

## CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 2 January 2020 at 11.00 am in Meeting Rooms G3/G4, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY, 8 JANUARY 2020

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY, 13 JANUARY 2020)

**Present:** Councillors A J Burford, L D Carter, S Davies (Chair), C Healy, R Mehta, R A Overton (Vice-Chair), S A W Reynolds, H Rhodes and D Wright.

**Also Present:** Councillor A J Eade, Conservative Group Leader

**Apologies:** Councillors R C Evans and W L Tomlinson (Liberal Democrat and Independent Group Leader)

### **CAB-29 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor S Davies declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute number CB-038, Youth Justice Plan 2019/20, due to his work as a solicitor occasionally practising in the Youth Court.

Councillor S Davies also declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute number CB-036, School Funding Formula 2020/21, due to his wife's employment as a teacher in a local Primary School

Councillor S A W Reynolds declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute number CB-036, School Funding Formula 2020/21, due to her daughter's employment as a teacher in a local Primary School

### **CAB-30 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2019 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

### **CAB-31 Financial Management 2019/20**

**Key Decision** identified as **Financial Management 2019/20** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 4 December 2019.

**Reserved for Council.**

Councillor L D Carter, Cabinet Member for Finance, Commercial Services and the Economy presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance & Human Resources, Chief Finance Officer.

Cabinet Members noted that the net outturn position for 2019/20 was currently projected to be within budget at year end after applying funding from the Council's contingency. The centrally held contingency was available to meet funding pressures and any unforeseen costs with any balance remaining at year-end used to support the medium term service and financial planning strategy in future years. The current projection was that £2.0m of the contingency would still be available at year-end, reduction of £0.3m since the last report mainly due to increased pressures in Children's Safeguarding

This was a positive position as £6.1m savings were required to balance the 2019/20 budget although significant pressures were being experienced in a number of service areas. The aim was to reduce the impact of those pressures and improve the overall position further during the remainder of the year.

Adult Social Care currently required an investment of £1.041m, a small increase of £0.058m since the last report, due to the cost of purchasing care packages. A cost improvement plan was in place and being closely monitored. Children's Safeguarding & Family Support continued to be a key pressure area with additional investment of £3.072m required (an increase of £0.993m since the last report), mainly due to the cost of placements for Looked after Children. This position was after applying £1.647m one off balances and contingencies, set aside at last year end to support the delivery of the cost improvement plan. The cost improvement plan in place is designed to deliver efficiencies over the remainder of the year and medium term. Education & Corporate Parenting was also under pressure with a projected overspend of £0.478m (a reduction of £0.289m since the last report), largely due to additional costs for school transport for pupils with high needs. Work to mitigate the pressures was ongoing and it was noted that there may be further opportunities for additional savings once the current review of Home to school transport is completed.

There were a number of variations from the approved budget, including some beneficial variances as set out in the report.

The funding outlook for the medium term was still very uncertain. The Government was proposing major changes to the local government finance system which were scheduled for implementation in April 2021. More detail on the medium term position was set out in the separate Service and Financial Planning Strategy report.

The Capital programme totalled £53.1m which included all approvals since the budget was set. Projected spend was 95.5% of the budget allocation. There were a number of new allocations and slippage which required approval and these were listed in Appendix 3 to the report.

The Income monitoring position was noted; sales ledger and business rate collection were ahead of target, but council tax collection was slightly behind target.

Councillor Carter commended the efforts of the Chief Financial Officer and all Council teams delivering services to the people of Telford & Wrekin.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) that it be noted that 2019/20 revenue spending is currently projected to be within budget and work will continue with SMT to sustain this position;
- (b) the position in relation to capital spend be noted and to **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that the changes to the capital programme detailed in Appendix 3 of the report be approved; and
- (c) the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger be noted.

**CAB-32 Service & Financial Planning 2020/21 Proposals**

**Key Decision** identified as **Service & Financial Planning 2020/21 Proposals** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 4 December 2019.

