



<u>Committee and Date</u>
COUNCIL
22 November 2012

<u>Item</u>
3
Public

MINUTES

MEETING OF SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

HELD ON THURSDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2012

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 A Caesar-Homden
Mr L Chapman
Mr S F 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 A Durnell
Mr D W Evans
Mr R A Evans
Mrs H Fraser
Mr J B Gillow OBE
Mr N J Hartin
Mrs E A Hartley
Mr R Huffer
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 M T Price
Mr D W L Roberts
Mr K Roberts
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 M L Wood
Mrs T Woodward
Mr P A D Wynn

40. APOLOGIES

The Speaker reported apologies for absence had been received from, Mr J T Bebb, Mrs K D Calder, Mr E J Everall, Mrs T Huffer, Mr D J Minnery, Mr W M Parr, Mrs E A Parsons, Mr M G Pate, Mrs D M Shingleton and Mr L Winwood.

41. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Members were reminded that they must not participate in the discussion or voting on any matter in which they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest and should leave the room prior to the commencement of the debate.

- Mr K R Barrow, Mrs J Barrow, Mr T H Biggins, Mr G H L Butler, Mr J B Gillow, Mr L Chapman, Mr S Davenport, Mr D W Evans, Mr P Nutting, Mr D Roberts, Mrs C Wild, and Mr P Wynn asked that it be recorded that they had left the room prior to the commencement of the discussion and voting on the Public Question item (Petition on Business Rates in Oswestry – Agenda Item 5).
- Mrs B Baker and Mr C Mellings asked that it be recorded that they left the room prior to the commencement of the discussion and voting on the item on Changes to Staff Pay (Agenda Item 11).
- Mrs J Barrow, Mrs A Hartley and Mr M Owen asked that it be recorded that they left the room prior to the commencement of the discussion and voting on the item on Loan to IP&E (Agenda item 19).

42. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2012, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

43. ANNOUNCEMENTS

43.1 **Chairman's Engagements**

The Chairman referred members to the list of official engagements carried out by himself, the Speaker and Mr J B Gillow since the last meeting of the Council on 19th July 2012, which had been circulated at the meeting.

43.2 **London 2012: Olympics and Paralympics**

The Speaker reminded Members that at the previous Council meeting the success of the Royal Visit to RAF Cosford had been applauded and

seen as a splendid curtain raiser to the forthcoming Olympics and Paralympics.

Following the conclusion of the Olympics and Paralympics, the Speaker felt it was appropriate to salute the spectacular success of both events, the role played by Wenlock and to also congratulate the medal winners, competitors, games-makers and volunteers from Shropshire who had all contributed to the massive international impact of London 2012.

Finally the Speaker urged everyone to visit the display outside the Council Chamber in the Foyer which was very informative.

43.3 **Royal Visit to Ludlow**

The extremely successful visit of H.R.H. Prince of Wales to Ludlow on 17 September was highlighted by Mrs R Taylor-Smith and endorsed by the Leader.

44. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

44.1 **Petitions**

The Speaker advised that a petition bearing more than 1,000 signatures requesting the Government reduce Oswestry business rates and help save the town centre had been received from The Oswestry and Border Counties Advertiser. Under the Council's Petition Scheme, Ms Susan Perry, Editor, would be given up to 5 minutes to open the debate by outlining her case, after which members would have 15 minutes to debate the matter.

The Speaker invited Ms Perry to open the debate. She indicated that the Oswestry and Border Counties Advertiser had been informing and serving the Oswestry community for over 160 years and over the decades some strong campaigns had been led in a bid to protect the local community. In August the 'Cut the Business Rates Campaign' was launched. Ms Perry called on the Council to support this campaign to reduce business rates and help save Oswestry town centre. She expressed concern that the current business rates were badly affecting local businesses and leading to a general decline in Oswestry. The petition now had over 2,200 signatures and continued to grow, such was local public concern.

Business rates was the commonly used term for non-domestic rates and were charged on most non-domestic premises, including most commercial properties such as shops, offices, pubs, warehouses and factories.

