



<u>Committee and Date</u>
COUNCIL
24 November 2011

<u>Item</u>
3
Public

MINUTES

OF

MEETING OF SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2011
AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

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

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

Mr P A Nutting
Mr W M Parr
Mr M G Pate
Mr M T Price
Mr D W L Roberts
Mr K Roberts
Mrs D M Shineton
Mr M Taylor-Smith
Mrs R Taylor-Smith
Mr R Tindall
Mr A E Walpole
Mr S J West
Mr M Whiteman OBE
Mrs C Wild
Mr B B Williams RD
Mr L Winwood
Mr M L Wood
Mrs T Woodward
Mr P Wynn

45. APOLOGIES

The Corporate Director reported apologies for absence had been received from Mr A Bannerman, Mrs B J Baker, Mr T Bebb Mr T H Biggins, Mr T Davies, Mr A Gibson, Mrs T Huffer, Mrs J Jones, Mr M J Owen, Mr J Tandy and Mr G F Tonkinson.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were received.

- (a) Mr C J Mellings declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 11 (Financial Strategy – 2012/13 – 2020/21, including Phase 1 savings 2012/13) because of his wife's employment with Shropshire Council.
- (b) Mr K Roberts declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 11, also because of his wife's employment with Shropshire Council.

47. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2011, as circulated with the agenda papers, be signed as a correct record subject to Mrs B J Baker's name being added to the list of apologies at Minute 29 and to the reply in the final paragraph of Minute 36 on page 9 being credited to Mrs C J Wild, rather than Mrs E A Hartley.

48. ANNOUNCEMENTS

48.1 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 of the Council on 21 July 2011, which had been circulated at the meeting.

48.2 Chief Executive's Announcements

The Speaker referred members to the document entitled "Briefing Note for Members on Capital and Asset Pathfinder Progress which had been circulated by the Chief Executive in advance of the meeting. He stated that members would have seen that the Council's first Asset Management Strategy, approved by Cabinet on 3 August 2011 had been commended by the DCLG and the Local Government Group. This strategy provided a decision-making framework for the Council and its partners to rationalise the public sector asset portfolio in Shropshire, making it leaner, greener and shaped to better meet

customer needs. It also set objectives to reduce property running costs, improve the use of occupancy and public buildings and release capital value that would be invested to benefit local communities in the future.

48.3 Presentation – West Midlands Ambulance Service

The Speaker reported that a presentation would be made to members that afternoon by Craig Cooke, Resilience and Support Services Director, West Mercia Area, West Midlands Ambulance Service. Mr Cooke would give an overview of the system it was hoped to implement shortly known as “Make Ready”. He advised that the briefing paper circulated for members’ information was a useful introduction to the subject, but Mr Cooke would be happy to take questions after his presentation.

48.4 Mrs C Downs

The Speaker reported the recent appointment of the Council’s former Chief Executive, Mrs Carolyn Downs, as the new Chief Executive of the Local Government Association. Members agreed that the Speaker should write to Mrs Downs passing on their congratulations and wishing her every success in her future role.

49. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Speaker reported that two questions had been received before the deadline set out in the Procedure Rules. In the absence of the first questioner, Mr P F Phillips, the Speaker put the following question to the Deputy Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills, Mrs K Burgoyne.

“Can you confirm that the number of youth workers (FTE) has reduced from 100 to 49 this year? (If no, please provide accurate figures)”

The Deputy Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills, Mrs K Burgoyne, replied as follows:-

“As a result of changing national government strategy in relation to youth support, Shropshire Youth was restructured in May 2011 into 4 Teams.

Prior to the restructure there were 18 professional youth workers (16.5 FTE) which reduced to 9.5 (FTE) after the restructure with 6.5 going into the Targeted Youth Support Team and 3 into the Positive Activities team.

Of the full time staff, there has been a reduction of 7 FTE Youth Workers.

