



<u>Committee and Date</u> COUNCIL
22 July 2010
10.00 am

<u>Item</u>
<b>3(i)</b>
<b>Public</b>

## MINUTES

OF

MEETING OF SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

HELD ON 24 JUNE 2010  
AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Mr P Adams  
Mrs B J Baker  
Mr T Barker  
Mrs J B Barrow  
Mr K R Barrow  
Mr J T Bebb  
Mr M Bennett  
Mr W Benyon  
Mr T Biggins  
Mrs K Burgoyne  
Mr G Butler  
Mrs A Caesar-Homden  
Mrs K D Calder  
Mr S Charmley  
Mrs A M Chebsey  
Mr J E Clarke  
Mr G L Dakin  
Mr S Davenport  
Mr A B Davies  
Mr T Davies  
Mrs P A Dee  
Mr D W Evans

Mr R A Evans  
Mr E J Everall  
Mr J A Gibson  
Mr J B Gillow OBE  
Mr N J Hartin  
Mrs E A Hartley  
Mr V J Hunt  
Mr J Hurst-Knight  
Dr J E Jones  
Mrs J Jones  
Mr S P A Jones  
Mr J M W Kenny  
Mrs H Kidd  
Mr C J Lea  
Mr D G Lloyd MBE  
Mr C J Mellings  
Mr D J Minnery  
Mr A N Mosley  
Mrs C M A Motley  
Mrs M R Mullock  
Mrs E M Nicholls  
Mr P A Nutting

Mr M J Owen JP  
Mr W M Parr  
Mrs E A Parsons  
Mr M G Pate  
Mr P F Phillips  
Mr K Roberts  
Mr D L Roberts  
Mrs D M Shingleton  
Mr J Tandy  
Mr M Taylor-Smith  
Mrs R T D Taylor-Smith  
Mr R Tindall  
Mr G F Tonkinson  
Mr A E Walpole  
Mr S J West  
Mr M Whiteman OBE  
Mrs C Wild  
Mr B B Williams RD  
Mr J M Williams  
Dr M Winchester  
Mr M L Wood  
Mr P A D Wynn

## 19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chief Executive reported apologies for absence had been received from Mr V Bushell JP, Mr J T Durnell, Mrs T Huffer, Mr R Hughes, Mr M T Price, Mr L J P Winwood and Mrs T Woodward.

## 20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declaration of interest was made:

- (a) Mr G H L Butler declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 12 (Shropshire Council Capital Monitoring Report (Outturn 2009/10 and Revised 2010/11 Budget) in relation to paragraph 18.2 (Private Sector Housing Programme) as he had previously applied for grant aid. He left the room during the consideration of, and voting on, this item.

## 21. MINUTES

Mr P F Phillips proposed an amendment to Minute 7(4) which was not supported by the majority.

### RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 April 2010 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

## 22. ANNOUNCEMENTS

### (a) Chairman's Engagements

The Chairman referred members to the list of official engagements carried out by himself and the Speaker and Vice-Chairman, since the last meeting on 29 April 2010 which had been circulated at the meeting.

### (b) HM The Queen Birthday Honours List 2010

The Speaker announced that the following Shropshire residents had been awarded honours in the Queen's Birthday Honours List and that he would be writing to each one of the recipients to congratulate them on their achievement:

#### Officers of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)

##### **Barry Forrester**

Lately Principal Recruitment Policy Advisor,  
Civil Service Commissioners, Cabinet Office

#### Members of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)

##### **Terrence James Connell**

Grade C1, Ministry of Defence

**Mrs Pamela Mary Jennings**

For services to the community in  
Ashton-on-Clun, Shropshire

**Kenneth Jones**

For services to the Ironbridge Gorge World  
Heritage Site

**John William Rose**

Dental Advisor, NHS Western Cheshire,  
for services to the NHS

**Bert Frederick Williams**

For services to football and charity

(c) **Award of Legion d'Honneur – Mr G Medicott**

The Speaker advised that Mr Glynne Medicott of Shrewsbury had recently been awarded the Legion d'Honneur, France's highest military honour, for his bravery in World War II. Mr Medicott, (87), and two other British veterans had received their medals for their parts in the Allied Invasion of Southern France from the French President, Mr Nicholas Sarkozy, in front of over 1,500 people at London's Royal Hospital, Chelsea.

He confirmed that he would be writing to Mr Medicott to congratulate him on this award.

(d) **Federation of Small Businesses Accord**

The Speaker stated that Ms Ann Johnson, the Shropshire Chair of the Federation of Small Businesses, was present in order that the Council and the Federation could sign this Accord.

The Leader and Ms Johnson then signed the document, after which Ms Johnson implored the Council to think of the impact its decisions would have on business in the coming months.

## **23. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

In the absence of the questioner, Mr I G Jones, the Speaker put the following question:

“As a Designated ‘Link’ Governor for Children’s Issues including Child Protection at three Schools, I am very concerned at the very poor (undeliverable poor) untimely response to concerns raised by Named Persons in our Schools to Child Protection issues by Shropshire Council’s Safeguarding Services.

