. Tourism had a direct impact with local businesses benefitting the most, particularly in relation to high inflation and high energy costs. Investment into the high street, leisure facilities and keeping the street clean was undertaken in partnership working with Town and Parish Councils. The visitor economy promoted green spaces, housing and employment opportunities. People visited Telford on a regular basis due to its offer.

The Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group commented on the substantial piece of work that had been undertaken. He noted the logic of the LVEP approach and was pleased that the Council would retain their independence. Objective and numeric standards that were directly measurable were welcomed. There were lots of things to be done including the took kits and passports to adventure and keeping focus on these was important.

The Leader confirmed that the plan was for the period 2024-29 and there were lots of opportunities for accountability through Cabinet and Council meetings. New visitors to the borough would grow the economy. Success breeds success. This was an excellent opportunity to do more on the agenda with the ambition to increase both regional and national visitor numbers. The level of energy costs was of concern leading to business closing or reducing operating hours. This reduces the visitor offer and this needed to be a national leadership priority.

RESOLVED – that

- a) the contribution that the Council is making to supporting the local visitor economy be noted;**
- b) the Destination Management Plan 2024 – 2029 be approved;**
- c) the setting up of a Local Visitor Economy Partnership be approved;**
- d) delegated authority be granted to the Director of Communities, Customer and Commercial Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education, Employment and Visitor Economy to:**
 - implement changes to the Destination Management Plan as required;**
 - Apply to Visit England to establish a Local Visitor Economy Partnership; and**
 - governance arrangements as set out in the Destination Management Plan be approved.**

CAB-60 2023-24 Leader and Cabinet Member Young Person's Grant Scheme

The Cabinet Member: Cabinet Member for Education, Employment & Visitor Economy presented the report of the Director: Children's & Family Services.

The report gave a summary of the 2023-24 Leader and Cabinet Member Young Person Grant Scheme and set out the recommendations for 2024-25 and 2025-26.

The scheme opened for applications between 1 December 2023 and 19 January 2024, with £14,000 being the allocated budget. Young people were able to apply for up to £500 each.

During 2023-24, the scheme was supported through sponsorship and match funding from external partners; Arriva; Balfour Beatty; Veiola and through the Virgin Media 02 Business Fund.

The main objective for the 2023-24 campaign was to receive 150 completed applications by the closing date. By close of the application window 155 applications had been received with 42% of applications being directly related to comms and social media.

During the reporting period 155 applications had been made with 116 being successful. Not all successful applications were awarded the full value of the costs requested and applications were scrutinised to ensure there were no alternative cost-effective ways to meet the requests.

Cabinet Members welcomed the applications being put forward noting that a small amount of money could do an awful lot of good. It was important to give the best start in life and help to remove barriers to children's success. They were proud to continue with the scheme due to the positive impact it had on so many young peoples lives.

The Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group welcomed the 155 applications that had been submitted and the successful grants which had helped people recognise their dreams.

The Leader expressed that this was one of the proudest things that he had done as a leader, investing a small amount of money to remove a barrier for a young person. A small amount of money could make a massive difference and meant a huge amount to the young people who benefitted from the award. He hoped that following their journeys they would continue to benefit the borough economy.

RESOLVED – that

- a) the outcomes of the Leader and Cabinet Members Young Person Grant Scheme for 2023-24 be noted;**

b) the launch of the Leader and Cabinet Members Young Person Grant Scheme for 2024-25 be noted; and

c) the continuation of the funding of the Leader and Cabinet Members Young Person Grant Scheme in 2025-26 be agreed.

CAB-61 Culture Peer Review 2023

The Cabinet Member: Climate Action, Green Spaces, Heritage & Leisure presented the report of the Director: Communities, Customer and Commercial Services.

The report set out the feedback received from the Cultural Peer Review undertaken in November 2023 and gave a summary of the key findings and recommendations to support the vision for culture and cultural participation across the borough going forward.

During their visit the peer team met with officers for a range of Council services, Senior Management Team, Members and a diverse mix of external cultural sector partners, individuals and Town and Parish Councils.

Overall feedback was positive and highlighted the 'energy and enthusiasm' of external partners and the Council teams. They recognised 'the positive foundations on which to build' and the range of partners the Council's Culture Service worked with, together with the significant investment in culture and events.

An evaluation was undertaken of the current priorities, together with future ambitions, and it was identified which areas had the best impacts given the available resources and it identified some areas for development. There was an opportunity to update the baseline data and that an audit of the existing cultural activity, venues and partners would enable a better understanding of participation levels and types of activity in order to identify gaps in provision

Key recommendations were set out in the report and a proposed action plan set out at Appendix A to the report.

Cabinet Members commented on the offer that the Council had with regard to events and high streets and culture could be seen as arts and theatre but covered every single aspect of the borough. Culture made a difference and if there was additional funding, more could be done. They highlighted the richness in the borough, the platform of opportunity and the appreciation of colourful and diverse carnivals.

The Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group welcomed the report and the benchmarking exercise. There were strong reference to the Council's strengths which were the free outdoor events which proved popular. In relation to the allocation of funds from the government, levelling up money had recently been received.

The Leader referred to the government cuts, but welcomed any additional funding that was received. He confirmed that the funding was more complicated than at first glance.

RESOLVED – that

- a) the feedback and recommendations from the Local Government Association and Arts Council England Cultural Peer Review, as summarised in Section 4 to the report be noted; and
- b) the action plan developed in response to the Peer Review and its delivery and continued development, to provide a framework for monitoring and supporting the cultural sector for the borough be approved.

The meeting ended at 10.58 am

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Anthea Lowe
Director: Policy & Governance
Date: **Wednesday 17 APRIL 2024**

Signed

Date: Thursday 16 May 2024