

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19TH JANUARY 2011
12.30 pm – 13.50 pm

Responsible Officer Penny Chamberlain

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Present:

Mr K Barrow
Mr G Butler, Mrs A Caesar-Homden, Mr S Charmley, Mrs A Hartley, Mr S P Jones,
Mrs C Motley, Mr M Owen, Mr M Price and Mr M Taylor-Smith

201. Apologies for Absence

201.1 There were no apologies for absence.

202. Declarations of Interest

202.1 There were no declarations of interest.

203. Minutes

203.1 **RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meetings held on 8th December and 22nd December 2010 be approved and signed by the Leader as a correct record.

204. Public Questions

204.1 Shrewsbury Municipal Golf Course

Mr S Martin of Shrewsbury (CPRE) asked the following question of the Leader, in accordance with Procedure Rule 14:

Some weeks ago the Leader of the Council was reported in the press as saying that there was no intention of selling off the Shrewsbury Municipal Golf Course for housing development. Will he please confirm that this is the Council's position?

The Leader, Mr Keith Barrow replied as follows:

As I have previously stated the Council has not received any formal offer for the golf course and has no intention of selling off the golf course at this time.

204.2 Shrewsbury North West Relief Road

Mrs E Sandford of Longden asked the following question of the Portfolio Holder, in accordance with Procedure Rule 14:

Would you please bear 2 very vital points in mind when discussing this matter and before you say "No" to the road?

The 2 points are:

1. The development of industry and other things in the north of Shrewsbury will depend on this road so that industry does not have to take its lorries and other vehicles through the centre of Shrewsbury.
2. Nor will they wish to continue going through the country lanes, such as Huffley Lane, and then end up circling around the country roads to get to their businesses to the north and west of the county.

How can anything less be done to save the centre of Shrewsbury if you are going to develop the north of the town.

I don't mind if modifications are made to the road, but please continue to support the scheme."

The Portfolio Holder, Mr Martin Taylor Smith replied as follows:

Regrettably, given the reductions in public sector expenditure, funding for the North West relief road is highly unlikely for the period of this parliament and for a number of years beyond that.

The work that the council has undertaken in planning for the North West relief road will remain substantially relevant and should funding become available in the future then this option can again be considered. We will retain the ability to construct the North West Relief Road should funding become available.

However, given the aspiration of the Council to see Shrewsbury as a growth point and to ensure the continued economic vitality of the town, measures will be required over the next few years to improve the transport and traffic infrastructure of the town in an affordable way.

This report sets out a coordinated group of initiatives and measures that collectively will result in a more sustainable integrated transport system for Shrewsbury without the NWRR. It recognises and seeks to address some of the limitations of the existing road network and to maximize the use of the existing network for key journeys.

The proposals seek to reduce where possible cross-town journeys and to reduce the number of vehicles coming into Shrewsbury through the increased use of effective joined up public transport systems.

The sustainable integrated transport strategy cannot address all the traffic and transport issues that Shrewsbury will face in the future; however, given the funding position it provides a realistic proposition to improve traffic management for Shrewsbury in the short to medium term.

205. Matters Referred from Scrutiny/Council

205.1 No matters had been referred from Scrutiny/Council.

206. Reports of Scrutiny Committees

206.1. No reports had been referred from the Scrutiny Committees.

207. Estimated Collection Fund Outturn for 2010/11

207.1 The Leader presented a report by the Interim Head of Finance – copy attached to the signed minutes – advising on the requirement to maintain a Collection Fund separate from the General Fund of the Council. As Billing Authority the report also detailed the estimated Collection Fund surplus for 2010/11, calculated as at the 15th January 2011, for the year ending 31st March 2011. The report also determined the respective shares of the estimated surplus notifiable to the major precepting authorities.

207.2 A member sought confirmation as to whether any of the estimated surplus would be allocated to the relevant town and parish councils and the Interim Section 151 Officer indicated that a written reply would be given to the question.

