



<u>Committee and Date</u>
COUNCIL
16 May 2013

<u>Item</u>
<b>5</b>
Public

## MINUTES

MEETING OF SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

HELD ON THURSDAY 18 APRIL 2013

AT 10.00 AM

### PRESENT:

Mr P Adams  
Mr A Bannerman  
Mr T Barker  
Mrs C A Barnes  
Mrs J B Barrow  
Mr K R Barrow  
Mr J T Bebb  
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 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 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 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 M L Wood  
Mrs T Woodward

## **108. APOLOGIES**

The Speaker reported apologies for absence had been received from Mrs B J Baker, Mrs A Caesar-Homden, Mr E J Everall, Mr R Hughes, Mr R Huffer, Mrs T Huffer, Mr D J Minnery, Mr M J Owen JP, Mr L Winwood and Mr P A D Wynn.

## **109. 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.

## **110. MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **111. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **111.1 Chairman's Engagements**

The Chairman referred members to the list of official engagements carried out by himself and the Speaker since the last meeting of the Council on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2013, which had been circulated at the meeting.

### **111.2 Mrs Mary Edbrooke**

The Speaker referred with great sadness to the recent death of Mary Edbrooke who had served as a member of Shropshire County Councillor from 1993 to 1997. A funeral service was held at St. Chads Church, Shrewsbury on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> March.

## **112. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The Speaker indicated that there were no public questions.

## **113. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

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

(a) Received from Mrs E M Nicholls :

“Can the Portfolio Holder please advise why surveyors have been working on the allotment site at Hag Corner, Highley? Enquiries from both the Parish Council and myself have failed to elicit any response, and this is just a matter of weeks after our garage site was flagged for demolition by Shropshire Council and included in our Place Plan - with absolutely no consultation with the local community whatsoever (since remedied).

Finally, can the Portfolio Holder also advise why a commitment to transfer allotments at Silverdale Terrace to the Parish Council in the summer of last year has not been completed almost one year later and further, why there is again no response to enquiries?”

Mr R Tindall replied:

“I have checked on this matter with the Area Commissioner South who has looked into the position and advises that council officers are not aware of a Shropshire Council surveyor going out to the allotments at Hag Corner, Highley.

In respect of the transfer of allotments at Silverdale Terrace to the parish council, work has had to be undertaken to resolve a number of issues with the tenancy agreements before the transfer could be undertaken.

I am very pleased to say that the required work on the tenancy agreements has progressed sufficiently to enable the arrangements for the transfer of the allotments to now proceed.”

(b) Received from Mr A Mosley:

“The Policy and Performance Scrutiny recently received a report from the VCS following their Recession Impact Survey.

This found that:

“Over 48% of participant’s state their organisation has been negatively impacted between 2011 – 2012.

72% of participants had a slight/significant reduction in income

56% of participants had a slight/significant increase in expenditure”

It pointed out that the main factors were:

“Less funding from Shropshire Council and other public sector partners

Less national funding from all sources

Less income from users - general public/other organisations

Higher costs of operation

Grant funding is less abundant/available and there are fewer charitable donations being made.

The results show that levels of funding and other support and value of investments are static or decreasing, whereas, outgoings on staff, goods and services are increasing”

The survey gave details of a number of leading charities which have already had to close down while “78.1% of respondents saw an increase in vulnerable groups due to the recession. Of these groups, people with mental/physical health problems and people on low incomes are the most vulnerable.

72% of respondents have seen an increase in demand for their services with less funding to operate them with.”

Some charities quoted the 20% reduction in Shropshire Council grants as being highly significant in exacerbating their severe problems e.g. CAB, Headway.

One of the conclusions is that: “Shropshire Council needs to maintain an awareness of the fragility of the voluntary sector here in Shropshire and realise the knock on effect the cuts are having on both voluntary organisations and residents who use these services.”