The number of part time youth workers remains the same as prior to the restructure (15.9 FTE)

Therefore, taking all youth workers into account:

15.9 FTE part time youth workers and 16.5 FTE professional workers = 32.4 (FTE) which reduced to 25.4 (FTE) a reduction of only 7 (FTE) or 21.6%.

It is important to note that Youth Workers and Connexions Personal Advisers were part of a pool of professional workers covering targeted youth support and positive activities. The summary of proposed reductions is what was used to determine future staffing levels and these have been applied. In order to protect front line services managers and auxiliary staff were reduced significantly. Please see table below:

Shropshire Youth Re-organisation November 2010

Post	Current FTE	Proposed FTE	Number proposed reduction FTE	% Proposed reduction
Senior Management Team	3	0	3	100%
Divisional Management Team	7	3	4	58%
Senior Fractioned	7	6	1	12%
Personal Advisors/Professional Youth Workers	38.9	28 Pos Acts 3 Targeted 13 IAG 12	10.9	28%
Connexions advisors	11.8	8	3.8	32%
Special Needs Personal Advisor	0.8	0.8	0	0
Youth Offending and At Risk Personal Advisor	1	1	0	0
Looked After Children Connexions Advisor	1	1	0	0
Part Time Youth Workers	Grade 4; 5.76 FTE Grade 3; 8.51 FTE Grade 2; 1.63 FTE	Grade 4; 5.76 FTE Grade 3; 8.51 FTE Grade 2; 1.63 FTE	0	0
Participation Team	1.6	1.6	0	0
Duke of Edinburgh's Award Officer	0.25	0.25	0	0
Clerical/Admin	11.2	6.6	4.6	41%
Finance	1.5	1	0.5	33%
Performance & Information officer	0.6	0.6	0	0
Handy persons	69hrs = 1.9 FTE	4hrs per building 40hrs/week 1.1 FTE	0.8	42%
Information Officer	1	0	1	100%
Stores	(3) 1.9 FTE	0	1.9	100%
Total	90.45 *	58.95 *	31.5	35%

- These totals do not include the part-time youth worker figures as there is no change in this area."

The Speaker then invited the second questioner, Mrs J Brand, to put her question to the Leader of the Council:-

"Please will the Leader of the Council give a reassurance that the cuts in salaries and terms of conditions for staff currently employed by Shropshire

Council is not a precursor to the privatising of a number of services now being provided by the Council, in particular the running of the Car Parks in Shropshire and the IT service now provided in house."

Mr K R Barrow , Leader of the Council, replied as follows:

"The Council will continue to explore various different ways to deliver public services to the people of Shropshire. We will make decisions on a service by service basis, depending upon what we judge is right for the people of Shropshire. Within the Council at present we have some very successful public services delivered by the private sector eg highways and refuse collection; in some other Councils externalised services have been brought back in-house – there is no one size fits all solution. My personal preference is that we explore running a range of services in partnership with other local authorities – but we will only follow this course of action if it benefits the people of Shropshire."

By way of supplementary question, Mrs Brand then expressed her dismay at the way the Council was treating its staff and destroying their moral. She asked what the Council planned to do about this and what action it was taking to support its staff?

Replying, the Leader stated that he regretted any suggestion that what he had said implied any intention to privatise services. One of the options being pursued was joining up with other local authorities to provide some services but there was no hidden agenda of any kind. The cuts in staff salaries resulted directly from reductions in Government grant and were not a precursor to a wholesale transfer of services to the private sector.

50. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

The Speaker advised that the following questions had been received from Mr N J Hartin (2) and Mrs T Huffer in advance of the deadline set in Procedure Rule 15:

(a) Mr N J Hartin asked the following question:

"A large number of temporary contracts were entered into by staff at the start of the Unitary Council. As a result of the on-going transformation plans can the Leader confirm how many of these have been terminated & how these are shown in the redundancy figures to date."

