



Committee and Date  
COUNCIL  
23 February 2012

Item  
**3**  
Public

## MINUTES

OF

MEETING OF SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2011  
AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Mr P Adams  
Mrs B J Baker  
Mr A Bannerman  
Mr T Barker  
Mrs C A Barnes  
Mrs J B Barrow  
Mr K R Barrow  
Mr M Bennett  
Mr W Benyon  
Mr T H Biggins  
Mrs K Burgoyne  
Mr V Bushell JP  
Mr G H L Butler  
Mrs K D Calder  
Mr S F Charmley  
Mrs A M Chebsey  
Mr J E Clarke  
Mr G L Dakin  
Mr S Davenport  
Mr T Davies  
Mrs P A Dee  
Mr A Durnell  
Mr D W Evans

Mr R A Evans  
Mr E J Everall  
Mr J A Gibson  
Mr J B Gillow  
Mr N J Hartin  
Mrs E A Hartley  
Mr R Hughes  
Mr V J Hunt  
Mr J Hurst-Knight  
Dr J E Jones  
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 A N Mosley  
Mrs C M A Motley  
Mrs M 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 M T Price  
Mr D W L Roberts  
Mr K Roberts  
Mrs D M Shineton  
Mr J Tandy  
Mr M Taylor-Smith  
Mrs R 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  
Mr L Winwood  
Mr M L Wood  
M P A D Wynn

### **83. APOLOGIES**

The Chief Executive reported apologies for absence had been received from Mr T Bebb, Mrs A J Caesar-Homden, Mr A B Davies, Mr R Huffer, Mrs T Huffer, Mrs J Jones, Mr D J Minnery and Mrs T Woodward.

### **84. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations of interest were made:

- (a) Mr R Evans declared a personal interest in Item 5 (Public Question Time) as he was a member of the Shropshire Older Peoples Assembly.
- (b) Mr T H Biggins declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 10 (Setting the Council Tax Taxbase for 2012/13) as he had a second home in Shropshire.

### **85. MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2011, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record, subject to Mr J M W Kenny's address in Minute 72 being amended to indicate that he asked what continued to progress well when the Music Hall project was at least a year late; what were the benefits of and revenue implications for the Heathgates Island scheme; and whether the Riverside development was going to include improvements to Frankwell footbridge to make it more disabled friendly.

### **86. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **86.1 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 24th November 2011 which had been circulated at the meeting.

#### **86.2 Christmas Celebrations**

The Speaker indicated that 40 choir members from Greenfields School, Shrewsbury would be attending to sing a medley of Christmas carols in the Foyer outside the Council Chamber from 12.00 noon onwards.

The meeting would be adjourned at that point if the business had not been completed, so that Members could enjoy the carols and partake in a festive glass of mulled wine with himself and the Chairman of the Council.

### 86.3 **Council Song: Give A Little Hope This Christmas**

The Speaker and the Leader referred to the Christmas song that the Council had launched to raise money for the local charity, Hope House Children's Hospices. The song had been recorded in one take with the help of local musician, Charlotte Edwards, BBC Radio Shropshire, and Shropshire Council staff who had all given their time voluntarily to help make the project happen at no cost to the Council. The Council listened to the Christmas song and Members were encouraged to buy the song, that could be downloaded on itunes for just 79p, and promote it as widely as possible amongst family and friends

## 87. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Speaker advised that a petition bearing more than 1,000 signatures relating to the reinstatement of kerbside cardboard collections had been received from Mr. Patrick Cosgrove. Under the Council's Petition Scheme, the Mr Cosgrove would be given up to 5 minutes to open the debate by outlining his case, after which members would have 15 minutes to deliberate before the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth and Prosperity, Mr M Owen, would reply, during which he would also respond to a further petition received from Mr Gerald Wild on cardboard recycling arrangements.

He then invited Mr Cosgrove to open the debate during which he called on the Council to reinstate the kerbside cardboard collections. During the course of his address Mr Cosgrove expressed concern that the Council was not providing an alternative means for recycling waste cardboard now that it could not be used for garden compost and was advising householders to dispose of cardboard in their waste bin or to take it to a recycling centre from where it was then being sent to landfill. He stated that many other local authorities had continued to collect and recycle cardboard and considered that the present contract for the kerbside collection of cardboard should be honoured, even if it produced a reduced income for Veolia, as there was an environmental cost to be borne in mind.

It was proposed by Mr N J Hartin, and seconded by Mr R A Evans that the examination of alternative arrangements for cardboard recycling be referred to scrutiny to enable further information to be obtained and the most suitable solution to be sought.