Given the on-going depressed economic climate and the severe impact of changes in benefits to many of our residents in need, does the Leader believe that cuts to significant charities were misguided? Furthermore, will he explain how the Council will ensure that they are aware of the fragility of the sector and provide adequate resources to enable them and Council provision, to respond to the increasing demands of residents?”

Mr G Butler replied:

“We are grateful for the report from the Voluntary Sector Assembly and thank them for the really important impact they, and their member organisations have on life in Shropshire. With over 300 members, the Assembly plays a critical role in supporting volunteers, social enterprises and charities tackling issues as diverse as reversing the stigma associated with mental health conditions, through to giving young people a better voice in decision making.

This council recognised early on that changes in national policy, particularly around how public services are funded and delivered, would mean both opportunities for, as well as potential threats to the Voluntary Sector in Shropshire as elsewhere. So we got together with the Assembly to help make the best possible preparations for this new world. Recognising that tough choices would have to be made about continued grant funding from the council, we both wanted to invest now in creating as strong a sector as possible. This has helped create a sector that’s less reliant on vulnerable grant hand-outs and more able to win

investment from the new range of commissioners –the council, the police and crime commissioner and clinical commissioning groups in health for example.

Under the leadership of Sonia Roberts, Assembly Chair, and Cllr Gwilym Butler as Portfolio Holder, a comprehensive programme – crucially designed by the sector, for the sector, was pulled together. Using a two year funding package of £180,000 granted from Shropshire Council, this has;

- a) Created the Shropshire Providers Consortium – supporting VCS organisations big and small to win commissioning tenders. In its first three months this has already gained 26 members and delivered its first tender.
- b) Strengthened the Assembly as a voice for the sector through support for Forums of Interest. Five new forums of interest have been developed (there are now 16 in total). The criminal justice forum has already met with the new Police and Crime Commissioner and successfully made the case for the critical role that VCS organisations can help play in the fight against crime
- c) Built new bridges between the voluntary and private sectors – with the recent Dragon’s Den event leading to enduring relationships between Shropshire business and voluntary organisations – for example between a community transport scheme and Stagecoach, helping develop commercial skills in community organisations as well as better opportunities for corporate social responsibility. The council’s own company, ip&e group has already committed to be a founder member for a new community social partnership as part of this work.

Since then, our locality commissioning approach is starting to work with local VCS organisations to better understand the role they play in their community. In Church Stretton, it’s clear that the Mayfair Centre for example plays an absolute central role in the lives of people – young and old – living in and around the town. By better understanding about how the council can support local community entrepreneurs, the people who make places like the Mayfair Centre tick, we believe we can help them thrive. As the questioner alludes, funding is tight and we know it’s going to get tighter, but we believe our approach is building a more resilient voluntary sector, better equipped to cope with an uncertain future.”

By way of a supplementary question, Mr A Mosley asked the portfolio holder how concerned he was that charities in Shropshire were closing down or had been put in danger of closing down as a result of the cut in Council grants. In addition, Mr Mosley asked that the portfolio holder provide him with a list of the charities that had been subject to the 20% cut in Council grants.

In reply, Mr Butler expressed the view that there was a strong voluntary sector in Shropshire lead by the Voluntary Sector Assembly that was moving away from taking hand-outs and looking to work together with public authorities and, through its work with the Assembly, the Council was enabling the community sector to achieve greater access to public sector budgets. He considered that this new developing way of working provided a promising future for the modern community sector that was taking shape, and as a result saw no point in providing Mr Mosley with the list he sought.

#### **114. SCRUTINY REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP – FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

It was proposed by the Mrs H M Kidd, 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.

In presenting the report, Mrs H M Kidd explained that the work of the Task and Finish Group had focussed on the consideration of the future role and remit of the Council's scrutiny arrangements in the light of changes in the way the Council operated. Mrs Kidd emphasised that a considerable amount of time had been taken on the review to ensure that the public could be assured that the scrutiny process was sufficiently robust. Mrs Kidd continued to indicate that the review found that, under the present arrangements, the public had difficulty in identifying the areas that each scrutiny committee covered. In addition, one of the Task and Finish Group's main conclusions arising from the review was that a move to the parliamentary select committee style of meeting was preferred to enable scrutiny members to pursue points and lines of enquiry to obtain direct answers.