The Leader replied as follows:

"On 1 April 2009 there was a decrease in the number of temporary staff working for the council, as a number who had been given fixed term contracts at Shropshire County Council and the five borough and district councils in the period prior to the new Unitary Council being established either had their contracts ended or became permanent employees of the new Shropshire Council.

Since 1 April 2009, Shropshire Council has ended 195 Fixed Term contracts. It is not feasible to distinguish between those staff engaged in respect of the LGR workload/skills requirements and those covering other workload/skills shortages. Although those with over 2 years service (of which there were 10 staff) were eligible to receive a redundancy payment, they have not been included in the overall redundancy figures because they were not on permanent contracts.”

By way of supplementary question, Mr Hartin asked the Leader to confirm whether the Administration would return to discussing employment matters with staff in the Employers Joint Consultative Committee?

Replying, Mr Barrow stated that, following the positive approach taken in discussions with Unison the previous day, he was happy to bring forward the next meeting of the Employers JCC.

(b) Mr N J Hartin asked the following question:

“As a result of the changes to the staffing structure a number of managers & staff have taken on new roles with reduced remuneration. Can the Leader confirm that all staff, including all managers & staff affected in this way, have been offered new contracts based on the 5.4% reduction in remuneration spread over two years.”

The Leader replied as follows:

“I can confirm that the Council intends to reduce the salaries of all staff affected by our recent Management Review by 5.4% over two years, in common with other staff, (except those on lower salaries).

For senior managers, this change has been subject to separate formal consultation, which has recently ended. So, given the need for full notice, any salary reductions for these staff will be implemented from 1 January 2012 or earlier where individuals are willing, voluntarily, to forego full notice or accept the changes, which some have already done.

When it is fully completed in 2013, the Management Review will have reduced our management costs by over £5m. The 5.4% salary reduction will further reduce these costs.

This is just one example of the ways in which the Council is protecting essential frontline jobs and services, and avoiding large scale redundancies for our current staff, whose skills, experience, and commitment are essential to our future success.”

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Hartin enquired whether the proposed 5.4% reduction in staff salaries over two years would affect all staff equally from 1 October, 2011.

Mr Barrow advised that the reduction would apply to all staff equally on 1 October 2011. However, the intention was to reduce the wage bill by

2.7% in the first year in the hope that a lesser reduction could be agreed with the staff for the following year. Hopefully, it would not be necessary to reduce salaries by the same amount in 2012/13 and an amicable solution was being sought in this regard.

Mrs T Huffer asked the following question:

“Recent freedom of information requests in the South west have revealed that £103.8M has been invested in tobacco firms by seven local authorities with an estimated £1bn invested nationwide. In 2013 County & Unitary Councils will assume legal responsibility for public health as part of the Coalition governments restructuring of the NHS and such investments will, according to the South West NHS Regional Director of Public Health, mean they will be open to legal challenge if they do not make alternative investment arrangements before taking on this responsibility.

Given that it will be possible for Pension Funds to achieve similar returns by investments in areas which do not impact public health, can the portfolio holder advise what is the total value of Shropshire Council Pension Fund investments in Tobacco Companies & what plans are in place to disinvest in areas where the Council could be accused of profiting from deaths and so remove this conflict of interest before any legal challenge takes place.

The Leader replied as follows:

“Shropshire County Pension Fund has taken legal advice on the acceptability of the Fund investments in tobacco stocks and as a result of this, has no plans to disinvest in the future unless the regulatory environment changes through regulatory amendment or successful legal challenge.

The over-riding fiduciary duty of the Pensions Committee is to maximise investment returns in order to pay pension benefits to scheme members and keep employer contribution rates down. The legal advice confirmed it is only acceptable to have an investment policy determined by non-financial criteria, provided it does not detract from investment returns, which would be the result of divestment in tobacco since the stocks have very attractive investment characteristics such as high and stable yields and steady growth, and tobacco firms are legal businesses which are a large part of markets. Shropshire County Pension Fund currently has only 0.64% of the total Fund invested in tobacco companies.