207.3 RESOLVED:

- (a) That, the Collection Fund estimated surplus of £541,400 for the year ending 31st March 2011 be noted.
- (b) That, the distribution of the Collection Fund estimated surplus to the major precepting authorities be noted.
- (c) That, Shropshire Council's share of the surplus (£446,100) which was available for use in 2011/12 be noted.
- (d) That, the inclusion of Shropshire Council's share of the surplus in its 2011/12 budget estimates be noted.

208. Statement of Chief Financial Officer on the Adequacy of Provisions and Reserves 2011-14

208.1 The Leader presented a report by the Interim Section 151 Officer – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the adequacy of the proposed reserves which enabled a longer term view of the overall position to be taken. The report also sought approval for the recommended level of the Council's reserves, based on an assessment of current financial risk.

208.2 During the ensuing discussion a number of members expressed concern about the proposed level of reserves for the next few years and suggested that they be reduced in view of the current economic difficulties facing the Council this year and the need to find more savings over the next 2 years. In turn the Leader stated that it was important for the Council to have money available in the event of unexpected pressures otherwise the authority would be putting itself at risk.

208.2 RESOLVED:

- (a) That, the following be approved:
- A The recommended level of risk based general balances to support the 2011-12 revenue budget, be set at £13.342m; and
 - B The plan to reach this level of reserves over a longer period.
- (b) That, the projected recommended level of risk based general balances for the following two years, at £13.280m and £10.945m, respectively, be noted.

209. Statement of Chief Financial Officer on the Robustness of the Estimates 2011-14

209.1 The Leader presented a report by the Interim Head of Finance – copy attached to the signed minutes – setting out a Statement by the Council's Chief Financial Officer (Director of Finance) on the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the Council's budget calculations.

209.2 RESOLVED:

That, the Statement of the Chief Financial Officer on the Robustness of the Estimates for 2011 – 2014 as set out in the report by the Head of Finance be noted.

210. Revenue Monitor 2010/11 Month 8 (November 2010)

210.1 The Leader presented a report by the Interim Head of Finance – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the Revenue forecast for 2010/2011 as at month 8 (November 2010) and ongoing management actions which had been identified to ensure that the year end position would result in a balanced budget.

210.2 RESOLVED:

- (a) That, it be noted at the end of Month 8 (26 November 2010) the full year forecast projected a potential overspend of £316,000.
- (b) That, the management actions identified in the report to recover the directorate overspends in Children & Young People's Services, Community Services and Development Services be noted.
- (c) That, the transfer of £1,400,000 to the General Fund Balance from the Shropshire Waste Partnership General Reserve be approved, and it be noted that this sum could be released now that budget provision had been made within next year's budget strategy.
- (d) That, the transfer of £831,000 be approved from the General Fund Balance to offset the County Training overspend projected to remain at the year end.

- (e) That, the transfer of £240,750 be approved from the General Fund Balance to offset the expenditure relating to the Transformation Programme.
- (f) That, the write offs of six bad debts be approved, each over £15,000, relating to Non Domestic Rates accounts that were no longer retrievable in accordance with Financial Rules.

211. Capital Monitoring Report – Period 8 2010/11

211.1 The Leader presented a report by the Interim Section 151 Officer – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the current position of the Council's 2010/11 to 2014/15 Capital Programme taking into account the latest monitoring information on the progress of the schemes, any budget increases/decreases and the re-profiling of budgets between 2010/11 and future years. The report also set out the current position in respect of the prudential indicators approved by Council on 25th February 2010.

211.2 RESOLVED:

- (a) That, the budget variations to the 2010/11 Capital Programme, totalling £0.8m as included in Appendix 1 and 3a/Table 1 and the re-profiled 2010/11 capital budget of £102.1m be approved.
- (b) That, the re-profiled capital budgets of £108m for 2011/12, £50.4m for 2012/13, £46.1m for 2013/14 and £44.1m for 2014/15 as detailed in Appendix Two and changes in Appendix 3b be approved.
- (c) That, the spend to date of £46,058,318, representing 45.1% of the revised capital budget for 2010/11, with 67% of the year having elapsed (Appendix 1) be noted.
- (d) That, the ongoing work by officers to bring forward proposals to match the programme to the available resources and in doing so reducing the over commitment on capital receipts and the ongoing revenue costs associated with the current level of prudential borrowing be noted. A revised capital budget report would be presented to Cabinet on 15th February for consideration. This report would also incorporate the confirmed Government Grant allocations for the period 2011/12 to 2014/15.
- (e) That, the position be noted regarding the prudential indicators and the requirement to update these indicators as part of the Treasury Strategy Report 2011/12, which would be presented to Council 24th February 2011.