It appears that Shropshire Council Children’s Services have not learned anything from the Lord Laming Report into the death of Victoria Climbié.

Do we in Shropshire (God forbid) have to wait for a tragic case like Victoria Climbié or Baby ‘P’ to happen in our county before Shropshire Children’s Services comply with current legislation and requirements for speedy intervention in Child Protection issues. This will fall firmly on the shoulders of Shropshire Council’s Children’s Services in all cases.

What does the Portfolio Holder and her Department for Children's Services propose to do to speed up investigation and the removal of children at risk into a safe environment and address these concerns, which is not happening at present, and remembering under Every Child Matters our Children have the right to be Happy and Safe”.

Mrs C Motley, the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People's Services, replied:

“We are grateful for this question being raised and share the increased awareness of safeguarding issues: safeguarding is a priority area for the Children and Young People's Directorate.

We have faced an increase in referrals in respect to concerns about vulnerable children at a time when we have had particular difficulties recruiting and retaining experienced Social Workers. Nevertheless, we have responded to these concerns and this, in turn, has led to an increase in children and young people subject to Safeguarding plans and the number of those accommodated.

We have made sure that child protection referrals are allocated, but are aware across all areas of work that on occasions temporary cover arrangements have not been satisfactory. These difficulties are coming to an end as we fill our vacancies following an intensive recruitment campaign. Staff covering our initial response arrangements are being increased to ensure consistent responses and a more joined up approach with all partner agencies.

Any practice concerns raised by schools or agencies are promptly followed up and we have regular discussions at all levels to monitor this. Where needed, separate meetings will be held with local schools to make sure that all concerns have been covered.

The Referral and Assessment Services have been inspected by Ofsted through an unannounced inspection and this confirmed the effectiveness of the steps we are taking to ensure that we have the capacity to respond. I am confident that we will be in a much improved position as we finalise all actions in terms of staffing and management arrangements.”

## **24. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

The Speaker advised that the following questions had been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 15:

Received from Mr J E Clarke:

“Can the Leader of Shropshire Council advise me of any dialogue with The Boundary Committee over the ongoing local calls for urgent further review of the electoral arrangements for the recently combined Bayston Hill, Column and Sutton Division?

Shrewsbury Town Council, Bayston Hill Parish Council and majority of local residents, from Bayston Hill particularly, remain seriously concerned by last year's quite inappropriate merger of the three separate single member wards of Bayston Hill, Column and Sutton, into one single three member division, and continue to press for their reinstatement.”

The Leader of the Council, Mr K R Barrow, replied:

“The Council has contacted the Electoral Commission to determine whether any change to the arrangements applying in Shropshire's only three member division, which serves the Bayston Hill, Column and Sutton and Reabrook area, is possible.

The advice received is that a change to the present electoral arrangements is a possibility, but that it would necessitate an electoral review of the entire unitary council area. This stance is justified by the fact that the Council would be requesting the decision made in respect of the former Shrewsbury and Atcham area to be reversed.

Also, the Commission would need to be provided with strong evidence before it would even consider making changes to the current electoral arrangements. This evidence would need to be new, as the evidence that was provided initially during the review to the Boundary Committee and the further evidence produced by all parties to the Electoral Commission is not considered to be sufficient to trigger a further review, or for the Commission to depart from its final recommendation.

In addition, the Commission has stated that, although the Council may request a further review, this is unlikely to happen given the level of available resources and the fact that the last review was completed less than 2 years ago. The position is the same in the Market Drayton area too.”

Mr Clarke asked by way of a supplementary question whether the Leader would be prepared to provide him with a copy of the correspondence with the Electoral Commission, together with any findings indicating that electoral parity was of superior importance to that of community identity.

Responding, the Leader empathised with Mr Clarke and recalled the meeting at which the Electoral Commission’s Review Manager stated that there would be no three member wards within the County. Accordingly, he would provide copies of the relevant correspondence and pursue the possibility of a further review with the Commission.

Mr N J Hartin asked the following question:

“Given the Governments’ call for 'outstanding' schools to register interest in becoming a 'fast track' academy by September 2010, can the portfolio holder list those schools across Shropshire who are classed as outstanding? - (both according to the old & new audit rules) and could the portfolio holder also indicate what methods are intended to be used to ascertain which, if any, schools have currently registered such an interest?”

"Could she also indicate what financial impact there would be should a significant number of schools opt for this route?"