The Fund believes good governance is an important element in reducing the risk of corporate failures in the future, and over the long term is committed to corporate best practice that will enhance investment returns. To reflect its role as administering authority, the Council has a transparent, robust and considered approach in place with regards how its investment managers deal with environmental, social and governance matters.

Mrs Huffer is not correct in claiming that "such investments will, according to the South West NHS Regional Director of Public Health, mean they will be open to legal challenge if they do not make alternative investment arrangements before taking on this responsibility". This overstates what was reported in the media, which said only that "if they (Councils) keep them (tobacco investments) they could be accused of conflicts of interest when they assume legal responsibility for public health, including anti-smoking work, in 2013"

51. REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

The Speaker reported that this matter had been withdrawn and the report would now be presented to the next meeting of the Council on 24 November 2011.

52. REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDERS FOR FLOURISHING SHROPSHIRE

It was proposed by Mr G H L Butler 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 G H L Butler stated that it explained how the Council would deliver localism in Shropshire. These were challenging times for the Council, the voluntary and community sector and parish/town councils. This would affect the way in which future policy directed towards local communities would be created, funded and delivered.

It was pleasing therefore that over a third of the Council had attended the recent workshop on the effects of the Localism Bill, the role of the voluntary and community sector and how it works. Those councillors who did not respond to these changed times would see other organisations with the same rights take over the influencing, planning and delivery of public services. Meanwhile, the Council would be open to challenge on all fronts from community activists or organisers.

Mr Butler added that Shropshire had already been recognised nationally in the way it was challenging conventional ways of working and the roles of members of staff in delivering for their communities. The level of success could be measured in the strong working relationship which had been established with the voluntary and community sector assembly and how keen its members were to work with the Council. A very positive meeting had also been held with parish/town council clerks to determine the most effective way of working together, given that their role was similar to the Council's.

Following the workshop on the Community Leadership role, a number of interesting projects, ranging from a community re-opening their local pub, to bringing urban communities together with all partner agencies, to the future role of social media in getting people involved in local matters, had been established. But the key message to come out of this project was the importance of the relationship between officers and members. This was

crucial to the creation of a common understanding about the communities they all served and the new types of working relationship that needed to be developed.

In conclusion, Mr Butler advised that Mrs C M A Motley and Mr M Bennett would assist him in answering questions from members.

Referring to the item on community leadership on page 1 of the report, Mr N J Hartin asked whether it was intended to share more widely the experience of individual councillors with their colleagues and if this could be broadened out to include town and parish councils.

Referring to support for VCSA Forums of Interest on page 4, Mr T Barker invited the Portfolio Holder to clarify and explain the Council's intention with regard to the role of the members working with VCS and highlight any progress since the member briefing session held some weeks earlier.

Mrs D M Shingleton asked for details of the membership of the Community Interest Company Interim Management Group. She also referred to the need for cross-boundary working with Worcestershire to resolve an immediate problem with a bridge crossing the River Teme and providing an important crossing point between the two counties.

Mr K Roberts sought clarification from the Portfolio Holder on the Council's intention with regard to those people owning historic and listed buildings which required modernisation and repair.

Referring to the section of the report on Capacity Building with the Voluntary and Community Sector, Mr J M W Kenny highlighted the need to develop a new performance framework to deliver an 'outcome-based' approach. He asked for further detail on how this would work in the future and whether the Wakeman School could be purchased under the Community Right to Buy. He also drew attention to the section of the report relating to climate change grant funding where he questioned why the subject of hydro-electric power appeared to have been omitted and finally, asked with reference to the item on Fairtrade on page 7 of the report, whether it would be possible to celebrate the Council's status by including this on Shrewsbury town nameplates.