**On being put to the vote, the motion was defeated, with a substantial majority voting against.**

A number of members from the minority political groups expressed their disappointment at the Administration not allowing, earlier in the debate, scrutiny to examine the issue of cardboard recycling when the scrutiny process was proving to be effective.

Replying, the Leader, Mr K R Barrow, accepted that the scrutiny process was working well, however the Administration was getting on and dealing with the issue of cardboard recycling and it was important that it continued with this.

Mrs B J Baker enquired whether thin card could be put in the kerbside paper recycling box. In reply, Mr M Owen indicated that he was endeavoring to find out whether it was possible for this to be done.

At the conclusion of the debate, the Portfolio Holder responded to the petitions as follows:

“The Council share the frustration and concern of Mr Cosgrove and Mr Wild that changes in national composting standards have made it impossible for us to continue collecting cardboard with garden waste. This method was both successful in diverting waste away from landfill and also convenient and popular with residents. It was also a cost effective way of collecting this type of waste across a large rural county such as Shropshire. This would have continued to be the preferred approach without these externally imposed changes.

Unfortunately it is not possible to reinstate this service as, without a composting outlet, the waste would be sent to landfill, with all of the environmental and financial disadvantages that entails. Of the 38,000 tonnes collected annually by this service only around 4,000 tonnes was cardboard, so in order to safeguard the composting of the garden waste it has been necessary to end the practice of collecting cardboard in the same bin.

Residents who do not wish their cardboard waste to be sent to landfill have the option of taking it to one of the 5 Household Recycling Centres or to one of the 16 Bring Banks now placed around Shropshire in frequently used locations such as town centre and supermarket car parks so that in most cases residents will not need to make a special trip to use them. Contrary to Mr Cosgrove’s statement this waste is transported to a local merchant where it is sorted, graded and sent on to an appropriate cardboard or paper mill.

Although it is preferable to recycle the cardboard, we recognise that some residents will not find the Household Recycling Centres and Bring Banks convenient and therefore take the option to dispose of the cardboard in their rubbish bin, and it is for this reason that we will continue to work on methods for efficient and cost effective collection of cardboard for recycling from the kerbside.

The current infrastructure has been developed over many years into a successful and efficient collection system enabling over 50% of Shropshire’s household waste to be recycled or composted, and any new systems should be introduced without damaging this successful approach.

The design of collection and treatment facilities in the UK is very much a local process, allowing each authority to find the best arrangements for its size, geography and density of population. While we are always interested in how

collections are made elsewhere we have to consider what will work in Shropshire and which methods can be adopted within the specific operational and financial constraints that we face. Any new scheme will be implemented as quickly as is practical within this framework.”

Mr M Owen then recommended that the petition be rejected.

It was proposed by Mr J E Clarke, and seconded by Mr J Tandy that the petition be referred to the Performance and Strategy Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

15 members requested a recorded vote, the outcome of which was as follows:

For the motion: (19)

Mrs B J Baker, Mrs C A Barnes, Mr V Bushell, Mrs A M Chebsey, Mr J E Clarke, Mr T Davies, Mrs P A Dee, Mr R A Evans, Mr N J Hartin, Dr J E Jones, Mr J M W Kenny, Mrs H M Kidd, Mr C J Mellings, Mr A N Mosley, Mrs E M Nicholls, Mrs E A Parsons, Mrs D M Shineton, Mr J Tandy, Mr J M Williams.

Against the motion: (44)

Mr P Adams, Mrs J B Barrow, Mr K R Barrow, Mr M Bennett, Mr W Benyon, Mr T H Biggins, Mrs K Burgoyne, Mr G H L Butler, Mrs K D Calder, Mr S F Charmley, Mr G L Dakin, Mr S Davenport, Mr A Durnell, Mr D W Evans, Mr E J Everall, Mr J A Gibson, Mr J B Gillow, Mrs E A Hartley, Mr R Hughes, Mr V J Hunt, Mr J Hurst-Knight, Mr S P A Jones, Mrs C J Lea, Mr D G Lloyd, Mrs C M A Motley, Mrs M Mullock, Mr P A Nutting, Mr M J Owen, Mr W M Parr, Mr M G Pate, Mr M T Price, Mr K Roberts, Mr M Taylor-Smith, Mrs R Taylor-Smith, Mr R Tindall, Mr G F Tonkinson, Mr A E Walpole, Mr S J West, Mr M Whiteman, Mrs C Wild, Mr B B Williams, Mr L Winwood, Mr M Wood and Mr P A D Wynn.