Properties were given a rateable value by the Valuation Office Agency, which the local authority would use to calculate how much businesses should be paid. The rating lists were lists of all the rateable values for non-domestic property in England and Wales. There was a separate list for each local authority that calculated and collected business rates bills. New rating lists

were published every five years, the last being published in 2010.

As Shropshire Council was responsible for business rate collection many people assumed that the Council was to blame for their high rates, which was incorrect. Ms Perry hoped their campaign has gone some way to correcting that mistake. However, she indicated that as rate collector, surely the Council had a right to express its views on the unfair deal Oswestry and all other Shropshire towns were experiencing.

She continued that Oswestry was not alone in the number of empty shops that seemed to appear on a weekly basis. The Oswestry Advertiser prided itself on being at the heart of the local community and she commented that to see the town centre become decimated by empty shops was heartbreaking. As a rural market town Oswestry's unique selling point was the amount of independent traders it had, which serve their community and also attracted tourists boosting the area's economy.

Ms Perry suggested that if the Council kept a list of who owned town centre premises, this would make it easier when alarms went off and nobody knew who to contact and for groups like Footfall to get in touch to ensure empty premises were not left looking too derelict.

She acknowledged that as a Council, tough decisions had to be made in the light of the current economic climate so Members knew how difficult times were for traders, but that one area where traders could be helped was through the business rates. She felt that treating urban towns and rural towns the same was unjust and unfair. Further, to apply the same rules to all when it came to business rates only put towns like Oswestry at a disadvantage from the outset. Ms Perry believed that it was time for the government to re-address how business rates were set.

She acknowledged that Shropshire Council has already generously agreed to give £175,000 as part of a revitalisation programme towards Oswestry town centre with £75,000 to help with shop fitting and £100,000 to the Oswestry Economic Board which was welcomed, but concluded by seeking the Council's support in petitioning the government for a fairer business rates deal in rural towns.

During the ensuing discussion several members, including Mr A E Walpole, Mrs P A Dee and Mrs E A Hartley agreed that this issue was prominent not only in Oswestry, which had more than 50 vacant premises, but also across the county as a whole, with several members adding that they felt action must be taken before it was too late.

It was suggested that Business Secretary, Vince Cable MP should be contacted following his visit to Shropshire last year, in a bid to bolster the motion. Mr M Bennett suggested that the Council should urge the Government to take action, especially if the Council wanted to encourage enterprise and trade and commented that businesses needed less taxation, not more.

Mr N J Hartin agreed and called on the Business Secretary to get involved and for Council to support this. He suggested that this was an opportunity to remind Vince Cable MP of his visit and it was an issue he could take forward and look at in more detail. Mrs R Taylor-Smith commented that luckily Ludlow did not have the same problem, with just one or two empty shops, but she still felt it was very important to support local businesses across all the county's market towns

Mr V J Hunt, suggested lobbying the county's MPs to get their assistance, as well as trying to change people's mindset to move them away from internet shopping and rebuilding footfall in town centres. Meanwhile Mrs P A Dee requested that the minutes of the meeting be forwarded to the Local Government Association for their information and attention. They were currently gathering evidence on this matter and she felt this would be helpful.

It was proposed by Mr M Bennett and seconded by Mrs E A Hartley, that the action requested in the petition be taken.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried, with no votes against and no abstentions.

44.2 Public Questions

The Speaker indicated there were no public questions.

45. **POLICING SHROPSHIRE – OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

In introducing the Chief Constable of West Mercia Police, Mr David Shaw to the meeting, the Speaker expressed his thanks to the Police for their help and support over the years in supporting local structures and for their policing. Mr Shaw indicated that he was pleased to attend and to make a verbal presentation to the Council on 'Policing in Shropshire'. He briefly covered the following matters;

Crime – pleasingly this was relatively low in Shropshire, and appeared to be bucking the trend nationally.

Police & Crime Commissioners – this was not just about policing in his view but encompassed more issues. His approach to all candidates was to be open. With regard to the future of CSO's and stations he felt it better to leave these issues until the new Police and Crime Commissioner was in post and could be included in the decision.