Councillor L D Carter, Cabinet Member for Finance, Commercial Services and the Economy presented the report of the Interim Chief Operating Officer and the Chief Financial Officer, which noted that a one year service and financial planning strategy for the current financial year had been approved by Council on 28 February 2019 due to proposed major changes to the local government finance system which were due to be implemented from April 2020. Additionally, no Government spending figures had been available beyond the end of the current year. A Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) was expected to be announced during 2019 which would have set out the Government's priorities over the medium term for public spending, taxation and the national budget deficit. However, the planned changes to the local government finance system had been postponed and were not due to come in to effect until April 2021 and the CSR was also postponed so this period of unprecedented uncertainty facing local government finance had been extended for a further year..

In view of this significant uncertainty over the future of local government finance and what resources may be available to the Council beyond next year, a one year service and financial planning strategy was also proposed for 2020/21. However, capital projects needed to be planned over a longer time horizon in order to achieve the Council's priorities and ambitions for the community and therefore new capital investment proposals were detailed in the report for 2020/21 and the following three years.

Since 2010, the Council had had to make ongoing budget savings of £117m per annum - equivalent to more than £1,600 for every household in the Borough. The Administration was committed to protecting the most essential services, particularly for vulnerable children and adults and to investing in Telford's future and in promoting jobs and growth for the Borough. In order to

do this, the Council would continue to seek innovative ways to generate income to fund key frontline services.

Key points of the strategy included:-

- A Council tax increase for 2020/21 of 3.99% which included an increase of 2% for the Government's "Adult Social Care precept". Council Tax in Telford & Wrekin currently remained the lowest across the Midlands region for the services that the Council provided.
- The Adult Social Care precept would raise £1.35m which would be fully invested in to Adult Social Care services. The general council tax increase would raise £1.34m, giving a total of £2.69m from the total increase in council tax. However, the Council through careful management of its finances would invest over £3.9m extra into Adult Social Care services in the next year.
- Increased investment of £2.958m in Children's Safeguarding.
- Extra investments of £0.15m revenue funding to support housing initiatives, £0.1m to pump prime work on climate change and just over £0.1m revenue funding for Pride environmental projects.
- In order to fund these new investments, to cover rising demand for many services and inflationary cost pressures a package of budget savings totalling £3.306m in 2020/21 rising to £4.581m in 2021/22 was required, together with
- The prudent use of £1.434m of available revenue balances to ensure a balanced budget for 2020/21 whilst retaining sufficient flexibility for the uncertain future that was faced beyond 2020/21.

#### Medium Term Capital Programme:-

A programme of capital investment programme totalling more than £234.4m was set out in Appendix 4 to the report. Amongst the capital investments included in the programme were:-

- £60m for a new "Property & Housing Regeneration and Investment Fund" to enable further long-term investments in the development of good quality homes for rent and further expansion of the Council's Property Investment Portfolio
- £26m invested in an extension to the Council's Pride Programme of environmental improvements over the next four years
- £2m pa available as a contingency in both 2021/22 and 2022/23 to fund additional priorities such as reducing the Council's carbon footprint and partnering with government and others on other climate change projects and any additional pressures that arise.

Attached to the report were a number of appendices, including the Capital Investment Programme, details of Reserves and Balances and details of education related Section 106 Agreements.

A consultation period would run from 3 January 2020 through to 31 January 2020 in order that careful consideration could be given to the views expressed by the Council's Cabinet when preparing their final report and recommendations to Full Council on 5 March 2020.

Members welcomed the report and congratulated the Cabinet Member: Finance, Commercial Services & Economic Development, Senior Management Team and Finance Team for their management of the budget.