Replying to the point relating to the possible acquisition of the Wakeman School under the Community Right to Buy and Challenge, the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills, Mrs A Caesar-Homden, advised that the Council was anxious to ensure that the Wakeman School remained in educational use in perpetuity. Mr M Bennett, the Deputy Portfolio Holder for Flourishing Communities, stated that the Association of Local Councils and the Community Council for Shropshire had recently convened a conference on localism. The Council would be holding a number of area based meetings which were to be arranged by the respective Area Directors to advance discussion on this topic with the parish and town councils and keep them informed of developments. He therefore expected the Area Directors to make contact with the Clerks of the larger parish/town councils at the very least so as to develop the spirit of partnerships.

Mr G H L Butler, responded to the questions from Mr T Barker, by reporting that the challenge had been put to the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly and a response was awaited. As for the membership of the Interim Management Group raised by Mrs D Shingleton, he stated that this group had been set up by the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly, although the Council was responsible for meeting the initial set up costs and continued operation. A business case demonstrating how it would operate in the future was still awaited, but the expectation was that the new body would deliver outcomes that the Council was seeking to provide.

With regard to the introduction of an outcome-based approach to performance, this was a requirement of the Localism Bill and something which had not been undertaken in the past. It was not a risk free approach and would require some initial funding to deliver.

Mrs C M A Motley, replying to the question raised by Mrs D M Shingleton about the condition of the bridge across the River Teme, confirmed that urgent steps would be taken to address this matter and local members would be invited to attend any meetings with Worcestershire. With regard to the assistance available to the owners of historic and listed buildings, Mrs Motley advised that the Council's Conservation Officers were extremely good at advising the owners of such properties as was the Council's Energy Team in ensuring that they became insulated and as energy efficient as possible. Nevertheless, contact would be made with Shrewsbury Town Council to determine whether there would be benefit in the collaborative approach in this area. Finally, the question of hydro-electric power had not been deferred. A meeting of the relevant parties would be held shortly and invitations issued.

RESOLVED:

That the Portfolio Holders' statement be approved.

53. ANNUAL REPORT OF PROTECTING AND ENHANCING OUR ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2010/11

It was proposed by Mr V J Hunt and seconded by Mr P Adams 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 Hunt stated that it provided an overview of the work of the Scrutiny Committee over the previous year, and also an important insight into its future plan. The process also provided a means by which to evaluate the health of the Scrutiny function, reviewing the preceding year's activities from within the work plan, as well as assessing the extent to which the Committee's recommendations had begun to make a difference.

In the coming year the Committee would be looking at issues where its recommendations could make a real difference to local people. This would include a report on community transport and voluntary car schemes undertaken because this was both topical, given the rising fuel costs and the economic climate, and changes to the local bus services in the County, and there was also a need to determine whether the Council could do more to

help facilitate and sustain such schemes. The Committee would also examine the quality of the reinstatement works undertaken by utility companies on the Council's highway network, which was a £3 billion asset extending over 5,000 kilometres of roads and footpaths. Other proposed Scrutiny reviews would be undertaken on the energy efficiency of the Shirehall and school heating systems, as well as street lighting in the County.

The Committee would consider whether to recommend the introduction of an incentive/reward scheme for housing tenants after examining what such schemes entailed. And, it would also continue to operate a number of Task and Finish Groups throughout the year to broaden participation in discussion. To conclude, Mr Hunt thanked the Committee for their consistent hard work during 2010/11.

Referring to the item on winter maintenance in paragraph 3.3 of the report, Mrs D M Shineton stated that the Council's staff should be congratulated on the quality of the service provided in one of the most difficult winters on record. But she questioned whether it would be possible for local people to be allowed to grit sections of the highway when bad weather persisted. She also referred to the difficulties experienced by those living in the rural south-east of the County in accessing public transport for Post 16 education and invited the Committee to consider whether improvements could be made to offset individual problems.

Mr S P A Jones stated in reply with regard to post 16 education transport that this was entirely down to parental choice, but he would investigate whether anything more could be done to assist in this particular case.