Abstaining from voting: (2)

Mr T Barker and Mr D W L Roberts.

**The motion was defeated, with 19 members voting in favour, 44 against and 2 abstentions.**

The Speaker announced that Mr C Davis and Mr J Dodson, representing the Shropshire Association of Senior Citizens Forums and the Shropshire Older Peoples Assembly, had given notice of their intention to ask questions in accordance with Procedural Rule 14.

- (a) In the absence of Mr C Davis, the Speaker put the following question to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth and Prosperity:

“It has come to light that HSBC intend to close their branch in Craven Arms early next year. This will cause difficulties for the general population of Craven Arms and the surrounding rural area. It will certainly increase costs for local businesses and may increase security risks as traders are forced to transport sums of cash around the county in private vehicles.

I would like to ask if there is anything that the Council can do to try to stop this closure. Craven Arms is a market town set for regeneration but will no doubt find it more difficult to attract new businesses if banks close. We would all like to see commerce in Craven Arms expanding, not contracting.

Also I understand that the Council has a policy of trying to make savings of carbon emissions. Closure of the bank in Craven Arms will certainly add carbon emissions as people are forced to travel a minimum distance of a 15 mile round trip to do their banking.

Could the Council write to HSBC expressing the concern of the residents and businesses of Craven Arms?”

Mrs M Owen replied as follows:

“I am aware that Craven Arms Town Council are campaigning against the closure of this branch of HSBC. Clearly, this is a concern for local people and in particular for local businesses.

Shropshire Council will work with the Town Council to minimise the impact of any proposed changes by the HSBC to their service at Craven Arms.”

- (b) Mr J Dodson, representing the Shropshire Association of Senior Citizens Forums and the Shropshire Older Peoples Assembly, asked the following questions of the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing:

“1. The budget proposals relating to admissions to residential care identify savings of £875,000 in 2012/13 and £675,000 in 2013/14 from a stated budget of £14.166 million is about 6% and 5% in respective years. This is followed by a statement that a total reduction of 25% is sought over the next three years. This implies the expectation of a further massive reduction in year 2014/15. How many people will be affected by these savings? What proportion of these savings will be re-allocated in other related services to achieve the stated aim that people shall be supported as far as possible and as long as possible to retain their independence in their own home?”

“2. The budget proposals relating to provision of day care identify savings of £250,000 in 2012/13 and a further £250,000 in 2013/14. The details provided do not show how or where these savings will be achieved, but provide a list of aspirations regarding the hoped for improvements resulting from the cuts. How many day centres will be closed and how many day centre places will be lost, and how will these negative outcomes serve to promote the health and well being of the people affected?”

Mrs A Hartley stated that constructive feedback in the re-modelling of services was always welcomed and gave an assurance that in seeking value for money in the provision of services for older people the Council was dedicated to ensuring that could continue to live with dignity. She undertook to meet with Mr Dodson early in the New Year to discuss his views, but stressed that the Council was under enormous budgetary pressures.

Mrs Hartley then undertook to let Mr Dodson have the following replies to his questions in writing:

“1. We believe that people should be supported to live independently in their own homes for as long as is possible before entering residential care. Feedback from older people at our consultation events during the summer made clear the importance they placed on being able to live independently at home.

The reduction in admissions to residential care will be achieved through the use of assistive technology and a focus on reablement. This is particularly important on discharge from hospital and for new referrals from the community to adult social care services.

The financial savings have been calculated through mapping the savings made as a consequence of more people receiving support to remain at home and fewer people needing to go into residential care. Our plans already being implemented are showing this is a practical alternative, which local people prefer.”

“2. These savings are being achieved through a combination of carefully managed actions.

Current service users across all client groups are being reviewed as part of our normal review process. During this review, and in line with our development of more personalised support, we expect more people to take up activities outside day centres. This will, in turn, reduce the numbers of people using building based services on a regular basis. The feedback we received from our consultation strongly supported this approach to giving people greater personal choice.

New people being assessed now and in the future are also being supported to develop alternatives to the traditional day service model of care, by using personal budgets and self-directed support instead.

These actions provide both a broader choice and a more diverse range of activities for individuals, as well as delivering savings. This is a win: win for local people.

Changes to day time opportunities are inevitable as a consequence of individual choice. Clearly, we will be discussing with stakeholders how any changes to existing services, as part of our wider transformation of local provision, can be managed sensitively.