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, Mrs Cecilia Motley, replied:

Only schools (primary, secondary and special schools) that have been rated as outstanding overall in their most recent Ofsted inspection are eligible to convert to academies through the new process. In Shropshire these schools are:

**Secondary**

Priory

**Primary**

Greenfields Primary

Burford Primary

Whittington (2010 report not yet published)

Under the older style Inspection criteria, the following were graded outstanding:

**Secondary**

Corbet (2008)  
Lakelands (2006)  
Thomas Adams (2007)

**Primary**

St Giles (2008)  
St John's Catholic (2008)  
St Peter's Wem (2007)  
Stottesdon (2008)  
Wilfred Owen (2008)  
Woodfield Inf (2007)  
Welshampton (2006)

A school meeting the outstanding is free to discuss its plans with any local partners, including the local authority, however the proposed legislation will remove the need for the Local Authority to approve such a plan. All that is required is a resolution passed by the governing body. The Council has had initial discussions with Primary and Secondary school headteachers to consider the outline proposals. The schools themselves, in the spirit of partnership, indicated their preference to inform all partners including the Local Authority should they wish to proceed with an application. This very much reflects the spirit of partnership and openness engendered within the schools community and their relationship with the local authority and other partners.

It is not possible at this stage to assess the financial impact of schools electing to apply for academy status under proposed legislation. Further details regarding local funding requirements are awaited by schools and the local authority."

Mr Hartin thanked the Portfolio Holder for the information and asked by way of a supplementary question whether the Council had received any further information about the possibility of any of the listed schools applying for academy status and/or on the creation of free schools in Shropshire.

Replying, Mrs Motley stated that further information was still awaited from the Government and none of the schools listed had applied for academy status to date.

## **25. SCRUTINY REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

It was proposed by Mr Barker and seconded by Mr M Bennett that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

Introducing the report, Mr Barker stated that it summarised the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Group following the fitness check undertaken earlier in the year by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). The recommendations from IDeA had been taken forward in a ten point action plan set out in Appendix A to the report. This had been produced to develop the effectiveness of overview and scrutiny, as the Group considered there was a need for the scrutiny process to be more integrated into the way the Council developed and reviewed policy and took key decisions. There was also a need for scrutiny to be more externally and thematically focussed. Accordingly, the structures had been reconfigured to provided for five committees, based upon the three themes of the priorities identified in the community strategy, with a separate committee

taking responsibility for health matters and a further committee on Performance and Strategy. This would ensure that scrutiny work was directed towards outcomes for Shropshire citizens, rather than holding the Executive to account and on performance measurement.

Pointing to the patchy success of the scrutiny process in the recent past, Mr M Bennett stated that, in his opinion, a process which was focussed principally on outcomes would vastly improve the position. A large number of members, including Mr R A Evans, Dr J E Jones, Mr P F Phillips and Mrs H M Kidd, also spoke in support but also raised such matters as, the need to thank the co-optees who had participated in the process thus far; the importance of maintaining the Council's focus on safeguarding young and vulnerable people; the benefit of a strong independent staff to support the scrutiny function; the value of increasing the number and range of Task and Finish Groups once their role had been clarified and their purpose better defined.

Mrs C M A Motley emphasised the value of pre-scrutiny in the process of policy development and review. She hoped that the proposed way of working would assist her in her role as a Portfolio Holder in this regard. She also supported the idea of Local Joint Committees being encouraged to participate more readily in the scrutiny process through the improvement of the current arrangements. Mr A N Mosley, while congratulating the Task and Finish Group on the high degree of unanimity achieved throughout its work, expressed caution over the greater involvement of Local Joint Committees in the scrutiny process.

Replying, Mr Barker thanked all members for their support and added that the co-optees had made a very valuable contribution in the past and would, hopefully, make an even bigger impact in the future. He confirmed that the Council would continue to maintain vigilance with regard to safeguarding the interests of children and vulnerable people, as this was one of the Council's principal concerns. While the Council would not be appointing any new staff to provide independent support, the greater involvement of the Democratic Services team in managing the scrutiny process would go a significant way to achieving this objective. And in future the Council would be using scrutiny to enhance the policy development part of the decision making process.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the revised Scrutiny and Overview Committee structures, as set out in Appendix B be approved.
- (b) That the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group, as set out in the Action Plan in Appendix A to the report, be approved and the new structures be introduced in 1 October 2010.

## **26. POLITICAL STRUCTURES MONITORING GROUP**

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow and seconded by Mr M Whiteman that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed. Referring to paragraph 5.2 of the report, Mr Whiteman drew attention to the proposal to notify all members of the dates and times of future Task and Finish Group meetings so as to enable those not appointed to serve to participate in the work of those bodies. In this regard he suggested that each agenda should include a brief resume of the intended purpose of the meeting.

Referring to the revised draft protocol, Mr R A Evans suggested a further modification in relation to the attendance of Member Champions at Task and Finish Group meetings with the deletion of the words “if requested by the Task and Finish Group” from the penultimate paragraph.