**RESOLVED that –**

- (a) the proposed Service and Financial Planning Strategy set out in the report be approved for consultation between 3 January 2020 and 31 January 2020**
  
- (b) the high level of uncertainty relating to the medium term financial outlook for the Council due to the significant changes to the local government finance system which will be introduced from April 2021 and because the Government's one year Spending Round Announcement does not extend beyond the end of next financial year be noted. This high level of uncertainty requires the Council to retain flexibility by limiting new ongoing investments to our highest priorities and retention of as much one-off resource as possible whilst identifying some additional budget savings to ensure a balanced budget for next year.**

**CAB-33 Driving Delivery of Our 4 Year Programme to Protect, Care & Invest to Create a Better Borough**

**Key Decision** identified as **Driving Delivery of "Our Programme to Protect, Care & Invest to Create a Better Borough"** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 4 December 2019.

The Leader presented the report of the Interim Chief Operating Officer which set out key progress against the 7 priorities set out in the Council's programme to "Protect, Care and Invest to Create a Better Borough", adopted in July 2019.

Analysis of progress showed that in the 6 months since the Council adopted the new programme, a third of the pledges had been completed with a further 9% partially complete. The report comprehensively detailed examples of the activity that had been undertaken by the Council to date against each priority and the outcomes achieved.

Members welcomed the report and looked forward to further progress reports being presented to Cabinet throughout 2020 with a focus on outcomes.

**RESOLVED** – that progress made against the Council Programme be endorsed.

**CAB-34 Housing Investment Programme Update**

**Key Decision** identified as **Housing Investment Programme** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 4 December 2019.

**Recommendation for Full Council – Not Subject to Call-In**

Councillor D Wright, Cabinet Member for Housing, Transport and Infrastructure presented the report of the Assistant Director: Finance & Human Resources, which focussed on Nuplace Limited, the Council's wholly owned housing company, and provided an update on achievements over the last year, and committed developments.

Nuplace's growing housing portfolio provided a range of homes across the Borough with houses available within North and South of Telford, including affordable homes in Newport. Circa 800 people were now living in Nuplace properties across seven sites. Lettings across the portfolio remaining strong, with voids for the financial year 2018/19 contained at 2.42%, below the Business Case assumption of 5%. The tenant testimonials set out in the report reflected that the programme was achieving one of its strategic aims of raising the standard of rental provision in the Borough, both in terms of the quality of the rental homes and the quality of the landlord service.

The programme had also resulted in over 23 acres of brownfield land being regenerated, delivered added value in terms of local employment, apprenticeships, supply chain development and the delivery of a range of community projects. The Council also benefit from Council Tax and New Homes Bonus as appropriate on the housing stock delivered. This was estimated to have generated £526k since 2016/17, rising to £700k in 2019/20.

Members welcomed the report, and expressed pride in the programme and the provision for local people, particularly noting other authorities were seeking to replicate the scheme.

In response to questions regarding the levels of affordable housing, Councillor Wright noted ambitions to increase the level of affordable units in future.

**RESOLVED** – that

- (a) progress made in the delivery of the Housing Investment Programme be noted;
- (b) the financial performance for the year 2018/19 and the impact of Nuplace's operations on the Council's budget position be noted; and

- (c) **the approval of an extension to the Nuplace Loan Facilities Agreement of £5.0m, the rate and terms to be delegated for approval to the Councils s151 officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Council Finance & Service Delivery be RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

**CAB-35 Creating a Better Borough - The Telford Land Deal and Growth Fund**

**Non Key Decision**

Councillor D Wright, Cabinet Member for Housing, Transport and Infrastructure presented the report of the Assistant Director: Business, Development and Employment which provided an update on the continued achievements of the Telford Land Deal and the Council's Growth Fund investments which were delivering new and higher skilled, local jobs, creating growth and security in the local supply chain alongside new homes, and were central to the Council's Strategy to Protect, Care & Invest into creating a better Borough.

Four years after entering into a unique 10 year Land Deal with Homes England (HE), continued success was being demonstrated despite national uncertainties in the inward investment market. The unique model which allowed the disposal of public land through upfront investment into site preparation and marketing of sites, was underpinned by the Council's Enterprise Telford investment offer through its £50m Growth Fund, and had delivered an acceleration in commercial and residential sites sold and raised land values.