Mr Mosley stated that in progressing and implementing the findings of the review the holding of the executive to account needed to be more vigorously enforced and scrutiny committees needed to be opposition lead for the openness and transparency of the scrutiny process to be recognised.

Mrs Woodward considered that it was vital that the Council had a scrutiny process that was capable of delving deep into issues and welcomed the reviews proposed changes to the scrutiny process.

Mr Whiteman considered that the use of the task and finish group's to examine areas of the Council's work had been a particular success and more use needed to be made of them to benefit the Council.

Mr Hartin welcomed the findings of the review and indicated his support for the proposals, including a move to the parliamentary select committee style of meeting which he considered was the way forward for the scrutiny process to operate in the future.

Mr Barrow thanked the Task and Finish Group for their fine work on the scrutiny review and considered that the proposed revisions to the process would produce stronger scrutiny which would contribute to helping drive improvement for the Council.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the remits of the current Scrutiny Committees should be revisited to mirror changes within the Council and aligned with the Council's priorities and objectives.

In particular, the remits of the current Safe and Confident Communities Scrutiny Committee should be changed to focus on Young People's and Children's Services. The current Healthy Communities Scrutiny Committee should include Health and Adult Social Care.

The remaining Committees should cover, as follows:

- Corporate Issues, Commissioning, Finance and Performance and overall scrutiny activities
  - Business Growth and Prosperity, including Public Protection and scrutiny of the Police and Crime Commissioner
  - Provision of Housing, Environment, Planning
- (b) That the current titles of the Scrutiny Committees, being vague, unclear and confusing, needed to be clarified and brought into alignment with the Committee remits.
- (c) That continued use be made of the Task and Finish style of working as an accepted method of positive engagement between Members, Officers and those outside the Council.
- (d) That the Parliamentary Select Committee style of meeting should be the default except where it would not be appropriate or constructive. It will also be important that provision is made for those who receive the services to give their evidence in private should that be considered necessary.
- (e) That all contracts for the commissioning of future services needed to include the requirement for the service providers to be available for scrutiny as much as the Council may require.
- (f) That the Council further recognises:
- The need to be cautious on the number of Task and Finish Groups working at any given time bearing in mind Member and Officer capacity.

- That those with an interest in and /or knowledge of the subject matter be assigned to work on any given Task and Finish Group.
  - That relaxation of the political balance rules in the allocation of seats to Task and Finish Groups be considered on a case by case basis with all political groups having the opportunity to be represented. The decision to be jointly made by the Scrutiny Chair and the Operations Director
- (g) That all Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes to be considered fully by the appropriate Scrutiny Committee at each meeting to improve transparency of decision making.
- (h) That a non-executive Member Group be introduced for a regular scrutiny session, informed, in part, by Cabinet's Forward Plan, between the Scrutiny Chairs and all non-Executive Members to allow a two-way exchange of items for potential scrutiny intervention/consideration. This will provide clarity of the process to be followed by all Members to promote items for inclusion on scrutiny committee agendas and particularly to encourage non-scrutiny Members to get involved.
- (i) That improvements to all aspects of two way communication relating to scrutiny, include:
- Scrutiny Chairs to take ownership and encourage Member attendance to their respective Committee meetings by the use of appropriate promotion of agenda items
  - Increased use of social media including the Shape My Shropshire Facebook page
  - Promotion of scrutiny's achievements [promotion of good practice as well as investigating things that could be done better], management of expectations and improved meeting promotion to generate interest and increase attendance by Members and the general public
  - Holding meetings at venues within the community as appropriate to the subject matter being considered
  - Briefings continue to be given to LJC's on the role of scrutiny
- (j) That the Member Induction Programme for all Members include:
- An introduction to scrutiny [to include a general introduction to the role of scrutiny and guidance on the practical application of the scrutiny committee processes to include the Select Committee meeting style]
  - Training on a range of chairing, listening and questioning skills