For those choosing to develop their own form of support, as an alternative to attending a day centre, this should not be seen as a negative outcome. Where people have made choices about what they do, how they do it, and when they do it, they often feel more in control of their own lives which, in turn, promotes the health and well-being of the people involved.”

## **88. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

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

(a) Received from Mr R Evans:

“Given the cuts in Youth Services how will this authority meet its requirement as laid out in the Education and Inspection Act?”

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

“As Roger Evans well knows, Shropshire has a proud heritage of providing young people with a wide range of enriching and varied leisure time activities, provided by the statutory, voluntary and the private sector. We are committed to continuing this, and our imaginative approach to how we do this in future, will give local people even better value for money, by reducing unnecessary costs.

Our universal services probably best relate to the national standards, and these are delivered and supported by our Positive Activities Team. This includes investment in more extensive voluntary sector support and delivery. It is our ambition that more of our positive activities are delivered by the local voluntary/not for profit sector, as its capacity grows, with help from our positive activities team. This is in accordance with the policy of the Coalition Government.

Current youth legislation relates directly to young people aged 13 to 19. But, Shropshire Council has gone one step further in acknowledging that early intervention, social education and self esteem need to be developed earlier in the life of young people to be most effective. The Positive Activities team, therefore, work with 10 to 16 year olds, leaving the Information, Advice & Guidance (IAG), Target Youth Support (TYS), and Engaging with Young People teams to concentrate on 13 to 19 year



olds. All 4 teams work with disabled young people up to their 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday, to provide a comprehensive, high quality service.

We have ensured that Young people are actively involved in “what facilities and activities are available to them” by undertaking a needs assessment exercise across the whole county, which included Young People, Councillors, Community Regeneration officers and partner agencies. As a result of this, we are currently piloting 3 new commissioning models which put young people at the heart of deciding the shape of the provision they want.

The Engaging with Young People team are also actively involved in a variety of consultations on behalf of the authority and ensure that young people have a voice in council matters, through their support of the Members of Youth Parliament (MYP's) and Speak Out (SO) group.

Other parts of the council further enhance the provision available to young people in their leisure time, they include:

- Arts Service
- Library Service
- Leisure (including community sports and active leisure)
- Extended schools
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme
- Short Breaks Scheme.

I do wish that Liberal Democrat councillors would stop assuming that good quality services can be provided only by increasing spending lots of money, paid for by increasing the financial burden on local Council tax payers. That might be what they are used to doing, but it is not the way that this Council is run.”

By way of a supplementary question, Mr R Evans at first expressed his disappointment and concern at the tone of the prepared response and queried the approach of responses to Members questions being given by deputy portfolio holders; and then asked how the Council would actually meet the requirement laid out in the Education and Inspection Act?

Mrs Burgoyne replied:

“Thank you, Roger, legitimate and helpful contributions from colleagues are always welcomed.

This is, however, the third consecutive question addressing this issue at Full Council from the Liberal Democrat Group, from either previous or current councillors, and so the main body of the answer reflects this repetition.

It should be recognised that, despite cuts across the majority of departments in councils nationally, as well as its extensive restructuring

into four strands, the Shropshire Youth team is doing a fantastic job in delivering youth services to not only the government's recommended age group of 13 to 19 year-olds, but also going a step further in addressing the needs of 10 to 13 year olds. In addition, the four strands work with disabled young people right up to their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. For this, the team should be very much commended, and actively supported by members.

The Education & Inspection Act states that: '*The local authority will need to ensure that young people are involved in determining what activities and facilities should be available to them*'. This council already listens to the requirements of young people, to decide what they actually want, instead of what councillors and officers think that they ought to want. This is carried out via the young people's Speak Out Group, which holds regular meetings and of which my son is a keen participant; the members of the Youth Parliament, whose excellent presentation was given at the last full council meeting; and this January's Positive Activities pilot scheme, which addresses three participant involvement models: For you, With you and You alone. The pilots will be run at one urban and one rural school.

As community leaders, and in keeping with the spirit of localism which you mentioned earlier, Roger, we should all be working with the future generation, not only by regular participation in the Speak Out and MYP activities arranged, which I have to say not all councillors attend, but also by directly volunteering for clubs ourselves when we can or at least by helping source volunteers for youth activities.

I know that some councillors in the chamber do spare some time to work with young people. For years I have helped as a civilian instructor with the air training corps, organised extracurricular activities such as ski trips for schools, and have volunteered for the sessions at Sundorne Youth Centre, where volunteers are scarce. This is despite being a very happily divorced working mother.