Replying, Mr Barrow accepted this change but added that it was essential that individual Chairmen determined whether non-members should attend Task and Finish Group meetings and/or whether to release documents prepared for particular meetings to non-group members. However, he did not anticipate any problems resulting from this procedure and gave an undertaking to further review the matter if any difficulties arose.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Council adopts the Petition Scheme attached at Appendix A to the report.
- (b) That the Council’s Constitution be amended, as necessary, to include the provisions contained in the Petition Scheme.
- (c) That subject to the foregoing amendment, the revised draft protocol on the Task and Finish Groups be adopted and included in Part 5 of the Council’s Constitution.

**27. BUDGET VIREMENTS 2009/10 – QUARTER 4**

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow and seconded by Mr B B Williams that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

Mr Barrow advised that the report brought forward a request from the Cabinet to approve a number of budget virements. He added that the impact of the Government’s savings would be dealt with at the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 21 July 2010 and was a matter for the current year’s accounts, rather than those for the 2009/10 financial year.

**RESOLVED:**

That the following virements be approved in accordance with the recommendations from the Cabinet:

- (i) In the light of the recent bad weather, contribution be made to the severe weather reserve from the following sources:
  - (a) £758,000 from the Performance Reward Grant
  - (b) £242,000 from the Brought Forward District Balances
- (ii) £150,000 transfer from Brought Forward District Balances to fund the set up costs incurred in relation to the extra care housing PFI.
- (iii) £90,000 from the Performance Reward Grant to cover the grant payment made to the Citizens’ Advice Bureau for the extra support services provided to local businesses and people, as recommended by the Economic Recession Panel.
- (vi) £90,000 from the Performance Reward Grant to fund the cost of community alarms within Housing Services.



- (v) To fund the shortfall in interest received on the Council's revenue balances be funded from the following sources:
- (a) £109,000 from the Under-Spend on Corporate Subscriptions in 2009/10
  - (b) £500,000 from Brought Forward District Balances
  - (c) £203,000 from Unallocated LABGI Grant

## 28. REVENUE OUT-TURN 2009/10

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow and seconded by Mr B B Williams that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

Mr Barrow explained that the report showed the Council to be in a good financial position at the end of 2009/10. There were some areas of concern that were familiar to members following regular monitoring including looked-after children, safeguarding, adult social care and the LETS service (County Training), but overall the Council was very close to its budget. Action had been taken in the current year to help address these matters and the Administration would continue to actively manage those sensitive areas.

Dr J E Jones expressed concern over the annual cost of looked-after children which continued to rise. She added that three new cases had added £600,000 to the annual cost.

Mr P F Phillips highlighted the need for an adequate Severe Weather Reserve given the recent practice of relying on contingency sums to deal with instances of flooding and extremely bad winter weather. He asked how such costs would be funded in the future in the light of the £800,000 overspend on highway maintenance in the previous financial year.

Mr A E Walpole stated that he could not reconcile the amount of overspend attributed to County Training and asked for clarification as well as an explanation for the overspending.

Mrs C M A Motley advised that the Director of Children and Young People's Services was working on reducing the amount of overspending on looked-after children, although this was difficult given the rise from 200 to 230 cases in recent years and the expense of care packages for those with very complex needs.

Mr M Taylor-Smith informed members that the Council had received an additional £1.5 million grant, equivalent to approximately 50% of the estimated cost, for dealing with potholes following the severe winter weather. This money had been applied to 160 schemes required on the most trafficked routes within the County. All of this work would be completed during the current financial year and additional storage for road salt had been provided in order for adequate amounts to be purchased and stockpiled in preparation for the coming winter.

Mr A N Mosley, referring to paragraph 10 on page 4 of the report, identified the fact that 128 primary schools together held balances of more than £5.7 million in delegated budgets. He asked whether the Leader would be prepared to identify these schools and the intended purposes for which the balances were to be put.

In reply, Mr Barrow stated that the reason for the large overspend on county training was due to the loss of a substantial contract. This was a complex matter, but the Portfolio Holder would provide Mr Walpole with a personal explanation. On the question of primary school balances, he agreed to circulate details to all members of the Council.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That it be noted that the outturn for the revenue budget for 2000/10 is an overspend of £919,000 which represents just 0.2% of the original gross budget of £574,900.00.
- (b) That the level of the general balance, which stands at £2,875,226.00 (2008/09 £2,250,000), is within the Council's policy of ½% to 2% of the gross revenue budget be noted.
- (c) That the level of school balances, standing at £7,647,772.00 (2008/09 £7,552,027), be noted.

**29. RESERVES PROVISIONS AND BALANCES AS AT 31 MARCH 2010**

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow and seconded by Mr B B Williams that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

Mr Barrow invited members to note that the inherited balances from the six former district/ borough councils and Shropshire County Council had been added together and that the report had been considered in detail by the Audit Committee.

Mr A E Walpole, commenting on the level of school balances referred to in paragraphs 46/57 on page 8 of the report, asked whether it was possible for this money to be applied generally.