212. Annual Review of Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy

212.1 The Leader presented a report by the Interim Section 151 Officer – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy which had been totally refreshed in line with best practice and continued to outline clearly the Council's commitment to stand against all forms of Fraud and Corruption whether it was attempted on or from within the Council.

212.2 RESOLVED:

That, the Counter Fraud and Anti-Corruption Strategy attached to the report by the Interim Section 151 Officer be adopted as a key part of the Council's stance against Fraud and Corruption.

213. Establishing Member Working Group: Transforming Shropshire's Approach to Localism and the Big Society

213.1 The Portfolio Holder for Community Working presented a report by the Corporate Head of Strategic Planning – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the proposed establishment of a time limited cross party Member Working Group to develop Shropshire Council's response to the Localism Bill which had been launched by the Government to allow local people the freedom to run their lives and neighbourhoods in their own way. The publication of an essential guide entitled "Decentralisation and the Localism Bill" had also explained the Government's expectations for accelerating decentralisation through specific actions with the intention that each action was actively considered by local government as an opportunity to return power to local people.

213.2 RESOLVED

- (a) That, a cross party member working group be established to formulate Shropshire Council's response to the Localism Bill and call for decentralisation of services.
- (b) That, the membership of the cross party member working group be determined on the basis of 3 members from the Administration Group and 1 from each of the Labour and Liberal Democrat Groups.
- (c) That, because of the importance of this issue in shaping the future role and style of Shropshire Council, the membership of the Group be reflective of relevant Cabinet portfolios.

214. Preliminary Draft Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule and Draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document

214.1 The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing presented a report by the Corporate Director – Places – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the requirement under the Shropshire Core Strategy for development to make contributions to infrastructure with the Community Infrastructure levy identified as the most suitable mechanism in this regard. The Government had recently announced its support for the levy and was encouraging local authorities to adopt it as a fairer, faster, more certain and transparent method than the system of planning obligations. The report explained that the first stage in introducing a Shropshire Community Infrastructure Levy was to publish a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule for consultation alongside a draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document to help explain the operation of the new mechanism and its connection to Place Plans.

214.2 RESOLVED:

That, the Preliminary Draft Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule and the Draft Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document attached to the report by the Corporate Director – Places be approved for the purposes of public consultation.

215. New Shropshire Council Sustainability Policy Documents

215.1 The Portfolio Holder for Energy and Carbon Reduction presented a report by the Corporate Director – Places – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the need for proposed changes to existing sustainability related documents if the Council was to remain a recognised leader in responding to climate change. An over-arching Sustainability, Environment and Climate Change Policy had been created which would be supported by the following documents:

- Climate Change Strategy;
- Sustainable Construction Policy;
- Historic Community Climate Change Policy; and
- Sustainable Procurement Policy.

215.2 In response to queries raised by a number of members, she indicated that given the current economic climate the Council would need to act realistically in light of its available resources in achieving good and excellent targets, albeit the intention was to aim for as high standards as possible. Confirmation was also given that whilst these were corporate documents and meant mainly for use within the Council, discussions were due to commence with community groups in Shropshire in the near future in order to bring benefits to the whole of the county.

215.3 RESOLVED:

That, the contents of each of the following New Shropshire Council Sustainability Policy Documents attached to the report of the Corporate Director – Places be approved and adopted for use across Shropshire Council:

- Climate Change Strategy;
- Sustainable Construction Policy;
- Historic Community Climate Change Policy; and
- Sustainable Procurement Policy.