I will ensure that a detailed response addressing the supplementary question, if Roger still requires it, will be provided."

The Speaker indicated that he would check the position, in respect of the operation of the Council's procedure rules, on responses to Members questions being given by deputy portfolio holders.

(b) Received from Mr R Evans:

"Given the welcome increase in pupil premiums that is due for next year, can you please give full details of what positive action Shropshire Council has done in the last 12 months and what plans does it have to give this extra publicity and promotion between now and February 2012 so that this extra money can be obtained for our local badly funded schools?"

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills, Mrs C M A Motley replied:

“The Council has taken a great deal of positive action on this, as part of our wider campaign to get a fairer funding system from the Government for our local schools, as Roger must know.

The Pupil Premium was introduced as a new government grant from September 2011. It is grant targeted at pupils from deprived backgrounds and is available to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (and have registered), all registered forces children and all children known to be continuously looked after for over 6 months.

The current allocation for the academic year 2011/12 is £488 per pupil for those eligible for free school meals and for looked after children - in the case of Armed Forces children the allocation is £200 per pupil. However, this will rise fourfold taking the value for each pupil up to £1,720 and £800, respectively by 2014/15.

The funding, whilst not ring fenced, is targeted at improving the educational performance and outcomes of these pupils. Schools will be monitored on the performance of these groups and will be required to report annually about how they have used the pupil premium.

The pupil premium has been the topic at meetings of the Schools Forum on 23 June 2011 and 17 November 2011, and detailed discussions have taken place around the need to maximise the funding. It has been discussed also at secondary headteacher briefings, and local schools have been signposted to a good practice website.

Shropshire Council has included a statement in “The Admissions Guide for Parents”, available to all parents – which highlights the benefits of registering:

“Schools are entitled to receive additional funding and a pupil premium for the number of pupils on roll who are eligible for free schools meals. It would therefore be beneficial for the school if all those who qualify, make application for their free school meals entitlement.”

Information has also been included in the letter sent to parents/carers when advising them of the allocated places (in year/mid-term applications).

There has been an increase in uptake of free school meals (FSM) in Shropshire from 7.74% in 2008 to 10.54% in 2011. This correlates closely with the percentage of people in receipt of housing/council tax benefit, suggesting that the take up locally is good.

Schools have some responsibility to promote and encourage families to register and some schools have, as a result of Local Authority promotion, taken action such as including articles in newsletters to parents and governors etc.

There is obviously a link between eligibility for free school meals and eligibility for other benefits, for example housing and council tax benefit, and Benefits Options Advisers routinely signpost applicants to the entitlement for free school meals. Applications are being completed by these advisers.

Eligibility can be checked on the Shropshire Council website at: <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/schoolmeals.nsf/open/065D886911B6636B8025750B00507E92>

Extended School Coordinators within school are promoting take up of FSM.

As a result of discussions at the recent Schools Forum, and the increased per pupil allocation from 2012, it was agreed to widen the promotion of the take up of FSM. A high profile publicity campaign is planned, which will be undertaken very soon and will include:

- Press releases to local press, radio interviews
- Use of social media (Twitter and Facebook)
- Members' bulletin
- Children's Centre and Family Information Service
- Promotion via school governor briefings/newsletters
- Included in information sent to parents/carers on primary and secondary allocation days
- Production of simple/clear leaflet/flyer
- Ensuring promotion via Extended Schools Coordinators/Children's Centres.

Whilst acknowledging that the pupil premium does increase the funding available to schools, any increase in the numbers accessing FSM is offset by increased costs. Each FSM costs £380 per pupil to the Local Authority, and the Schools Forum meeting of 23 June 2011 noted the need to consider some financial adjustment within the schools budget through the dedicated schools grant (DSG) to meet these extra costs.

Roger Evans can see that the Council has taken a full and active role in ensuring that our local schools get maximum benefit from this initiative."

Mr R. Evans stated that the Pupil Premium grant had now risen from £488 to £600 per pupil eligible for free school meals, so it was even more imperative for the Council to ensure that the uptake of free school meals for those that were eligible increased. He asked by way of a supplementary question whether the portfolio holder would do all she could to target parents not claiming free school meals and, in particular, bring to their attention the template letter for making a claim that had been issued by the Government.

Replying, Mrs Motley indicated that the Council was doing all it could to increase entitlement uptake through the use of social media and direct contact with the schools, and she assured that she would continue to pursue this with the utmost vigour.