Replying, Mr B B Williams stated that the total amount was spread over a large number of schools and belonged to the individual school. It was for the governors to determine how each amount should be applied.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the level of the Council's reserves, provisions and balances and the purposes for which they are held be noted.
- (b) That it be noted that the level of school balances has increased from £7,552,000 to £7,647,770.
- (c) That it be noted that the General Fund balance, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, has increased from £2,250,000 to £2,875,226.
- (d) That the specific revenue reserves and provisions, after incorporating balances transferred from the district/borough councils, which has increased from £30,885,000 to £38,175,000, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted.

**30. SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT - OUTTURN 2009/10 AND REVISED 2010/11 BUDGET**

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow and seconded by Mr R Tindall that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the 2009/10 outturn capital expenditure of £78,270,074, which represents 83% of the total revised budgeted expenditure for 2009/10, be approved.
- (b) That the slippage of £16,172,112 to be carried forward to the 2010/11 Shropshire Council capital programme, be approved.
- (c) That the carry forward of the operating leasing approval of £2,224,248 from 2009/10 to 2010/11 be approved.
- (d) That the net budget increase of £573,170 to the Shropshire Council 2009/10 capital budget, funded from additional grants and contributions, be approved.
- (e) That the revised Shropshire Council capital budgets of £139,926,289.00 for 2010/11, £70,586,747.00 for 2011/12 and £53,104,281.00 for 2012/13 (Appendix 3), be approved.
- (f) That the retention of the balance of capital receipts set aside (£23.2 million) as at 31 March 2010 to generate minimum revenue provision savings of £0.92 million in 2010/11 be approved.

**31. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2009/10**

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow and seconded by Mrs E A Hartley that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

Mr Barrow reminded members that the Directorates' current year expenditure was close to budget but there were ongoing pressures in the areas of Children's Safeguarding, Looked-after Children and Adult Social Care, especially adults with learning disabilities. And, significantly, a further £1 million had been added into the Severe Weather Reserve, all of which had been spent. Despite this, specific reserves for waste management and planning enquiries had been strengthened over the same period.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the observations of the Audit Committee be noted.
- (b) That it be noted that the 2009/2010 statement of accounts will be audited by the Audit Commission during July and that any material changes required as a result of the audit will be reported to the Audit Committee and Council in due course.
- (c) That the 2009/10 statement of accounts be approved and that the Chairman be authorised to sign them, in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, as amended, (2006).
- (d) That the Director of Resources be authorised to make any final adjustments that may be required.
- (e) That formal publication of the audited 2009/10 statement of accounts by 30 September 2010 in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, as amended in 2006, be noted.

### **32. STRATEGY FOR SERVICES FOR ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN SHROPSHIRE**

It was proposed by Mr S P A Jones and seconded by Mr A B Davies that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

Introducing the report, Mr Jones stated that the strategy spanned the next three years and covered areas which most citizens took for granted. It had been developed to address inequalities experienced by those with learning disabilities and had been done in full consultation with stakeholders and key partners, particularly those with learning disabilities and family carers to address the four key principles of rights, independence, choice and inclusion.

Mrs H M Kidd remarked on how well the strategy had been received by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee and how it had been made more accessible by the clarity and exemplary design of the executive summary. Mrs P A Dee and other members also spoke in support and commended the officers involved in crafting the document.

In reply, Mr Jones thanked those members for their comments and support.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the strategy for adults with learning disabilities in Shropshire 2010/2013 be approved.

### **33. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS**

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow and seconded by Mr M Bennett that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

In presenting the report, Mr Barrow advised that this contained a number of sensible and practical changes which could hopefully be introduced in advance of the next local elections in 2013.

Referring to paragraph 4.3, Mr T Davies spoke in support of the addition to Weston Rhyn to the name of the electoral division and suggested that in future it be known as Gobowen, Selattyn and Weston Rhyn.

Referring to paragraph 7.1 on page 4 of the report, Mr D J Minnery stated that it was the Market Drayton Town Council, as opposed to the local unitary councillors, that wished to see a change to the Market Drayton Town/Adderley Parish Council boundaries.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That under the provisions of Section 59(4) of the Local Government Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (the 2007 Act) and following receipt of consent from the Local Government Boundary Commission (the LGBC), this Council resolves to renamed the Minsterley Electoral Division as the Rea Valley Electoral Division at a meeting specially convened for that purpose.
- (b) That subject to there being no substantial local opposition to the change, the LGBC be invited to consent to the name of the Selattyn and Gobowen Electoral Division being renamed the Gobowen, Selattyn and Weston Rhyn Electoral Division.