A number of achievements were detailed in the report including the development of commercial and residential sites which had delivered a cumulative gross sales income of £27.3m and attracted private sector investment of over £200m, future delivery of further commercial and residential sites; and reinvestment of local profit share of £3.3m into the delivery of new incubation units and grow-on space for small companies at Hortonwood West future proofing employment. A number of testimonials were included in the report.

The Council's £50m Growth Fund enabled the Council to provide land, build and lease bespoke properties and offer a full turnkey solution, continuing to drive a high number of investment enquiries drawing in new businesses and enabling others to expand and grow locally. The Fund had supported commercial opportunities including Southwater as well industrial employers such as Rosewood Pet Products and Eden Horticulture Ltd at Hortonwood West. Cumulatively, the £43m investment to date through the Growth Fund was estimated to deliver an ongoing gross return of 7.3%, 4.8% after borrowing.

The Borough continued to attract significant interest from the automotive and advanced manufacturing sector, and more recently companies connected to

battery and automotive light weighting together with the food and agricultural industries. There had been a significant increase in indigenous companies requiring new premises to expand. Investment through the Deal and utilising the Growth Fund was supporting the delivery of new floor space at Ni-Park, a new Agri Tech flag ship employment park for the Borough set to consolidate the Borough's reputation as an investment hotspot in this growing global sector.

A number of high profile investments had been made through the Council's Enterprise Telford programme including Magna Cosma's new plant at T54, Polytec's new manufacturing plant at T54, and the Epwin Group's recent land acquisition at Hortonwood.

Speculative investment was also on the rise showing continued confidence in the Telford market. This included private sector acquisitions at Hortonwood West and Halesfield alongside the Council's own investment into two new large units at T54 on land acquired through the Land Deal.

Across both the Land Deal and the Growth Fund the developments would generate business rates of circa £1.75m pa and council tax of circa £760,000 pa. The additional rental income and additional business rates retained by the Council were being invested directly into delivering front line services across all the Borough's communities. For example, this funding in 2019/20 equated to 58 older people being supported in residential care or alternatively 136 older people being supported with domicillary care to remain in their own homes.

Under the Land Deal, the Council had taken ownership of all residual non developable land from Homes England. This provided the additional opportunity to enhance and grow the Borough's provision of Green Network and Local Nature Reserves as well as providing opportunities for carbon offsetting aligning with the Council's commitment to zero carbon.

Members welcomed the report, particularly drawing attention to the testimonials of those who had benefited from the Land Deal and Growth Fund, and thanked staff across the Council for the team effort in delivery of the scheme.

**RESOLVED** – that the outcomes achieved since the Land Deal was completed and the outcomes of the Growth Fund investments to date as set out in section 4 of the report be noted.

#### **CAB-36 Schools Funding Formula 2020/21**

**Key Decision** identified as **Schools Funding Formula 2020/21** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 4 December 2019.

Councillor S A W Reynolds, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People and Education presented the report of the Assistant Director: Education & Corporate Parenting. It was reported that each year the local funding formula



was reviewed for mainstream schools in the context of revisions to Department for Education (DfE) regulations or any other relevant developments. The Council made the final decision on the funding formula having consulted with schools and the Schools Forum regarding any changes. The local funding formula applied both to academies and maintained schools and in 2020/21 would determine the distribution of around £126m of funding, which included an additional allocation of approximately £9m for schools..

Proposals for 2020/21 were noted as the local funding formula would move towards the DfE's National Funding Formula model for school funding, details of which were published in 2017, and the protection for schools would be improved by increasing the minimum funding guarantee to 1.84%;

The revised funding formula had to be submitted to the DfE agency - the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by 21 January 2020. The report sought Cabinet approval for the proposed 2020/21 funding formula for Telford & Wrekin mainstream schools.