*\* The above training is considered to be essential for all Members on Scrutiny Committees and desirable for all Members. Group Leaders to manage their Member attendance as appropriate \**

- (k) That, under the overall responsibility of the Director of Resources and Support, a lead officer be assigned to take on the duties of the statutory Scrutiny Officer.
- (l) That officer report writing training be provided in order to improve the standard of reports being put forward to Committee; future report techniques to include the use of case study examples to bring issues alive.
- (m) That a Task and Finish Group be convened 12 months after the election of the new Council:
  - To monitor the implementation of recommendations (a) to (l) above and
  - To consider the scrutiny role of the LJs following the implementation of local area commissioning.

## **115. GAMBLING ACT 2005 – POLICY STATEMENT**

It was proposed by the Mr S Charmley, and seconded by Mrs R Taylor-Smith 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 Gambling Act 2005 policy statement, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved and the policy statement be published and advertised by the Head of Public Protection in accordance with the provisions of the Act to take effect from 1st June 2013.

## **116. LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES**

It was proposed by the Mr M Bennett, and seconded by Mr G Butler 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 M Bennett indicated that he wished to add a further recommendation to those in the report to thank each LJC team, Community Action Officers and Committee Officers for their hard work and efforts in contributing to the success of the Local Joint Committees. Mr Bennett considered that the concept of Local Joint Committees had proved extremely successful over the four years of the Council's administration, working with town and parish councils they had brought together and strengthened communities and the funding provided, which had also attracted

external funding streams, had been used to support many local projects and initiatives to the benefit of local communities.

A large number of Members, including Mrs J Barrow, Mr K Barrow, Mr A Bannerman, Mrs P Dee, Mr R Evans, Dr J E Jones, Mr C Lea, Mr A Mosley, Mrs C M A Motley, Mrs E M Nicholls, Mr P Nutting, Mr D Roberts, Mrs M Shingleton, Mrs R Taylor-Smith and Mr B Williams, and spoke in support of Local Joint Committees and some referred to the work and achievements of the Local Joint Committees in their areas helping to support projects and initiatives and addressing local issues; the valuable support provided by Community Action Officers and Committee Officers; and the effective working that had been achieved with local parishes, partners and organisations for the benefit of the community.

During debate, some Members, including Mr A Bannerman, Mrs J Barrow, Mr R Evans, Dr J E Jones, Mrs H Kidd, Mr A Mosley, Mrs E M Nicholls, Mr P Nutting and Mrs M Shingleton, raised the following comments and concerns about the operation and future of Local Joint Committees:

- The role of Local Joint Committees in the Council's scrutiny process was becoming recognised but still required development.
- Some meetings of Local Joint Committees had not been as well attended as they could have been and consideration needed to be given to how meetings were publicised and conducted in future to attract a greater attendance and get local people more involved.
- The funding provision for Local Joint Committees needed to be maintained and increased if possible.
- Some of the Local Joint Committee funding was being used to replace money that had been taken out of communities from cuts in services.
- The funding criteria needed to be tightened up in respect of awards to church authorities.
- The operation of the Highley Zone Local Joint Committee and its capability to make decisions would benefit from an increase in the number of local representatives on the Committee.
- The effect of the introduction of local commissioning of services on the future role of Local Joint Committees in the community and the need for Local Joint Committees to continue and operate independently from the new commissioning model.

The Chairman stated that the original concept for Local Joint Committees was about empowering local people to raise issues that could then be taken to Cabinet and Council to address and he considered that this should continue.

Mr G Butler stated that the move to local commissioning of services required priorities for areas to be explored and agreed to enable the budget spending of a range of community stakeholders to be influenced to achieve a model of local governance which could build on the experience, knowledge and success of Local Joint Committees.