Referring to the second bullet point in paragraph 4.1 of the report, Mr S J West asked whether it was possible to fine utility companies who failed to reinstate the highway satisfactorily and Mrs H M Kidd asked why the Council had not introduced a licensing scheme, similar to that operated by Kent County Council for excavation of the highway. She asked whether a policy which required the utility companies to provide a bond in advance of them undertaking works was a better approach to having them undertake further reinstatement works which only exacerbated problems and delays for road users.

Replying, Mr Hunt confirmed that there were powers to fine utility companies and this matter, together with the possible adoption of a licensing scheme, would be considered by a Task and Finish Group later in the year.

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Protecting and Enhancing Our Environment Scrutiny Committee be approved.

54. REPORT OF SCRUTINY ON THE EXAMINATION OF PHASE I BUDGET SAVINGS 2012/13

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

By way of introduction, Mr Barker explained how the five Scrutiny Committees had been required to undertake this work within an extremely short period of time and thanked the members for their contribution and co-operation.

Referring to paragraph 3.6 of the Report regarding budget savings for Adult Social Care, Mr N J Hartin asked whether the Chairman of the Scrutiny Chairs' Group was able to comment on or clarify the data contained in the Demos Report which showed the Council to be performing badly in this area.

Mr R A Evans stated that he had asked for a minority report because of his dissatisfaction with the level of consultation. Referring to paragraph 3.8 of the report, he sought confirmation that the Scrutiny Chairs' Group would establish a Task and Finish Group to undertake the necessary review, with unrestricted terms of reference to external agencies to contribute to the decision-making process, thereby resulting in a better set of recommendations.

Replying, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture stated that the Demos Report had cherry picked all the negative aspects relating to the service, whilst ignoring all of the positive ones. The Council had not been consulted about the document prior to publication as it should have been. If it had, Demos would have been told that much of the content was inaccurate

In reply Mr Barker reiterated his intention for future budget reports to show the percentage of total budget spent for each area. This would include the percentage reduction as requested. With regard to the Demos report, although important and illuminating in part, it was peripheral to the Committee's purpose on this occasion. The Group Manager for Adult Services had been present at the meeting and was able to deal with most of the points raised in discussion. Nevertheless, he had subsequently spoken to the Corporate Director – People who would now take such action as he considered appropriate.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Phase 1 savings identified within Appendix 5 of the Financial Strategy – 2012/13 to 2020/21 report be approved;
- (b) That it be agreed that where the implementation of Phase 1 savings extends beyond 1 April 2012, additional savings be delivered in future years as detailed in the Financial Strategy – 2012/13 to 2020/21 report, without the need for the Council to duplicate decision-making.
- (c) That the further savings, relating to 2013/14, identified for consideration by Cabinet alongside Phase 3 2012/13 savings (and subject to scrutiny thereafter) and the updated information contained within the medium term and long term sections of the Financial Strategy – 2012/13 to 2020/21 report, be noted.

55. FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2012/13 TO 2020/21, INCLUDING PHASE 1 SAVINGS 2012/13

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 R A Evans proposed by way of amendment, which was seconded by Mr N J Hartin, that Recommendation 2, as set out below, be deleted:

“That where the implementation of Phase 1 savings extends beyond 1 April 2012, additional savings will be delivered in future years, as detailed in the report, that this be agreed without the need for Council to duplicate decision-making.”

Speaking in support of the amendment, Mr Evans stated that this should be the Council's decision and that if necessary, Council should be able to look at the matter again if required.

Speaking in support, Mr Hartin stated that the amendment went to the heart of the matter. The Council should be required to look at all Phase 1 savings and deleting Recommendation 2 would enable members to fully debate the issue.

Mrs H M Kidd added that removing the right to look at the effect of proposed savings on frontline services was inappropriate. All members had been elected to oversee the Council's full spending proposals and commitments, but Recommendation 2 would have the opposite effect. She stated that the Scrutiny Committees were being treated similarly and were not being given the full facts about service reductions or the way these were intended to be implemented, contrary to the Council's stated policies on openness and objectivity.