**RESOLVED that the 2020/21 funding formula for Telford & Wrekin mainstream schools, as consulted on with the Schools Forum, be approved.**

#### **CAB-37 Together4Children - Regional Adoption Agency**

**Key Decision** identified as **North Midlands Partnership** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 4 December 2019.

Councillor S A W Reynolds, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People and Education presented the report of the Assistant Director: Children's Safeguarding & Strengthening Families which detailed the progress of the formation of an adoption agency partnership between Telford & Wrekin Council, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Shropshire Council and set out the proposed Financial Formula which set the basis for Telford & Wrekin Council's contribution to the Adoption Agency.

The formation of the "Together4Children Adoption Agency" (formerly working titled North Midlands Regional Adoption & Permanency Partnership) combined the expertise of the four Local Authorities, and was based on a shared vision to create an arrangement which went beyond Adoption (as required in the Education and Adoption Act 2016) and included Fostering, Special Guardianship and Connected Persons, was a unique arrangement, creating a sustainable system which operated on a regional footprint, maximising resources, capacity and flexibility, leading to improvements in service delivery, effective practice and long-term outcomes for children, whilst maintaining the independence of each individual Local Authority.

In March 2019, Cabinet approved the formation of a Regional Permanency Arrangement (following the consideration of an Outline Business Case). To maximise the potential benefits of the new delivery model, and to manage the risks, Cabinet agreed to pursue a well organised and sequenced plan to

achieve go live of Phase One (2018 – 2020), Phase Two (2020 – 2022) and Phase Three (2022 – 2024). The report detailed the partnership’s progress to date and set out the governance arrangements in place.

The four Local Authorities had made it clear that any future partnership arrangement could not lead to increased financial costs or pressures because of the development of this Partnership. The four Local Authorities are also clear that no Local Authorities will be disadvantaged financially because of the development of this arrangement.

It was, therefore, that the Regional Financial Formula for 2020/21 and 2021/22 was set on the basis that each Partner contributed 100% of “in scope” budgets (Adoption), as disaggregated from the 2019/20 budget and that there would be no further recourse to any Local Authority in the Partnership, in respect of services in scope of the Phase One Regional Adoption Agency (RAA). Partner Local Authorities would remain responsible for any additional cost pressures (through, for example, significant increases in predicted demand for services).

The Department of Education (DfE), stakeholders and other Local Authorities had identified regional finance and funding formulas as one of the most significant challenges facing Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA) across the country. Within the design of the proposed financial model, the Partnership had identified the best practice from Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA) that had already gone live. The available evidence supported the proposals as the best approach in terms of mitigating the potential for increased cost pressures and ensured financial certainty for the Partnership in the short term, whilst ensuring that the Local Authorities were insulated from potential financial risk as a result of the new arrangement. The proposed model allowed the Partnership to be able to adjust the Regional Financial Formula to take account of further functions coming into scope, as previously set out in the previous Cabinet Report and Regional Outline Business Case (OBC).

Members welcomed the approach set out by the report noting the benefits of a broader geography to finding the right forever family for children in care. .

**RESOLVED – that**

- (a) the progress made in respect of the formation of the Together4Children Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) between Telford & Wrekin Council, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Shropshire Council be acknowledged;**
- (b) the Statutory Director of Children’s & Adults Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Education Cllr Shirley Reynolds be authorised to make further key decisions in relation to the formation of the Together4Children Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), including entering into the final interagency Permanency Partnership Agreement;**

- (c) the Together4Children Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), Regional Financial Formula for 2020/21 and 2021/22 set on the basis that each Partner contributes 100% of “in scope” budgets (Adoption Services), as disaggregated from the 2019/20 budget be approved; and
- (d) continued commitment to the ambition of Telford & Wrekin Council, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Shropshire Council to go beyond adoption and develop a regional model of wider permanence which includes Fostering, Connected Persons and Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) be made.

### **CAB-38 Youth Justice Plan 2019/20**

**Key Decision** identified as **Youth Justice Plan 2019/20** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 4 December 2019.