(c) Received from Mr J M Williams:

" 'The current market value of mixed cardboard is an estimated £50 per tonne.' Where has this estimate come from?  
If it comes from our Waste Operator Veolia, then arguably there is a conflict of interest, as the same company might want to understate the value of our recycled items in order to produce feedstock for the Incinerator, which it is making great efforts to bring on-stream in Shrewsbury. Arguably its advice is not independent as it has a vested interest in understating the value of recyclables. Why didn't they predict this change in national policy? Where was the advice on best practice? Will the Council agree to an independent assessment of the value of the cardboard (and other waste)?"

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth and Prosperity, Mr M Owen replied:

"Mansell Williams' argument is fanciful in the extreme, and he knows this. He really should be less paranoid, and stop seeing conspiracies where they don't exist!

The estimate did come from Veolia, but is supported by other evidence gathered by Council staff. It is an estimate on the basis of projected prices for mixed, low grade cardboard over the next six months. Prices for clean, sorted corrugated cardboard are much higher, but that is not what Veolia would be collecting or delivering to mills. Veolia deliver mixed loads to local merchants who then sort and grade the material. The merchant prices published for the last six months have varied between £10 and £40 per tonne, the £50 estimated by Veolia reflects the volumes offered and the market power of the parent company.

Clearly, Mansell does not understand how the contract with Veolia works. Veolia have a direct financial interest in getting the best price for the material they collect, as they share the value of this material with Shropshire Council. The contract allows Shropshire Council to audit gate prices and total amounts received for all recyclates. Veolia gain income from the recycling they collect, providing a direct incentive to recycle more material and get the best price for it. This income is shared by Shropshire Council.

With the safeguards of this contract structure, and the Council's ability to carry out its own checks, expenditure on employing a consultant to check cardboard prices would not give value for money for local people.

And, I am very surprised that Mansell Williams wants us to spend money unnecessarily in this way, as he and his Labour colleagues have always objected to the use of independent consultants, because of the costs involved.

On the subject of predicting policy, as I have already said to Mansell more than once, the reason that this issue has caused so many problems is that it was not communicated to Councils or waste management companies in advance.

Also, as Mansell knows, I have already made a response on best practice to Council. I see no need to repeat that here, as Labour Group members are starting to sound like a broken record on this topic.”

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Williams expressed his disappointment at the intemperate tone of the prepared response and thanked Mr Owen for arranging for him to meet with Veolia on the issue.

Replying, Mr Owen indicated that he was pleased that Mansel had accepted his invitation and he would try all he could for his meeting with Veolia to be held before Christmas if that was possible. He added that his comments in response to the question were not intended to be discourteous.

## **89. REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow and seconded by Mrs A Hartley that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, with the exception of the recommendation relating to the proposals set out in paragraph 5.18 of Appendix 1 to the report which it was considered should be referred to the Group Leaders for further discussion, be agreed.

Mr Barrow welcomed Mr Ciaran Martin, the Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel, to the meeting.

Mr Barrow stated that he wished to make it clear that he considered that although the workload of the planning committees was changing, as a result of the greater delegated authority granted to officers to determine planning applications, he recognised that the planning applications coming forward to each area planning committee were mainly of a contentious nature and therefore he did not regard the demands being placed on the committees to have lessened.

Mrs. Calder stated that she was pleased to see that the value of the work of the vice-chairmen of the area planning committees would be recognised. She considered that the role of the chairmen of the area planning committees had increased under the scheme of delegation to officers through their involvement in adjudicating on whether applications should be referred to

committee for determination. She indicated that she would raise this as part of the Independent Remuneration Panel's review in January 2012.

Mr Hartin indicated that he supported the proposals set out in paragraph 5.18 of Appendix 1 to the report being referred to the Group Leaders for further discussion.

Mr J M W Kenny proposed by way of amendment, which was duly seconded by Mrs B J Baker, that the following be included as an additional recommendation:

"No car or motorcycle travel allowance be paid for approved duty journeys of 2 miles or under with the effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012"

Mr Kenny indicated that the purpose of the amendment was to discourage short distance travel, reduce the harm to the environment that it caused and encourage people to adopt healthier lifestyles by walking or cycling instead.

In seconding, Mrs Baker stressed that emissions from cars were greatest when an engine was cold and not operating at maximum efficiency and that the Council should be taking a lead in reducing vehicle emissions.

Mrs Motley, Mrs R Taylor-Smith and Mr Bennett, expressed the view that certain Members might have difficulty covering their areas without the use of a motor vehicle, which also helped to reduce journey times in undertaking their duties.