- (c) That Reviews be undertaken in each of the Oswestry/Oswestry Rural, Clun/Chapel Lawn and Market Drayton/Adderley/Moreton Say Parish/Town Council areas, as necessary to correct current electoral boundary irregularities Community Governance

### **34. CHANGE IN COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the following changes in Committee membership be noted:

#### **Strategic Planning**

Mr G L Dakin to replace Mr P Andrews

#### **South Area Planning Committee**

Mrs C M A Motley to replace Mr P Andrews

#### **Combined Fire Authority**

Mr J Hurst-Knight to replace Dr M Winchester

### **35. SHROPSHIRE TREE SAFETY POLICY**

It was proposed by Mr M Taylor-Smith and seconded by Mr R Tindall that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

Introducing the report, Mr Taylor-Smith stated that this document updated the former district/borough council policy documents. There were in excess of 10,000 Council owned trees and more than 500,000 roadside trees to which the policy related and where the Council had a responsibility. He advised members that the onus was on them to report problems so as to enable appropriate action to be taken in a timely and cost effective manner. As for schools, governors had a further responsibility in relation to health and safety within the school curtilage. The detailed policies contained within the documentation were largely a matter of commonsense.

Mr M Bennett pointed to the important aspect of “neighbourliness” as regards Council owned trees often located on amenity land which had a negative effect on private homes and community dwelling schemes.

Mr V J Hunt spoke in similar terms regarding the detrimental affect that trees could have on drains and electricity ducting.

Replying, Mr Taylor-Smith acknowledged that trees did cause problems to private householders and residents of community dwelling schemes alike but that these issues fell outside the scope of this particular report.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Tree Safety Policy, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be adopted.

### **36. REPORT FROM THE COUNCIL LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE IN RESPECT TO SAFEGUARDING**

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow and seconded by Mr M Bennett that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

Introducing the item, Mr Barrow stated that this new duty on the Leader and Chief Executive was to evaluate the safeguarding arrangements in relation to vulnerable individuals. Currently, the Council had chosen to look at both Children's and Adults Services and comment on the achievements and areas for development.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

### **37. LEADER'S STATEMENT ON COUNCIL PROGRESS**

The Speaker announced that, in accordance with the new arrangements, the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holders for Children and Young Persons and for Adult Social Care would present their statements for their individual responsibilities. Following each presentation, questions would be received from members that had been submitted before the deadline.

#### **Statement from the Leader**

The Speaker then invited the Leader, Mr K R Barrow, to present his statement on Council progress, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes.

After presenting the report, the Leader, commented that he was not sure that the Council had yet found the most appropriate format for this particular item and suggested that the matter be referred back to the Political Structures Monitoring Group for further review in order that it promoted more open and inclusive debate.

The Speaker then invited Mr A N Mosley to put the following questions to the Leader:

"Despite large savings arising from the unitary reorganisation and the forthcoming related transformation we are faced with very large reductions in our finance and consequent cuts to services. Could the Leader please outline his immediate strategy by responding to the following:

Is it correct that based on current knowledge there will be cuts of £7.2m from withdrawal of grants plus a further £3.2m following the imposition of zero council tax increases and that even more significant cuts are inevitable?

What efforts does he intend to take in joining with Shropshire Lib-Dem members in lobbying the Government to reduce the impact of cuts on the people of Shropshire.

Does he agree with Bob Neill that it is a disgrace that those in greatest need will ultimately bear the burden of paying off the debt and how will he ensure that this is not the case in Shropshire?

Have there been discussions about which front-line services will be safeguarded from cuts and if so what priorities have been ascribed?

Will he look at all methods of mitigating the effects of the cuts including raising additional income based on ability to pay?

What proposals are emerging for in-year services cuts given Government announcements?  
The Leader replied:

Members will have received a briefing note setting out how the in-year specific grant cuts are affecting the Council. The very latest estimate that we now have of the grant cuts, including both revenue and capital is £8.4m.

These revenue cuts are in specific grants and whilst I accept that there are implications from the withdrawal of this funding we will do our best to manage the impact on service delivery and local enterprise. We are in a good position to manage this because we took the prudent step of saving an extra £2 million as part of this year's budget.

We are in a strong position to influence the Government's thinking on future funding of services for a rural County like Shropshire. Cecilia is an active Member of SPARSE and we will continue to campaign for a fairer share of the available funding. A fairer share that properly reflects the additional costs of providing services in a sparsely populated area. We will also press hard to ensure that the funding that is released from tackling waste in Regional and National Quangos and bureaucracy comes to Shropshire.

The Chancellor's budget on Tuesday was a measured response to addressing the worst structural deficit that the country has ever faced. The Office of Budget Responsibility has stated that the level of debt inherited is over that stated by the previous Government. The measures taken by the Government will affect the majority of people in the country but will help to reduce the burden on the state and encourage economic growth that is led by the private sector.

Cabinet on 21 July will receive a formal report on the Council's revenue budget planning parameters for 2010/11 and future years. The savings required will be extensive given the Chancellor's announcements yesterday. We will consider every opportunity for making savings and efficiencies and will bring forward more detailed proposals in September. Furthermore we will have a full and open public consultation on our proposals and seek ideas and suggestions from all concerned.

We will be bringing forward a report on Fees and Charges on 21 July. Some limited areas are under review.

A separate note has been provided to all Members proposals emerging for in-year services cuts given Government announcements.