216. Consultation Draft Supplementary Planning Document on Sustainable Design (Part 1), including the Part 1 Sustainability Checklist

216.1 The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing presented a report by the Corporate Director – Places – copy attached to the signed minutes – on Policy CS6 of the Shropshire Core Strategy which sought to ensure that new development was designed to a high quality using sustainable design

principles. The report explained that as part of this policy approach, all development proposals would be required to meet the minimum requirements within a Sustainability Checklist, set out within a Sustainable Design supplementary planning document. To ensure that the key sustainability considerations within the document were ready for adoption alongside the Core Strategy in April 2011, it was necessary to publish a draft document (Part 1) for the purposes of a formal public consultation as soon as possible.

216.2 RESOLVED:

That, the Draft Supplementary Planning Document on Sustainable Design (Part 1) be approved for the purposes of public consultation.

217. Growth Point Update and Expenditure

217.1 The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing presented a report by the Corporate Director – Places – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the current spend of the Growth Point budget for Shrewsbury together with outputs of the programme to date. The report also identified budget commitments to March 2012 and beyond which formed part of delivering the conditions for success for the emerging Marches Local Enterprise Partnership.

217.2 RESOLVED:

- (a) That, the progress made to date in respect of the Shrewsbury Growth Point activities be noted.
- (b) That, the proposed future budget spend be included within the Capital Strategy to Council, with authority for the spend contained within the Activity Plan being delegated to the Corporate Director – Places in liaison with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing.

218. Shrewsbury North-West Relief Road and Shrewsbury Transport Strategy

218.1 The Portfolio Holder for Transport presented a report by the Corporate Director – Places – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the current position with the funding of the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road. In light of very little prospect of sufficient funding being secured for the project in the short to medium term the report recommended no further work should be undertaken on the scheme at present. To address Shrewsbury's identified traffic problems the report also suggested that a more affordable package of transport measures should be pursued as part of a Shrewsbury Integrated Transport Strategy.

218.2 During the ensuing discussion a member stated that traffic problems in north Shrewsbury needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency and asked that care be taken to ensure that the intervention measure relating to the proposed development of a Parkway Rail Station at Preston Boats did not take on too much prominence and consequently hinder the implementation of some of the more practical measures being put forward for the town.

218.2 RESOLVED:

- (a) That, the policy position on the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road and Shrewsbury Transport Strategy set out in the report by the Corporate Director – Place be approved for consultation purposes.
- (b) That, the policy position be set out in the draft Local Transport Plan Core Strategy for consultation with stakeholders and the general public.

219. The Rural Challenge Capital Fund Part of the Market Towns Revitalisation Programme

219.1 The Portfolio Holder for Rural Affairs presented a report by the Corporate Director – Places – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the proposed operation of the Rural Challenge Capital Fund which was the third element of the Market Towns Revitalisation Programme package of support with an allocation of £0.5 million.

219.2 RESOLVED:

- (a) That, the proposed arrangements for the operation of the Rural Challenge Fund and the assessment criteria set out in the report be approved.
- (b) That, the aims and objectives of the fund as detailed in the report be approved.
- (c) That, authority be delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive (Policy and Partnerships) and the Assistant Director Strategy and Development (or the new responsible officers in the revised management structure) in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Economy, Finance and Waste, Partnership Working and Rural Affairs and Public Protection for approval of all projects.

220. Shropshire Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2011

220.1 The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing presented a report by the Assistant Director Housing Delivery – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the outcome of the consultation on the draft Homelessness Strategy Action Plan which had been developed to re-align the Shropshire Homelessness Strategy with the Shropshire Housing Strategy. The Plan had been amended in response to the consultation and presented to Cabinet for adoption by the Council.

220.2 RESOLVED:

- (a) That, the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2011 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report by the Assistant Director be adopted.
- (b) That, the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan be reviewed as necessary early in 2011 when the funding settlement had been confirmed.

221. Empty Homes Strategy

221.1 The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing presented a report by the Assistant Director Housing Delivery – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the outcome of the consultation undertaken into the Empty Homes Strategy which had been developed in relation to the work carried out by the Private Sector Housing Team. The Strategy had been amended in response to the consultation and presented to Cabinet for adoption by the Council.

221.2 RESOLVED:

That, the Empty Homes Strategy be adopted.