The Strategic Alliance agreed between West Mercia and Warwickshire Police Authorities – Simply, this was about keeping the frontline as robust and as good as possible. It was not a merger.

Spending/Budget – the force was in the process of making £30 million in savings from its budget of £210 million, putting it back to spending levels last

seen in 2004. 82% of the budget was pay and pensions. Therefore there would be fewer officers in future and some CSO's may be lost too, whilst efforts were being made to avoid forced redundancies.

In conclusion, Mr Shaw recounted he had spent 30 years in the force and had been through both good and bad times. He acknowledged that morale in the force had taken a hit, but stressed that he believed the desire, ambition and passion of the remaining force was greater than ever.

A Question and Answer session ensued during which the Leader thanked Mr Shaw for his presentation and expressed his pleasure that the Council had such a good relationship with the Police. He added that Superintendent James Tozer and his team had done a magnificent job in Shropshire and their hard work and efforts were much appreciated.

The offer for local members to help communicate information on Police re-organisation was noted and welcomed by Mr Shaw who hoped to involve local members more in future.

Mrs C M A Motley expressed particular concern at the rise in crime in rural areas where she knew criminals from outside the local community were causing problems. In response Mr Shaw indicated his awareness of people crossing the borders where communities were often seen as 'soft targets' and commented that local discretion was the key to alleviating the issue. He assured Members that the police were 'alive' to this issue and that they were working with the NFU.

Mr A N Mosely expressed concern at a rise in burglaries in his ward, particularly bearing in mind that 80% of cuts had not been implemented yet. He stressed the need for stability in local policing and spoke highly about the Community Safety Officers (CSO's) in his local area where they had made a good positive impact, especially in improving community cohesion.

Mr A Durnell commented that James Tozer and his new team were now well established and that he wished to formally place on record his sincere thanks to West Mercia Police on behalf of colleagues in the voluntary sector.

Mr P A Nutting referred to incidences of anti-social behaviour which he contended was a greater problem than major crimes and asked if CSO's could have their role enhanced more in order to tackle such matters more effectively.

In response, Mr Shaw acknowledged the impact of other services having to withdraw and agreed that stability was important, but unfortunately there would be more change before the force got to where it wanted to be. He agreed that CSO's were important and spoke of possible plans to extend their powers and their contractual hours in the future.

Mr Shaw undertook to get a definitive answer for Mr T H Biggins about whether or not Whitchurch was on course to have a new police station in the near future.

The excellent work being undertaken by the Troubled Families Programme was also highlighted by Mrs E A Hartley. She commented that early intervention in preventing problems were yielding excellent results, as well as saving money in the longer term. Mr Shaw agreed that it was important not to lose sight of tackling things early.

Mr Shaw closed by thanking the Council for inviting him to their meeting. He would relay everyone's thanks to Superintendent Tozer and his team, which was pleasing to hear.

The Chairman concluded by thanking Mr Shaw for his time and valuable contribution to the meeting.

46. YOUTH PARLIAMENT PRESENTATION

The Speaker welcomed four Members of Shropshire's Youth Parliament who in turn introduced themselves. They were Luke Harper MYP, George Battson MYP, and Deputy MYP's Niamh Limerick and Bethany Lord.

A joint presentation was given by those present about their work and how they had been successful in the elections that took place in schools and colleges across Shropshire in December/January. Due to a heavy workload, it was explained that the MYP's and their Deputies were supported by a Speak Out Group (SOG); a group of young people feeding in their views to the MYP's on a monthly basis and highlighting issues of importance for young people.

The MYPs showed a short film about the role and work of the UK Youth Parliament. They informed members about Local Democracy Month and invited members to 'sign up' if they were interested in video conferencing with schools or going into local secondary schools.

The BIG VOTE was explained by MYP's. This was a UK Youth Parliament national ballot of young people to establish what their top issues and priorities. MYPs said they wanted to collect as many votes as possible, both because they wanted to know what the top issues were and also because Telford had issued Shropshire with a challenge to see who could collect the most votes. MYPs would inform members of the results of this ballot. The top 5 issues voted on across the whole of the UK would be debated on by MYPs in the House of Commons on 23rd November 2012. Members could watch this live on that date.