Mrs H M Kidd asked the following question:

"The new Government is setting great store by the Voluntary sector. The Council recently removed the grant funding available for these bodies through the area Partnerships. Could the Leader of Council outline:

- (a) the mechanism to be put in place (if any) to maximise our use of the voluntary sector

The Leader replied:

Shropshire Council already provides a mechanism for working together with the Voluntary and Community Sector via the VCS Assembly.

The Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Assembly is a group of VCS organisations that come together to voice shared issues, tackle common problems and pool energy, ideas and resources. The Assembly is supported by Shropshire Council and funded through the Shropshire Partnership.

The VCS Assembly now engages over 300 individual groups and organisations in Shropshire and provides clear flows of communication between Shropshire Council and other public sector partners. The Assembly's strong representational role and processes facilitate partnership working between the sectors and this relationship is supported by the principles outlined within the Shropshire Compact. The success of the Assembly and partnership between the sectors is evidenced by a high performing score for Shropshire against National Indicator 7.

The Assembly is led by a Board which meets at least four times a year. The Board is formed of representatives from the different Forums of Interest. The Board works closely with public sector partners and the Chair and Vice-Chair attend the Shropshire Partnership Leadership Board. The partnership working facilitated through the Assembly and its structures provides a strong mechanism that may maximise the Council's use of the voluntary sector.

- (b) provide grant funding for delivery of many of our services and priorities

The Leader replied:

The provision of grant funding within the CVS and other voluntary and charitable organisations across Shropshire is reviewed each year as part of the budget process. Any changes in the level of funding provided will be reported in line with the budget process and wherever possible, be subject to the Compact principles – in particular the six month notice period with respect to significant changes.

and

- (c) to underline the importance of our recently signed compact?

Mrs C M A Motley replied:

The Compact is the agreement which sets out how Shropshire Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector will work together based on shared values, principles and commitments. The Compact was formally approved by Shropshire Council in November 2009 and by the CVS Assembly in December 2009.

The Compact includes four codes of practice: funding, consultation, volunteering and equalities and diversity. Checklists have recently been produced to support the Compact: these are designed to assist VCS organisations and Council officers in working to deliver the commitments set out in the Compact.

Implementation of the Shropshire Compact is led by the Compact Implementation Group, formed of Shropshire Council Officers and representatives from the VCS Assembly. The Compact Implementation Group and its sub groups work to deliver a comprehensive action plan and a progress report has recently been drafted to demonstrate the progress achieved to date.

A Compact Champions Network is also in place. Compact Champions act as advocates for the Shropshire Compact. Their primary role is to support and



promote the Compact and its partnership principles as the best way of working. Champions also signpost individuals to additional information and support. There are now over 50 Compact Champions with a good balance of representatives from Shropshire Council and the VCS. Numbers are growing steadily. A 'Champion of Champions' represents the Compact Champions Network on the Compact Implementation Group.

The Shropshire Compact Implementation Group has recently started to look at commissioning and funding issues and a sub group is being established to explore national best practice, national guidance and local implementation.

Mr J Tandy asked the following question:

All we hear these days is about cuts. Shropshire Council are proposing cuts in services of £2.2m. All employees have been sent a letter saying that changes are on the way.

In my opinion Councillors need to show they are sharing the pain. I am proposing that in future, the Council formal dinner which is provided at every full council meeting, be cut out. Councillors instead will either eat in the canteen with all the other staff, paying for their own meals, or bring a packed lunch to Council with them.

Does the Leader support this proposal?

The Leader replied:

Yes, I do support this proposal. Each formal Council Lunch costs about £850. I think it may be necessary on a couple of occasions each year to have lunch provided when we anticipate the Agenda taking us into the afternoon. So, the savings from Mr Tandy's proposal would amount to about £2,500 a year. However, I have gone further. Many local people feel it is not necessary to have buffets before meetings. I have stopped buffets except in limited circumstances where we have external visitors. This will save around £27,000 a year. At a time when we are cutting staff and services I am sure that this is the right thing to do.

Mr A Mosley asked the following question:

Will the Leader please comment on the effects of the freeze on Council Tax increases being introduced by the Conservative/Lib-Dem coalition.

In particular will this loss of revenue lead to additional cuts in services beyond those necessary to meet the £7.2m already announced and will it lead to taxpayers in some parts of the County paying significantly higher levels of tax than others, as the equalisation process comes to a halt once again?

The Leader replied:

Local people within Shropshire will be delighted to hear of the Council Tax freeze announced by the Government.

The Council is committed to delivering low and sustainable Council Tax across Shropshire. The Government has also announced that it will help Councils in delivering this Council Tax freeze, although details of this assistance have not been confirmed yet.

The Council has also already moved closer to equalising Council Tax across Shropshire, and the differential between the levels has been significantly reduced. The Council has

confirmed with the DCLG that additional time will be provided to Shropshire in order to deliver equalisation. We have also approached the Government to see if they would provide assistance to Shropshire in equalising Council Tax levels down in 2011/12 thereby removing the need for additional time. This would cost the Government an additional £1.6m, with Shropshire being the only Authority in this situation.