Other members, including Mr G L Dakin, Mr P A Nutting and Mr B B Williams emphasised the need for cuts to be made, and explained why full details were not available in every instance at this time. Recommendation 2 would not remove Scrutiny's right to see and comment on the proposals and if Opposition groups remained dissatisfied, they could put a motion on the Council agenda. The amendment would not have the effect being suggested and should therefore be resisted.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was declared lost, with 11 members voting in favour and a substantial majority voting against.

Speaking to the original motion Mr N J Hartin stated that the budget savings being proposed depended on the transformation agenda, the delivery of which was entirely dependent on the Council's staff. Regrettably, the industrial action that some of them were now engaged in could put this in jeopardy. While he could not support the financial strategy, he hoped that in future the Council and its staff could work through the Employer's Joint Consultative Committee to reach an amicable agreement over terms and conditions of service.

While accepting the need for a balanced budget, Mr R A Evans said that it was essential for members to know where the cuts were intended; how and when they would be made and the cumulative effect on the services affected. The report contained only bland statements and lacked detail and the necessary focus on Shropshire people.

Both Mr M Taylor-Smith and Mrs T Woodward expressed a contrary view, emphasising the requirement for the Council to stay within its budget.

Replying, the Leader stated that if the transformation savings were not realised, then the Council would be forced to use its reserves to make good any shortfall. The level of balances had been increased precisely because the Council was operating in uncertain times and required additional safeguards. He understood that some staff felt undervalued following, first, local government reorganisation throughout Shropshire and then the need to make significant service reductions within 2 years of establishment of the new Council. However, the former Shropshire County Council had increased spending by £80 million between 2001 and 2005, virtually the same amount as that now required in service reductions. He acknowledged that the Council had excellent staff and it was essential for the Council to work with them to resolve the current problems.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried with a substantial majority voting in favour to 11 members voting against.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Phase 1 savings for 2012/13 identified within the report (Appendix 5) be approved.
- (b) That where the implementation of Phase 1 savings extends beyond 1 April 2012, additional savings will be delivered in future years, as detailed in the report, without the need for the Council to duplicate decision-making.
- (c) That it be noted that further savings, relating to 2013/14, have been identified for consideration by Cabinet alongside Phase 3 2012/13 savings in February 2012.
- (d) That the updated information contained within the medium term (April 2013 to March 2015) and long term (April 2015 to March 2021) sections of this report be noted to guide the Council's financial decisions in a proactive and consistent way.

56. ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2010/11

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

RESOLVED:

That the position, as set out in the report, be accepted.

57. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2010/11

It was proposed by the Leader 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.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the 2010/11 Statement of Accounts be approved and the Chairman authorised to sign them (in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011).
- (b) That the Corporate Head of Finance and Commerce be authorised to make any minor adjustments to the Statement of Accounts prior to 30 September 2011.

58. REPORT OF THE POLITICAL STRUCTURES MONITORING GROUP

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 recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

In presenting the report Mr Barrow drew attention to the typing error at Appendix 1 page 6, second bullet point of the Terms and Conditions Agreement relating to the guidance for the use of audio and video recording, photography and social media during Council meetings. Members agreed that the word "courtesy" should be substituted for the word "curtsey" in the second line.

Referring to paragraphs 3.6(i) to (v) Mr N J Hartin stated that he considered the proposed amendment to dilute the effect of the present protocol, particularly with regard to the sharing of any new information with the Council that members had gained from attending a conference or seminar.

Mr J M W Kenny added that he fully understood the need for confidentiality on particular occasions. But, with regard to the work of the Task and Finish Groups he would have preferred to see the emphasis reversed such that all papers were immediately open to all members and the media, with the exception of those documents containing exempt or confidential information, as defined in the Local Government Act 1972.