**On being put to the vote the amendment was defeated, with 10 Members voting in favour and a substantial majority of Members voting against.**

Mr. Mosley and Mr R Evans expressed concern at how the scrutiny process was presently operating under the chairmanship of the majority Conservative Group and questioned the lack of challenge to the administration as a consequence of this arrangement and the influence of leading majority group Members on scrutiny business. In addition, Mr R Evans indicated that he had not been permitted to meet with the Independent Remuneration Panel to raise those points in person.

Mr Barker stated that he had been unaware until now of any concern about the performance of the scrutiny process. He referred to the fact that the call-in process was always available to members of all political groups for Cabinet decisions to be scrutinised, but this had not been exercised for sometime until today when, perhaps to tie-in with the criticism now being raised by the minority groups, two call-in requests had been received. He expressed disappointment in the timing of the criticism about the operation of the scrutiny process and considered the comments to be unwarranted and hoped that this would be noted by the Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Mr Barrow assured Members that the scrutiny process operated free from any influence of Cabinet Members and each scrutiny chairman was unhindered in leading their committee in setting work programmes and agendas, and expressing their views to Cabinet. Responding to Mr R Evans, he stated that any Member that wished to address the Independent Remuneration Panel should be permitted to do so and undertook to ensure that arrangements were made for this to occur in future.

In conclusion, the Speaker thanked Mr Ciaran Martin, the Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel, for his attendance at the meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the following recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the proposed level of Members allowances for the remainder of the 2010-11 financial year be adopted:
  - (i) Unless specifically referred to below, the Basic, Special Responsibility and other Allowances remain unchanged for the remainder of 2011/12.
  - (ii) The Special Responsibility Allowance for the Deputy Portfolio Holders be 0.25 x the Basic Allowance which, after the 5% reduction introduced on 1 April 2011 will result in an annual payment of £2,878.50 and that this be backdated to 12 May 2011.
  - (iii) The Special Responsibility Allowance of the three Area Planning Committee Chairs be reduced from 0.75 to 0.5 of the Basic Allowance set at 1 April 2010 which, when reduced by the 5% referred to in (b) above, will result in an annual allowance of £5,757 and that such reduction take effect on 1 January 2012.
  - (iv) The Special Responsibility Allowance for the Vice-Chairs of the three Area Planning Committees and the Vice-Chair of the Strategic Licensing Committee be set at 0.125 of the Basic Allowance set at 1 April 2010 which, when reduced by the 5% referred to in (b) above, will result in an annual payment of £1,439.25 and that these allowances be backdated to 12 May 2011.
  - (v) The Special Responsibility Allowance of the Chair of the Audit Committee be increased from 0.25 to 0.5 of the Basic Allowance set at 1 April 2010, which when reduced by the 5% referred to in (b) above will result in an annual payment of £5,757 and this be backdated to 12 May 2011.



- (vi) The mileage rate paid to members for the use of a bicycle be reduced from the present 46p per mile to 40p per mile, being the same as the current mileage rate payable in respect of motor vehicles, with effect from 1 January 2012.
- (b) That the following recommendation of the Independent Remuneration Panel be referred to the Group Leaders for further discussion:

The rules relating to the claiming of travel allowances for approved duties be amended in the manner suggested in paragraphs 5.18 of the Panel's report.

## **90. REPORT OF SCRUTINY ON EXAMINATION OF PHASE 2 BUDGET SAVINGS 2012 - 2013**

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

Mr Barker stated that the report summarised the thoughts and opinions expressed by all Members of the Scrutiny Committees.

Mrs E A Parsons referred to the concern she had raised about the deletion of six senior social worker posts in Adult Care and Management and the impact that the resultant re-structure was now having on the operation of the service. She cited the example of a carer of an elderly resident in her Electoral Division who could no longer take up issues and queries with a dedicated social worker making it more difficult to obtain a rapid response from the service.

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Mrs E A Hartley expressed her concern at the issue raised by Mrs Parsons and assured Council that the utmost care was being taken in respect of service delivery following the changes. She then undertook to speak with Mrs Parsons on the matter following the meeting.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Phase 2 savings identified within Appendix 4 of the Financial Strategy – 2012/13 to 2020/21 report be approved;
- (b) That it be agreed that where the implementation of Phase 2 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 revised savings targets in 2012/23 and in the medium term (April 2013 to March 2015), and how those revised savings targets relate to savings identified as part of the Council's financial planning process to date, be agreed.