### **Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People and Adult Social Care**

The Speaker advised that no questions had been received for either Portfolio Holder on their themed statements on safeguarding.

## **38. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

The Chairman of the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Mr T Barker, presented the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes on the work of each of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Mr Barker advised that there had been considerable activity within the Scrutiny Committees during the last three months. However, given the earlier report to Council he expected there to be much more activity in coming weeks as the Scrutiny Chairs prepared for and then delivered arrangements under the new structure adopted earlier in the meeting.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the report of the Scrutiny Committees and the individual Scrutiny Statements attached thereto be noted.

## **39. MOTIONS**

The following motion was received from Mr P F Phillips:

1. Council supports the recommendations and concerns of the House of Lords Select Committee on Communications (29.3.10).
2. It asks Digital UK to extend its assistance to "disadvantaged" groups to residents of hilly areas who have to buy additional equipment in order to receive DAB (and its successors).
3. Council further asks Digital UK to assess the impacts (a) environmental (b) on Waste Authorities' budgets - of the disposal of perhaps 100 million analogue radios.
4. Council regrets the omission by Digital UK of an environmental impact assessment of moving to digital radios.

In presenting the motion, Mr Phillips stated that he was aware of an amendment which would seriously affect the proposed intent of his motion which affected the poor, young, rural dwellers who would not benefit from installing costly satellite equipment. Any suggestion that the coverage of digital radio should be no greater than the current FM would be totally inadequate. Further, the fact that no scrappage scheme was planned meant that there would be an environmental impact resulting from the need to dispose of over 100 million analogue radios. This would impose a cost on local authorities and this should be recognised.

Seconding the motion, Mrs B J Baker also highlighted the absence of any scheme for election and disposal of obsolete radio sets, the inadequate access to essential facilities and the general lack of a help scheme, similar to that introduced for television viewers in recent times.

Mr G L Dakin proposed by way of amendment, which was duly seconded, that all the words in the motion be deleted and replaced by:

“That, as a forward thinking Authority, we applaud digital technology and the benefits it gives out communities and request however that this switch over does not take place until all DAB equal to that of VHF radio present, including car radio reception.”

Speaking in support of the amendment, Mr Dakin stated that digital radio was operating very successfully. It had improved quality, clarity and convenience for many listeners and the change that was planned would not happen overnight. There was a considerable period to enable listeners to replace their sets at a reasonable cost and DAB radios were already available at low cost. It would therefore be totally unacceptable if such an improvement was inhibited by the impact it may have on a relatively few listeners.

As far as a scrappage scheme was concerned, arrangements were in place for obsolete analogue equipment to be transported to the developing world where it would be put to good use. The Council should therefore inform Digital UK that it applauded the expansion of the digital network which would be of benefit to everyone.

He was supported in this view by Mr M Taylor-Smith who said that technology was advancing at such a pace that DAB was no longer the “emerging” technology. Listeners were now able to access radio transmissions via broadband so expensive masts and satellite equipment was no longer essential.

Speaking against the amendment, Mr Phillips stated that replicating the FM network was not good enough. It should be required to fund the cost of collection and disposal of radios that had become obsolete at a time when funding was being reduced. He invited Mr Dakin to add to this amendment additional clauses relating to the provision of a help scheme similar to that introduced for TV viewers be introduced for the benefit of those listeners living in rural areas and to invite the Government to provide funding to meet the additional costs of collecting and disposing of obsolete analogue radios.

Mr Dakin declined to add further words to his amendment.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was carried with a substantial majority voting in favour, 14 against and with 2 members abstaining.

**RESOLVED:**

That, as a forward thinking Authority, we applaud digital technology and the benefits it gives our communities and request, however, that this switchover does not take place until all DAB coverage is equal to that of VHF radio presently, including car radio reception.

The following motion was then received from Mr N H Hartin:

In recognition of the difficult financial position the Council is likely to be in over the next few years, Council resolves to put in place an interactive waste minimisation web blog where members of the public can nominate their own examples of waste or unnecessary spending within Council services. Portfolio Holders will be responsible for considering issues raised

and reporting back both to the Council and to the public on those suggestions received. In so doing this initiative will give a truer “ground up” indication of the services people value and clearly demonstrate that the Council is listening to the public of Shropshire and acting on what it hears.

Council would like everyone to take place in this initiative and welcomes comments from staff as well as interested members of the public. It further urges other public bodies providing services in Shropshire to adopt a similar open and transparent method of identifying waste and so help make savings which will have the minimum effect on the people of Shropshire.

NOTE: The Council’s Communications Unit to be responsible for checking and moderating entries from the public to screen out libellous and other unsuitable material.

With the agreement of his Seconder, Mr Hartin then withdrew the motion.

**SPEAKER**

**DATE**

The meeting closed at 12.40 p.m.