In summary, Luke Harper stressed that Members of the Youth Parliament were only too happy to help with anything that Members might want their perspective on at any time in the future, including organising events and

providing materials. He reminded members that to keep up to date with their news you could visit the website www.shropshireyouth.com or the Facebook page [facebook.com/shropshireyouth](https://www.facebook.com/shropshireyouth)

A Question and Answer session ensued, during which an offer to contribute to the Safe and Confident Communities Scrutiny Committee was extended by the Chairman, Mrs J B Barrow, who said their input would be most welcome.

Mr A Bannerman thanked everyone for their excellent work and asked if there was any way in which Members could help the MYP's to become more visible. Mr N J Hartin also welcomed their input and thanked them for an informative presentation.

The MYP's commented that they would like as many members as possible to complete and return the orange slips that had been distributed on everyone's chair. This was to become involved in Local Democracy Month 2012 and take part in video conferencing with local secondary schools. As many returns as possible would be welcomed.

At the election next year, the MYP's explained that they were hoping to get more than 18,000 votes and to continue their work in growing the profile of young people in democracy.

47. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

The Speaker advised that the following question had been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 15 from Mr J M Williams:

"In view of the significant number of houses which are planned to be built in Shrewsbury and Shropshire over the next 10 – 15 years, what powers does Shropshire Council have to stipulate and ensure that new developments are functionally and ecologically viable and will enhance the existing environment? Can Council intervene to discourage house builders making new houses look like old houses and then marketing them as modern homes? Modern homes can be built in a softer, less obtrusive form than the usual bland pastiche beloved of many builders. Are we, as a matter of policy, going to encourage the self-build movement to bring their creativity and enthusiasm to bear on the housing scene in Shrewsbury and Shropshire, as they seem to be fully aware of the range of modern options available?

When introduced to the wide range of building styles and materials available, many buyers would perhaps choose options which were aesthetically exciting, ergonomically efficient and socially affordable. How can Shropshire Council lead on such matters?

Surely we do not have to hand over some of our most sensitive environments to large scale national developers, which almost guarantees the bland, soulless, stock housing models of no architectural merit, which would be an insult to the town and the County?"

Mr M T Price, the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning replied:

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank Councillor Mansell Williams for bringing this question forward at this time. He raises important issues about our overall policy approach to design as a material planning consideration and the decisions we make as Local Planning Authority.

The good news is that notwithstanding all the publicity about the National Planning Policy Framework making for freer planning decisions, in this important area the Government has underlined its commitment to the importance of good design of the built environment, encouraging us to refuse poorly designed schemes which fail to improve the character and quality of an area. This position is welcome and underpins our desire to create sustainable places through good quality design as set out in Policy CS6 of our adopted Core Strategy.”

Mr J M Williams thanked the Portfolio Holder for his answer and asked by way of a supplementary question, if a cross-party member working group could be set up to look specifically at design. Mr M T Price replied that he believed quality and design went together and reminded that all planning applications had sustainable check-lists, however he was happy to look at this proposal.

48. APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS TO STATUTORY AND OTHER ROLES

The Leader, Mr K R Barrow, presented a report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, dealing with the appointment of officers to various statutory and other roles. It was proposed by Mr K R Barrow, seconded by Mrs E A Hartley and duly

RESOLVED:

- a) That David Taylor (Corporate Director - People) be appointed as Acting Head of Paid Service for Shropshire Council with immediate effect.
- b) That Claire Porter (Corporate Head of Legal and Democratic Services) be appointed as Returning Officer in accordance with Section 35(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 with immediate effect.
- c) That Stacey Ijewsky (Elections Officer) be appointed as the Deputy Returning Officer in accordance with Section 35(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 with immediate effect.
- d) That Claire Porter (Corporate Head of Legal and Democratic Services) be appointed as the Electoral Registration Officer in accordance with Section 8(2)(a) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 with immediate effect.

- e) That Tom McCabe (Corporate Director – Places) be appointed as the Clerk to the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire with immediate effect.