In conclusion, Mr G Butler thanked all Members for contributing to the success of Local Joint Committees.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the impact and evolution of Local Joint Committees in developing locality working over the last four years be noted, and the progress made to date be used to inform a review of their potential development and role in the light of Shropshire Council's move to locality commissioning.
- (b) That the contribution made by Local Joint Committees in developing a foundation for close working relationships and collaboration between Shropshire Council and Parish and Town Councils across Shropshire be endorsed.
- (c) That the significant contribution made by LJC funds in generating community activity and investment in local projects be noted.
- (d) That each LJC team, Community Action Officers and Committee Officers be thanked for their hard work and efforts in contributing to the success of the Local Joint Committees.

**117. SHROPSHIRE AFFORDABLE HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY AND SCHEME: DRAFT FOR ADOPTION**

It was proposed by Mr M Price, and seconded by Mr A Hartley that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein as amended following the Cabinet meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2013, be received and agreed.

In presenting the report, Mr M Price emphasised that full consultation had been undertaken on the new revised policy and scheme which reflected a range of fundamental changes to the allocation of affordable housing in Shropshire.

Members indicated that they welcomed and supported the revised policy and scheme and were pleased to see that preference would be given to people with local residency within the new scheme and that it also demonstrated the Armed Forces Community Covenant in action.

Dr J E Jones referred to the introduction of the additional groups for targeted allocations and asked for clarification on pre-tenancy 'training'. In response, Mr Price undertook to provide Members with details on pre-tenancy 'training'.

Mrs E A Parsons expressed concern about the need for the national rules on the under occupation of accommodation to be changed as it unfairly penalised families with members of their households studying away from home.

In response, Mr M Price and Mrs T Woodward, assured Members that representations on the issue were being taken up with the government and Mrs H M Kidd indicated that the national rules on the under occupation of accommodation had also been raised with Mr Steve Webb, the Minister of State for Pensions, and he had indicated that measures to address the issue in rural areas were being examined.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Shropshire Affordable Housing Allocation Policy and Scheme as contained in Appendix 2 to the report be adopted and published.
- (b) That the projected implementation date at the earliest opportunity be noted.
- (c) That authority be delegated to the Director of Operations to approve interim arrangements with respect to home owners in need of affordable housing.

**118. RETIREMENTS**

The Speaker then invited each of the retiring Members present to say a few words about their time at the Council.

Mr J B Gillow OBE

Mr Gillow remarked on the tremendous changes that had taken place during his many years of service as an elected member in Shropshire, particularly the effects of a succession of structural changes to local government within the County. He indicated that he had enjoyed his time on the Council and wished all well for the future.

Mr M Whiteman OBE

Mr Whiteman stated that he started his involvement in local government 48 years ago in 1965 when he was a young man and wished that more young people would come forward to represent their local area. He indicated that he had enjoyed his time on all the Council's he had served and working for the community.

Mrs E A Parsons

Mrs Parsons thanked all her colleagues in the Labour Group for the bouquet of flowers they had presented her that morning. She particularly wished to thank Ted Clarke and Jon Tandy, her fellow ward councillors for all their support and would miss working with them. She thanked all Members of the Council and indicated that she had found members from all political groups to have been generous to her in their dealings. She thanked the officers for their informative and professional manner and for always going the extra mile to

help. She concluded by stating that being a councillor had been so enjoyable, she had learned a lot and would recommend it to everyone.

#### Mrs E M Nicholls

Mrs Nicholls stated that it had been a privilege to represent the Highley Division and recalled her early days in the RAF, working in local government for Wolverhampton Council and serving as an elected representative in Dudley. She stated that she had no political ambitions when she came to Shropshire until Mrs Kidd called on her! She was pleased that the Highley Zone LJC had gone from strength to strength and was privileged to have been a local school governor and to have seen the improvements that had been made. She considered that she was leaving on a positive note and had brought some benefit to Highley.