## **91. FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2012/13 TO 2020/21, INCLUDING PHASE 2 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.

The Leader, Mr K R Barrow, stated that it was anticipated that a further 0.9% reduction in Government Grant was likely to be incurred and emphasised the impact that this could have on the Council's budget.

Mr N J Hartin concurred with the concerns expressed in the report on the amount of savings having to be made by the Council due to the Government's comprehensive spending review. He welcomed potential new sources of funding for the Council from initiatives such as the Community Infrastructure Levy but he noted the amount of funding still proposed to be placed in the Council's reserves and questioned whether it would be more appropriate to invest that funding in service delivery to the public.

Mr A N Mosley stated that 529 posts had been deleted from the establishment in this Council's lifetime, equating to a quarter of the jobs lost in the County during the same period, and it was anticipated that a further 60/70 jobs would be deleted as a consequence of the shared services initiative. He contended that with the cuts in the Council's budget increasing this called into question the sustainability of the Council's services. In particular, he drew attention to the proposals for no further growth in social care budgets in future years and the disparity in the amount of funding to come from the Health Service.

Mr M Taylor-Smith stressed that as the Council's budget was very tight reserves needed to be strengthened to assist in meeting any unexpected expenditure and adapt to changing circumstances.

The Leader, Mr K R Barrow, indicated that a further 0.9% reduction in Government Grant might result in the Council having to make another £30m in budget savings. Therefore, he considered that it would be wrong not to build up its reserves to assist in meeting extra financial demands. In respect of jobs, he emphasised that it was 529 posts that had been deleted and not people and this would continue to be managed carefully through the Council's transformation.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Phase 2 savings identified within Appendix 4 of the Financial Strategy – 2012/13 to 2020/21 report be approved;
- (b) That it be agreed that where the implementation of Phase 2 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 revised savings targets in 2012/23 and in the medium term (April 2013 to March 2015), and how those revised savings targets relate to savings identified as part of the Council's financial planning process to date, be agreed.

## **92. SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX TAXBASE FOR 2012/13**

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

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992 as amended, the amount calculated by Shropshire Council as its Council Tax taxbase for the 2012/13, as detailed in the Appendix to the report, totalling 109,997.95 be approved.
- (b) That the inclusion of 512.80 Band D equivalents in the taxbase for continuation of the second homes discount at 10%, in accordance with present Council policy be noted.
- (c) That the exclusion of 331.12 Band D equivalents from the taxbase for continuation of the long-term empty properties discount, i.e. awarding the full 50% discount for six months and completely removing this discount after six months, in accordance with present Council policy be noted.
- (d) That the reduction in the Council Tax income raised of £390,508 as a result of continuation of the long-term empty properties discount, in accordance with present Council policy be noted.
- (e) That a collection rate for 2012/13 of 98.50% be approved.

## **93. CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS**

It was proposed by Mrs A Hartley, and seconded by Mr K Roberts 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 Council endorses the following list of approved conferences and seminars:

<b>Conference/Seminar</b>	<b>Conference Cost</b>
Annual Conference and Social Housing Exhibition – Birmingham x3	£930.00
CCN Annual Conference (Includes Accommodation) x2	£1,126.10
CIH Conference	-
Health and Social Care Conference 2011 x2	£490 + VAT
LG Group Annual Conference – Localism Works	-
LG Group Urban Commission	-
LG Annual Rural Commission x2	£598.00
LGA Annual Conference 2010 (Accommodation Included) x4	£2,560.00
National Children & Adult Services Conference	£495.00
Safety Adults Conference	£365.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£6,564.10</b>

- (b) That the provision for all conferences and seminars shall in future be incorporated into the Members' Services budget and that all such expenditure shall be managed by the Corporate Head of Legal and Democratic Services.
- (c) That the total amount the Council spends on attending conferences and seminars be reduced by approximately 20% with effect from 1st April 2012 by discontinuing attendance at the Annual CIPFA Conference.
- (d) That the residual amount in the budget of circa £1,500 be used to fund attendances at one-off events as required and approved by the Corporate Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

#### **94. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES**

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

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the appointment of Mr P Wynn to replace Mr D W Evans on the Safe and Confident Communities Scrutiny Committee and the appointment of Mr S Davenport as a Conservative Group substitute on the Strategic Licensing Committee be confirmed.

**95. ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS OF THE AUTHORITY**

The Leader, Mr K R Barrow, reported that this item had been withdrawn.

Speaker

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Date

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The meeting closed at 12 noon.