49. RETURNING OFFICERS REPORT

The Speaker Mr D G Lloyd MBE presented a report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, advising that Mr Lee Chapman had been elected as Councillor to represent the Church Stretton and Craven Arms Electoral Division on Thursday 13 September 2012.

50. CHANGES TO STAFF PAY REDUCTION 2012

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 approved.

During the discussion Mr N J Hartin commented that he was pleased to see that the pay decrease was less than originally planned. Mr A N Mosely and Mr R A Evans expressed disappointment at the overall proposals which still amounted to a pay reduction and suggested that staff should be treated with more integrity. In reply, Mr K R Barrow stressed that he fully respected all staff and that these changes would lessen the impact of the forthcoming pay reduction, whilst also providing a pay increase for the lowest paid staff and ensuring that the Council operated within its' agreed financial strategy.

RESOLVED:

- a) That all staff receive a 1% pay increase effective from 1 October 2012, mitigating the second part of the pay reduction.
- b) That staff on Spinal Column Point SCP13 (£15,027) and below be fully exempted from the second part of the pay reduction.
- c) That staff on Staff on SCP 14-17 (£15,300 - £16,376) be partially exempted from the second part of the pay reduction.

51. REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL: DEPUTY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS ALLOWANCE

The Speaker welcomed Mr Ciaran Martin, Chairman of the Independent Remuneration Panel to the meeting, who was present to answer Members' questions on the report if required.

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow, and seconded by Mr S J West that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the level of remuneration for Deputy Portfolio Holders, be received and agreed.

Mr N J Hartin asked if the proposed award would be backdated and if so how much would this be. Mr C Martin replied that it would depend on the date of appointment and commented that relatively speaking the amount was small. Mr N J Hartin then indicated that it was unfortunate that the increase was being proposed at a time when members of the public were having to make savings and that it would be viewed by many as a significant increase to member's allowances

Mr A N Mosely reiterated his comments at paragraph 2.3 of the report and stated he found it difficult to agree with the recommendations especially given the current economic climate the Council found itself in.

Mr C Martin explained that the Panel operated on a projected basis and that they were mindful of the situation nationally. However, it was the considered view of the Panel that the Deputy Portfolio Holders did add value, hence their recommendation.

Several members welcomed the work undertaken by the Panel and acknowledged the economic position overall, but indicated that it would be erroneous to ignore and not recognise the contribution and value of the work undertaken by the Deputy Portfolio Holders.

In summing up, Mr K R Barrow advised that the initial allowance had been just a starting figure and that further consideration had always been planned to set a more realistic figure. He concluded by referring to the considerable amount of hard work and time spent on council duties by all members, not just the Deputy Portfolio Holders.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Deputy Portfolio Holder Allowance be increased to £5,757.00 (0.5 multiplier of the Basic Allowance) and that this be backdated from the date of appointment.
- b) That it would be beneficial to the Council if further information was released on how the role works, the reporting lines and structure and the monitoring arrangements.
- c) That with a Local Government Election planned for next year and the changing structures in the public sector, a thorough review of the Members Allowance Scheme be conducted in 2013.

52. REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDERS FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The Speaker invited Mrs E A Hartley and Mr S F Charmley to present their report as Portfolio Holders for Health and Wellbeing, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes.

A number of service areas that contributed to improving and maintaining the Health and Wellbeing of Shropshire residents were contained within this portfolio. Mrs Hartley amplified safeguarding (children and adults), corporate parenting, joint working with health, the shadow health and wellbeing board, healthwatch, public health. She referred to the excellent work that had taken place to date to ensure that Shropshire and its partners are well placed to implement the arrangements required by the Health and Social Care Act from April 2013.

Mr S F Charmley amplified the areas of the report pertaining to Sport and Physical Activity, Libraries, Arts Development, Public Protection and Enforcement, and Assessment and Eligibility and answered members' questions on specific parts of the report.

Several members welcomed the many aspects of work undertaken.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report by the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing be received.

53. REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR LEARNING AND SKILLS

The Speaker invited Mrs C M A Motley to present her report as Portfolio Holder for Learning and Skills, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, which detailed the key achievements of the Learning and Skills Portfolio over the past 12 months and the key priorities for next year.