#### **Recommendation for Full Council – not subject to Call-in.**

Councillor S A W Reynolds, Cabinet Member: Children, Young People and Education presented the report of the Director: Children’s and Adult’s Services which outlined the responsibilities of the West Mercia Youth Offending Service and presented the Youth Justice Plan 2019/20 for approval and endorsement to Council.

It was noted that the Youth Justice Service was a youth justice partnership between the Local Authorities and NHS organisations across West Mercia, National Probation Service, West Mercia Police and the Office for the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner. Youth justice partnerships had a statutory duty to produce an annual youth justice plan which was prepared on behalf of Herefordshire Council, Shropshire Council, Telford and Wrekin Council and Worcestershire County Council.

The Youth Justice Plan for 2019/20 was prepared in May 2019 in line with the guidance issued by the Youth Justice Board (YJB), agreed at the West Mercia Youth Justice Service Management Board on 24 May 2019 and submitted to the YJB at the end of July 2019.

The Youth Justice Plan set out how youth justice services across West Mercia were structured and funded and identified key actions to address identified risks to service delivery and improvement. Members noted the partnerships priorities for 2019/20 and commentary on the three national performance indicators for youth offending services (YOS). Performance against the indicators was outlined in the plan and actions identified to address risks to performance improvement.

Members noted the twelve main priorities for 2019/20 which were detailed in the report and the actions being taken to address each priority.

**RESOLVED that the Youth Justice Plan 2019/20 be RECOMMENDED TO FULL COUNCIL for approval and endorsement and that the West Mercia Youth Justice Service responsibilities be noted.**

**CAB-39 Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020-2021**

**Key Decision** identified as **Council Tax Support Scheme 2020-2021** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 4 December 2019.

**Recommendation for Full Council – not subject to Call-in.**

Councillor R Mehta, Cabinet Member: Communities & Inclusivity presented the report of the Assistant Director: Customer & Neighbourhood Services which set out the proposed policies for 2020/21 in relation to Council Tax Support and the Council Tax Hardship Fund.

The Council provided Council Tax Support (CTS) to around 14,100 claimants, of which 8,331 were of working age. Residents who were of state pension age (a minimum 65 years of age for both men and women) were protected under the Government scheme, in that the calculation of the support they received was set by Central Government. For working age applicants however, the Council Tax Support they received was determined by the Local Authority. The main objective of the proposed new 'Council Tax Reduction Scheme' (CTRS) was to provide greater financial assistance to working age customers within the borough, many of whom were on the lowest income. It had recently become apparent, following close scrutiny of Council Tax collection data, that customers in this group were struggling to afford the Council Tax contribution that they were being asked to pay from their limited income.

The deployment of Universal Credit within the borough by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had also brought challenges, and resulted in the Council needing to change its approach to Council Tax Support. The current scheme was deemed too reactive to very minor changes in an applicant's income, leading to constant changes in Council Tax liability, resulting in numerous bills being generated for each household, which could be very confusing.

As a result, the report proposed a move to an income-based grid scheme (also commonly referred to as a banded scheme) without the complexities of a full means test required by the current scheme. The new scheme aimed to rebalance the distribution of the available funding to ensure that the most financially deprived customers could receive a greater level of support than the current scheme allowed.

A formal consultation regarding the proposed changes was undertaken with residents and key stakeholders between 30 September 2019 and 10 November 2019. 61% of respondents had confirmed their support for the proposed new banded scheme in comparison to 24% who were not in favour.

The proposed new scheme would still retain a number of 'incomes' that would be disregarded to protect vulnerable residents including Child Benefit, Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payments, Armed Forces Independence Payments, War Widow(er)'s Pension, War Disablement Pension, Carers Allowance, Support Component of Employment and Support Allowance and disregarding the first £20 of earned income

The proposals meant that a number of working age customers would see a difference in their individual awards once the new scheme was applied. Some customers would see an increase in the level of support received and others would experience a reduction. However, overall this represented a fairer distribution of the funding available, to ensure that the most financially deprived could receive a greater level of assistance than the current CTS scheme allows.