222. Adult Social Care Annual Performance Assessment 2009/10

222.1 The Portfolio Holder for Adult Services presented a report by the Director of Health and Care – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the judgements made by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) about the quality of Adult Social care services provided by and on behalf of Shropshire Council. The Council had achieved improved results compared to previous years and was in the top 4 (and ranked equal second place) out of the 14 West Midlands Councils.

222.2 RESOLVED:

- (a) That, the improvements achieved from 2008/09 to 2009/10 be noted.
- (b) That, the actions to address improvement areas identified by CQC be included in the relevant business plans where appropriate.

223. Delivery of Mobile Library Services in Shropshire

223.1 The Portfolio Holder for Culture and Leisure introduced a report by the Assistant Director Culture and Leisure – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the outcome of the Task and Finish Group established to review mobile library services and invited the Chairman of the Group to present the findings in relation to the future delivery of the service.

224.2 During his presentation the Chairman referred to the public's high regard for the service and explained that the Group had concentrated on how the mobile library services could best be provided in a way that took account of changing demographics, patterns of usage and council priorities. Having carried out extensive consultation and analysis together with sourcing best practice from other library authorities, he advised that the Group had put forward a number of recommendations for consideration which they believed to be practical solutions to the current financial challenges and changes facing the county, based on three elements namely, the provision of services to care homes, provision of a home delivery service to the most vulnerable and provision to other customers who were more mobile. In particular he referred to the possibility of some of the budget savings from the reduction in the mobile library fleet being re-invested into the development of the home delivery service.

223.3 RESOLVED:

That, the recommendations set out in Appendix 1 to the report by the Assistant Director Culture and Leisure be approved.

224. Shropshire Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE)

224.1 The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services presented a report by the Corporate Director – People – copy attached to the signed minutes – on the current arrangements for meeting the statutory duty to provide a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education together with recommendations for possible future ways of working, namely that future meetings of the Shropshire SACRE be separate from those for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin. A letter of support for the continuance of the current arrangements from the Chairman of the Shropshire SACRE to the Portfolio Holder was tabled for members' information.

224.2 During the ensuing discussion a member of the Shropshire SACRE spoke in favour of the proposed new arrangements in order that matters might be taken forward and officer reports scrutinised to ensure the Council met its responsibility in relation to Religious Education in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. In response to a query from a member regarding the officer time to be spent in relation to the appointment of a Clerk to Shropshire's SACRE, the Portfolio Holder agreed to forward the information including financial details to the member concerned.

224.2 RESOLVED:

- (a) That, a Clerk be appointed by Shropshire Council to Shropshire's Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education.
- (b) That, future meetings of the Shropshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education be distinct from those for the Borough of Telford and Wrekin.

225. Future of the MyPlace Project

225.1 The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services presented a report by the Corporate Director – People – copy attached to the signed minutes - on the current position with regard to the Big Lottery Bid for the development of two youth facilities in Shrewsbury and Oswestry from the MyPlace initiative made available under the previous government. Confirmation of capital funding for the Shropshire projects had been received recently from the new government with the caveat that investments should only proceed where all parties had confidence in the robustness of the project's long term revenue funding plans.

225.2 The report further explained that following the Comprehensive Spending Review and the need to find financial efficiencies combined with the likely outsourcing of Connexions to a new all age Careers Service, there was no longer confidence that robust and sustainable revenue funding was in place for the Shrewsbury element of the MyPlace project. As the element would

therefore be a high risk project for the Council to adopt, alternative uses and revenue funding for the Shrewsbury building had been looked into and continued to be explored in relation to the possible development of the building into alternative accommodation for homeless young people.

225.3 During the ensuing discussion the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing indicated that the possible use of the Shrewsbury building for accommodating homeless young people and rough sleepers ought to be referred for consideration to the member task and finish group alongside other possible sites in the town.

225.2 RESOLVED:

- (a) That, the MyPlace project at the Oswestry site be pursued.
- (b) That, the MyPlace project at the Shrewsbury site be not pursued.

226. Exclusion of Public and Press

226.1 RESOLVED:

That, in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and Paragraph 10.2 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the public and press be excluded during consideration of the following item.

227. Exempt Minutes

227.1 RESOLVED:

That, the exempt Minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Leader.

Signed (Leader)

Date: 15th February 2011