In amplifying the report Mrs C M A Motley congratulated Mrs A Caesar-Homden and the officers concerned for their excellent work to date in very difficult times. A successful year had been had by the Service, though she warned that this could become complicated, especially as more schools changed to Academy status, whilst it was pleasing to report that the Council were getting good 'buy-back' of services thus far.

Mrs C M A Motley highlighted two main areas of concern for the future namely:

- The role of the local authority in education; and
- How to cope with the new funding formula which had recently been announced.

She warned of possible unintended consequences for the Council, whilst it was hoped that solutions would be found.

An update on Academies was requested for the next Council meeting and more information including details about which schools were converting and when to academies, especially for the local member, was requested. Mrs C M A Motley replied that the academy process was very gradual and

that unfortunately this could not be publicised until it was known for definite that academy status had been approved.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report by the Portfolio Holder for Learning and Skills be received.

54. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEALTHY COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2011-12

The Speaker invited Mr G L Dakin to present his report as Chairman of the Healthy Communities Scrutiny Committee, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, which detailed an overview of work undertaken by the committee during 2011/12, plans for the forthcoming year and its achievements in providing positive outcomes for local people.

Mr G L Dakin thanked everyone involved for their contributions which were very much valued. In response to a question about the new '111' service to be introduced by the NHS and its effect on Shropdoc, Mr G L Dakin replied that this would be the subject of discussion at the next West Midlands Scrutiny Committee to be held on 4th October 2012 and that he would report back on the outcome of this in due course.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the foregoing, the contents of the Annual Report of the Healthy Communities Scrutiny Committee for 2011/12 be received.

55. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SAFE AND CONFIDENT COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2011-12

Mrs J B Barrow, Chairman of the Safe and Confident Communities Scrutiny Committee presented a report, copy attached to the signed minutes, on the work of the Committee from 2011 to July 2012. In doing so she highlighted the varied nature of the Committee's work largely covering adult social care, support for carers and safeguarding for adults and children, and thanked all members and officers for their much valued input.

It was proposed by Mrs J B Barrow, seconded by Mr K Roberts and duly

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be received.

56. ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT 2011/12

It was proposed by Mr M J Owen and seconded by Mr B B Williams that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendation contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the position as set out in the report by The Corporate Head of Finance and Commerce be accepted.

57. AUDITED ANNUAL STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2011/12

It was proposed by Mr B B Williams 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.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the 2011/12 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 2012.

58. LOAN TO IP&E

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

During the ensuing discussion, a number of members expressed concern at the loan being requested without a Business Plan being in place. Given the Council's position mentioned before in respect of low reserves, some members suggested a loan was contradictory to that position. Questions were also asked about where the amount of £500,000 had come from and that too little was known about the business.

In reply, the Leader explained that the report was merely seeking authority to draw down money from one part of the organisation to another. The company was trying to create and promote jobs in Shropshire. The funds were coming from the Transformation budget and he assured Members that the Council's money was not at risk.

RESOLVED:

That a loan of £500,000 to ip&e be approved, subject to the following loan terms:

- i) That the initial loan to ip&e is up to £500,000.
- ii) The loan amount is based on the estimate of costs for ip&e and will be detailed in the loan agreement.
- iii) The loan can be advanced on 1 October 2012.

- iv) The loan period will be 30 months commencing from the date of any advance.
- v) Repayment will be deferred for 12 months after the loan advance is made during which time interest will accrue.
- vi) The interest rate will be the appropriate loan rate set by the Public Works Loan Board as determined by the Council at 1 September 2012.
- vii) Repayment will commence 12 months after the advance, for a period of 18 months.
- viii) A repayment schedule will be attached to the agreement.
- ix) There will be the option for a review of the terms and conditions after 12 months, i.e. 1 October 2013.
- x) At review, the possibility of an extension of the loan period by a maximum of a further 12 months can be considered.
- xi) If at review the term is extended, the interest rate will be amended to reflect the equivalent rate at that time.
- xii) Subject to the agreement of Council, the loan agreement will be finalised by the Corporate Head of Finance and Commerce in consultation with the Leader.