29 Councils were currently operating a similar banded scheme to the one being proposed and reliable information indicated that nearly one hundred Councils were planning to move to a banded scheme in 2020, with more indicating that they would adopt a similar approach from 2021/22, many citing the introduction of Universal Credit as the main driver.

Since 2013 a Council Tax Hardship Fund had been approved each year by Cabinet which had been invaluable in providing additional support to the most financially vulnerable customers. Within the budget strategy for 2020/21 funding had been identified for the scheme to continue, allowing for additional tailored financial support whilst, residents adjust to the changes in the proposed new Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

To complement the proposed changes, the Council Tax Reduction Hardship Policy had been redesigned to ensure that personalised financial protection could be awarded to the most financially vulnerable customers.

The scheme received full support from the Cabinet.

#### **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL**

- (a) that the new Council Tax Reduction Scheme attached to the report at Appendix A be adopted for implementation from 1 April 2020; and**
- (b) the redesigned Council Tax Reduction Hardship Assistance Policy attached at Appendix B to the report be approved.**

#### **CAB-40 Review of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan - Protect, Care and Invest to Create a Better Borough**

**Key Decision** identified as **Review of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan - Protect, Care & Invest to Create a Better Borough** in the Notice of Key Decisions published on 4 December 2019.

Councillor D Wright, Cabinet Member for Housing, Transport and Infrastructure presented the report of the Assistant Director: Business, Development & Employment which set out the Council's obligation to comply with regulations to ensure the Local Plan was up to date. A review also provided an opportunity to address local opportunities and challenges.

Adopted in January 2018, the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan was the Development Plan for the Borough, central to delivering plan led growth and the starting point for assessing planning applications.

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 placed an obligation on Councils to review Local Plans within a five year period from the date of adoption (ie the review needed to be completed by January 2023). The Borough needed to comply with the Regulations and ensure its Local Plan is up-to-date and in conformity with the revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework. A review also enabled the authority to address local opportunities and it was a key opportunity to tackle policy and infrastructure challenges including transport, health and wellbeing, provision of affordable and specialist accommodation and to review policy to address Climate Change in the light of the Climate Emergency Declaration.

Given these circumstances and opportunities it was proposed that a review of the Local Plan be launched. The proposed review would not be housing numbers driven but seek to embed key priorities for the Council and Borough. Four core objectives were proposed to underpin the review:

- Employment led growth through inward investment and job creation
- A 'Forest Community' approach which afforded the protection, enhancement and accessibility of the natural environment and green spaces that characterise the Borough
- Support for regeneration of Borough Towns, new town estates and infrastructure
- Meeting local housing needs including providing more affordable and specialist accommodation to support people to live longer and healthier at home

Appended to the report were the Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The process for the formal Review was detailed in the report, and it was noted that the Local Plan would be brought forward in tandem with a review of the Economic Strategy, a new Housing Strategy and a refreshed Local Transport Plan ensuring a Local Plan Review that set the context for growth in the short and medium term with a horizon of 2041.

**RESOLVED - that**

- (a) a review of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan based on the information set out in the report be commenced;**

- (b) the Local Development Scheme attached to the report be approved and published with effect from 1 January 2020;
- (c) the revised Statement of Community Involvement attached to the report be approved and published;
- (d) the Call for Sites process be commenced; and
- (e) the Assistant Director Business, Development & Employment (or any Officer authorised by this post-holder) be authorised to exercise all the Council's powers (besides those which are non-executive powers) under the relevant provisions of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 and all other enabling legislation relating to, preparation, publication, consultation and processing to secure the delivery of the Local Plan Review, the Call for Sites, the Local Development Scheme and the Statement of Community Involvement.

The meeting ended at 12.27pm

**Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices**

Joanthan Eatough  
Assistant Director: Governance, Procurement & Commissioning  
Date: **Wednesday, 8 January 2020**

Signed .....

Date: Thursday, 20 February 2020