#### Mr W Benyon

Mr Benyon stated that he was grateful that he had many friends across the Council Chamber and wished them all well for the future. He considered that the highlight of his time as a councillor was the County Council election of 2005 when the result of the poll in his Division was the last one awaited by some three hours after all others had been declared. He recalled that with one seat still required for his Group to gain a majority, his victory was very well received by the Leader of his Group, Mr Pate!

#### Mr T Davies

Mr Davies stated that he had served as a local councillor for 28 years and like others had always hoped to make a difference. He indicated that he had made many friends in his time as a councillor and wished to thank them and wish them well for the future.

The Speaker then invited the Group Leaders and the Chairman to pay tribute to the retiring Members' service to the Council.

Mr K R Barrow made special mention of Bill Benyon and his work at Oswestry Borough Council and gave his personal thanks to all the retiring Members indicating that they, like all Members across the Council Chamber, were part of the community they represented. He stated that those Members retiring would always be welcomed back and wished them all well for the future.

Mr A N Mosley indicated that he welcomed the company of those Members retiring. He then paid tribute to the dedicated service of Liz Parsons as a local councillor and her true desire to represent less fortunate constituents. He advised that true admiration for her work was being received from the local residents she represented and emphasised how greatly she would be missed by all those she represented in recent years.

Mr N J Hartin thanked Mary Nicholls and Trevor Davies for their great support and then thanked all the retiring Members for all they had done for their local communities.

Mrs P A Dee thanked all the retiring Members for their friendship and stated that it had been a privilege to know them all. She hoped that their replacements carried on their good work.

The Chairman thanked all the retiring Members, on behalf of the Council, for their contributions in the conduct of the Council's business and wished them all well for the future

#### Mr David Taylor

The Speaker referred to the retirement of Mr David Taylor, the Corporate Director – People and former Head of Paid Service, who was present at the meeting.

Members of the Council joined with the Speaker in thanking Mr Taylor for his valued service to the Council, particularly the way he had aided the Council through a time of difficult negotiations, and wished him well for the future.

### **119. MOTION**

The following motion was proposed by Mr S West and duly seconded by Mr D Evans:

“That Shropshire Council supports the installation of sprinkler systems in all new build properties, initially in social housing, residential homes and affordable housing but ultimately in all new build properties in Shropshire, and will actively lobby and pressure Government to bring in legislation with some urgency. Sprinkler systems are proven to save lives, property and reduce the impact of smoke inhalation on future health issues. I urgently encourage Members to support this motion, and help make Shropshire a safer place to live.”

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried unanimously and it was

**RESOLVED ACCORDINGLY.**

### **120. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was proposed by the Speaker, seconded by the Chairman and

#### **RESOLVED:**

That in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and paragraph 10.4(3) of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item.

**121. MOTION**

The following motion was proposed by Mr A Mosley and duly seconded by Mr J Tandy:

“The recent report to the Audit Committee (27<sup>th</sup> March) reviewed “the internal controls and procedures in respect of consultancy provision”. The report appears to indicate very significant failings in the leadership and control of the Council with large sums of money paid for services without proper contractual arrangements in place, or any agreed terms of reference, management or accountability arrangements. The Councils contract rules do not seem to have been followed.

Furthermore, the report indicates that a decision designed to give greater control over the contracting arrangements, and resolved by Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2012, were consciously not implemented.

We believe that these matters are of significant public concern. It is in the interests of openness and transparency, and of accountability to Council Tax payers, that the finding be published and we instruct that this be done forthwith.”

**On being put to the vote, the motion was lost with 14 members voting for and a substantial majority voting against.**

**122. READMISSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

It was proposed by the Speaker, seconded by the Chairman and

**RESOLVED:**

That the public and press be readmitted to the meeting for consideration of the following item.

**123. REPORT OF THE SHROPSHIRE AND WREKIN FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY**

It was proposed by the Speaker and seconded by the Chairman 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

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Date

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The meeting closed at 12.35 p.m.