59. REPORT FOR THE COUNCIL LEADER AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE IN RESPECT OF SAFGUARDING

It was proposed by Mrs E A Hartley and seconded by Mrs C Wild that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, and the recommendation contained therein be received and agreed.

Mrs E A Hartley advised that overall the direction of travel had been positive, with services all committed to on-going development and to the swift actioning of the peer review action plan. Thanks were extended to Mrs Sally Halls, independent Chair of the Board and it was noted that a further report would be made to the Safe and Confident Communities Scrutiny Committee on 4th October 2012 on its work programme and most importantly the development of its scrutiny and challenge role.

Mrs E A Hartley also drew attention to the introduction of a specific indicator to highlight 'happiness'; a positive input to be included in future.

Generally the results published were welcomed by Members, whilst more inclusion in the process was requested by Mr N J Hartin and Mr R A Evans.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the report be noted, and that the Safer and Confident Scrutiny Committee continue to receive quarterly reports on safeguarding performance.
- b) That a further report be made to Council in September 2013.

60. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That Mr S Davenport be appointed to replace Mr W Benyon on the Strategic Licensing Committee.

61. MOTIONS

The following motion was proposed by Mr A N Mosley and duly seconded by Mr V Bushell.

“This Council condemns the proposals to close the Royal Mail Sorting Office in Shrewsbury which will result in work being relocated outside of the County and the Mid Wales Area.

We believe that closing the Office will cause great hardship not only to the people who work there, whose jobs are under threat, but to their families and their communities.

We also believe that the proposed closure will adversely impact on local businesses and local residents by reducing the quality and accessibility of the services provided by Royal Mail and will not show our Town as being business friendly and hence, will inhibit inward investment. Furthermore we fear that the loss of so many jobs, associated investment and the business related to the Sorting Office will be a further significant blow to the overall economic wellbeing of Shrewsbury.

We will therefore, urgently seek to organise activities among all interested parties so as to maximise and coordinate opposition to the proposals during the consultation period.”

In introducing the motion, Mr A N Mosley said he very much hoped to invite managerial colleagues for the Royal Mail Sorting Office, to meet with members at the earliest opportunity.

An amendment to the motion was then circulated at the meeting which was duly proposed by Mr P Adams and seconded by Mrs C Wild as follows;

First line delete ‘condemns’ and replace with ‘deeply regrets’.

Second paragraph to be deleted.

Third paragraph delete the word ‘also’ and insert ‘county’ between ‘our’ and Town. In the same paragraph delete the words ‘we fear that’ and ‘so many’, delete ‘a significant blow’ and substitute ‘detrimental. Add ‘and social’ after economic.

Delete final paragraph and replace with the words ‘we seek cross party support to mount a concerted and informed campaign to oppose the proposals now out to public consultation.’

A second amendment was proposed by Mrs C M A Motley and duly seconded in respect of the penultimate paragraph, where it read ‘...and social wellbeing of Shrewsbury’ in order to include additional wording to read ‘...and social wellbeing of Shrewsbury, Shropshire and Mid Wales.’

The proposer and seconder of the motion indicated that their acceptance of the two amendments, whereby the motion read as follows;

“This Council deeply regrets the proposals to close the Royal Mail Sorting Office in Shrewsbury which will result in work being relocated outside of the county and the Mid Wales Area.

We believe that the proposed closure will adversely impact on local businesses and local residents, by reducing the quality and accessibility of the services provided by Royal Mail, and will not show our County Town as being business friendly and hence will inhibit inward investment. Furthermore the loss of jobs, associated investment and the business related to the Sorting Office, will be detrimental to the overall economic and social wellbeing of Shrewsbury, Shropshire and Mid Wales.

We will therefore urgently seek cross party support to mount a concerted and informed campaign to oppose the proposals now out to consultation.”

RESOLVED

That the final amended motion be approved.

62. REPORT OF THE SHROPSHIRE AND WREKIN FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

It was proposed by Mr S West and seconded by the Leader that the report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, be received and noted.

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority be noted.

Speaker

.....

Date

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The meeting closed at 1.45 p.m.