Replying, Mr Barrow advised that he considered the revised wording of the protocol on attendance at conferences and seminars to be an improvement. He then invited the three other group leaders to join him in providing greater clarity to all members and the public by determining jointly which conferences and seminars members should attend in the future. The resulting list could then be presented to the Council for ratification in a spirit of openness and transparency.

As regards the suggested reversal of the wording in Recommendation (c), relating to the treatment of the documentation presented to all Task and

Finish Groups, he stated that the proposed arrangements would provide members with the opportunity to consider all possible options. This included those which they might consider impractical organisationally or unpalatable to discuss fully in public in advance of their deliberations being concluded ahead of the Group's final recommendations being published. Consequently, he could not support any change.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried, with a substantial majority voting in favour to four members voting against.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council adopts the guidance on the use of video and audio equipment, photography and social media, contained in Appendix 1 to this report, subject to a full video of future Cabinet meetings being published unless the Chairman regards the material as too sensitive to broadcast and that this be incorporated into Part 5 of the Constitution with immediate effect
- (b) That the Council's protocol on Members' attendance at Conferences and external Training events be amended to accord with the wording set out in paragraph 3.5(i) to (v) of this report with immediate effect.
- (c) That the Council's protocol on Task and Finish Groups be amended by the deletion of the word "investigatory" from paragraph 2 and the inclusion of a paragraph confirming the right of all members to attend Task and Finish Group meetings unless the Chairman considers the material to be confidential or sensitive
- (d) That a meeting of the four Group Leaders be convened as soon as is practicable to consider and agree which conferences and other events the Council should attend each year and the agreed list then be presented to the Council for formal approval.

59. SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS

RESOLVED:

That, in addition to the existing power to determine the need for agreements made under Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Group Manager – Environment be given delegated authority to vary or discharge by agreement planning obligations on Section 52 Town and Country Planning Act 1971, or Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as required and that Part 8 of the Council's Constitution be amended accordingly.

60. APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That Mr J M W Kenny be appointed to fill the vacancy on the Strategic Licensing Committee created by the resignation of Mr P F Phillips.

61. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW – RUYTON-XI-TOWNS PARISH COUNCIL

RESOLVED:

That the Council consent to undertake a Community Governance Review to effect a modification of the Ruyton-XI-Towns and West Felton Parish Council boundaries in advance of the local government elections in 2013 and that this matter be referred to the Community Governance Working Party for action.

62. CRIME REDUCTION, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND DRUG AND ALCOHOL STRATEGY 2011-2014

It was proposed by Mr S F Chalmley and seconded by Mrs C M Wild that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendation contained therein, be received and agreed.

Mr Chalmley reported that this strategy satisfied the Council's statutory duty to produce a three year crime reduction, community safety and drug and alcohol strategy every three years. The aim of the strategy was to set out the key priorities for the Safer Stronger Communities Partnership, following a strategic assessment which was undertaken on an annual basis. This assessment allowed the partnership to identify any changes in local crime types and whether they had increased or decreased. Fortunately, Shropshire remained a low crime area but the annual assessment enabled the partnership to identify any emerging vulnerable localities which required additional resources to address issues around crime, community safety etc.

Mrs R Taylor-Smith welcomed the 12 month review of the strategy and highlighted the benefit of the community alcohol project on underage drinking and anti-social behaviour undertaken by a pilot project centred on Ludlow. Mr J M W Kenny asked why there was no reference to restorative justice within the report and sought clarification of future intentions in this area.

Replying, Mr Chalmley undertook to provide Mr Kenny with further details in a written reply.

RESOLVED:

That the Crime Reduction, Community Safety and Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2011/2014 be endorsed.

63. MOTION

The Speaker reported that the proposer of the motion included on the agenda for the meeting, Mr J M Williams, was absent. Therefore, the matter could not be debated.

SPEAKER.....

DATE

The meeting closed at 12.10 p.m.