



Shropshire Council
 Legal and Democratic Services
 Shirehall
 Abbey Foregate
 Shrewsbury
 SY2 6ND
 Date: Tuesday, 29 April 2014

Committee: Council

Date: Thursday, 8 May 2014

Time: 10.00 am

Venue: Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND

You are requested to attend the above meeting.
 The Agenda is attached

Claire Porter
 Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

Malcolm Pate (Chairman)	Steve Davenport	Peggy Mullock
David Lloyd (Speaker)	Andrew Davies	Peter Nutting
Keith Barrow (Leader)	Pauline Dee	Mike Owen
Ann Hartley (Deputy Leader)	David Evans	Kevin Pardy
Peter Adams	Roger Evans	William Parr
Andrew Bannerman	John Everall	Vivienne Parry
Nicholas Bardsley	Hannah Fraser	Malcolm Price
Tim Barker	Nigel Hartin	David Roberts
Charlotte Barnes	Richard Huffer	Keith Roberts
Joyce Barrow	Tracey Huffer	Madge Shingleton
Tudor Bebb	Roger Hughes	Jon Tandy
Martin Bennett	Vince Hunt	Robert Tindall
Thomas Biggins	John Hurst-Knight	Dave Tremellen
Andy Boddington	Jean Jones	Kevin Turley
Vernon Bushell	Simon Jones	David Turner
Gwilym Butler	Miles Kenny	Arthur Walpole
John Cadwallader	Heather Kidd	Stuart West
Karen Calder	Christian Lea	Claire Wild
Dean Carroll	Robert Macey	Brian Williams
Lee Chapman	Jane MacKenzie	Mansel Williams
Steve Charmley	Chris Mellings	Leslie Winwood
Anne Chebsey	David Minnery	Michael Wood
Peter Cherrington	Pamela Moseley	Tina Woodward
Ted Clarke	Alan Mosley	Paul Wynn
Gerald Dakin	Cecilia Motley	

Your Committee Officer is:

Karen Nixon Committee Officer

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AGENDA

1 Election of the Speaker

To elect a Speaker and Deputy Chairman for the ensuing year.

2 Apologies for Absence

3 Election of Chairman and Deputy Speaker

To elect a Chairman and Deputy Speaker for the ensuing year.

4 Portrait Presentation: HRH Princess Royal

Dr. David Llewellyn from Harper Adams University, Newport, will present Cllr Malcolm Pate and the Council with a photographic portrait of HRH the Princess Royal.

5 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

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

6 Minutes (Pages 1 - 22)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 February 2014 attached marked 6.

Contact Penny Chamberlain 01743 252729 or Karen Nixon Tel 01743 252724.

7 Announcements

To receive such communications as the Chairman, Speaker, Leader and Head of Paid Service may desire to lay before the Council.

8 Public Questions

To receive any questions from the public, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 14.

Four separate petitions, each bearing over 1,000 signatures have been received as follows, under the Council's Petition Scheme;

- a) Petition to the Council to become a Living Wage Accredited Employer - Unison
- b) Petition to the Council for Free Public Access to new Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery – Prof. Lalage Bown
- c) Petition to the Council to Save the Quarry Swimming and Fitness Centre for the People of Shropshire – Mr Bernard Wills
- d) Petition to the Council to develop adequate Transport Solutions for projected traffic volumes expected in and around Shifnal – Mr Chris Broderick

Each petitioner will be allowed 5 minutes to outline their case, after which there may be a

debate of up to 15 minutes maximum.

9 Questions from Members (Pages 23 - 28)

To receive any questions from Members, notice of which has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 15.2, is attached marked 9.

10 Returning Officer's Report (Pages 29 - 30)

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services is attached, marked 10.

Contact Claire Porter Tel 01743 252763.

11 Constitution of Committees and the Allocation of Seats to Political Groups (Pages 31 - 36)

To agree the constitution of Committees and the allocation of seats between political groups.

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services is attached, marked 11.

Contact Claire Porter Tel 01743 252763.

12 Revised Code of Conduct for Members (Pages 37 - 42)

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services is attached, marked 12.

Contact Claire Porter Tel 01743 252763

13 Amendments to the Constitution - Part 4 - Licensing and Safety Sub Committee Procedure Rules (Annex B)

Council is requested to approve an amendment Part 4 of the Constitution which refers to the procedure followed by the officer making decisions under delegated powers. The procedure as it is currently appears is at Annex B at page D59 of Part 4 of the council's Constitution "Matters of Procedure for Licensing Officers" ("the Procedure"). The delegated power is currently mostly used in connection to applications concerning hackney carriages and private hire vehicles (and drivers) and scrap metal dealers.

The Delegated officer is required to consult with a legal advisor and any other officer he or she thinks appropriate – see paragraph 1 of the Procedure. The Procedure currently requires decisions that are adverse to an applicant to be re-considered by a more senior officer and a legal officer for a second time. Officers consider that there is no longer a necessity to re-consider decisions. It is therefore recommended that the Constitution is amended to remove the final two sentences of paragraph 4 of the Procedure so that the particular paragraph only refers to the need to take all relevant matters into account.

14 Dates of Council Meetings

To agree that in 2014/15 the meetings of the Council will be held on the following Thursdays commencing at 10.00 am:

- 17 July 2014 (provisional)
- 25 September 2014

- 18 December 2014
- 26 February 2015
- 14 May 2015 (Annual Council)

Contact Penny Chamberlain Tel 01743 252729.

15 Motions

The following two motions have been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 16:

15.1 The following motion has been received from Councillor Miles Kenny:

“Promotion of alternatives to the private motor car for short journeys:

So as to improve public health, tackle climate change and its consequences, reduce traffic congestion, lower the cost of travel, enhance air quality and lower highways maintenance expenditure this Council will promote alternatives to the private motor car such as walking, cycling or using public transport for short journeys of under five miles from the present 2/5ths of short journeys to 4/5ths short journeys in Shropshire by 2020.

Nationally:

- Around 11 percent use a car for journeys under a mile
 - 29 percent use a car for journeys between one and two miles
 - 60 percent use a car for journeys two to five miles.
- (source - Sustrans)

In Shropshire:

- Around 20 percent use a car for journeys under a mile
 - 62 percent use a car for journeys between one and five miles
 - 85 percent use a car for journeys of two to five miles
- (Source - national travel survey)

It is understood that a target of 4/5ths short journeys is easily achievable in urban areas but more of a challenge in rural areas as for example public transport is less available. There are safe and accessible walking and cycling routes in urban and rural areas which are being extended and promoted; further development can encourage more investment in the network.”

15.2 The following motion has been received from Councillor Alan Mosely.

“The recent Court of Appeal judgement to the effect that the Council had failed to consult service users and their carers about the closure of Hartleys Day Centre, and that this was unlawful, was extremely damaging to the Council and its Administration.

It is clear that:

- The Council was in breach of its common law duty to users of its services and their carers;
- There is enormous adverse reputational impact on the Council arising from the decision;
- There will be very significant cost implications especially if the appellant’s costs have to be paid by the Council;
- There has been great, and ongoing, distress caused to users and carers arising from the Administration’s actions in this case;
- There were several occasions when the Administration could have reconsidered

it's approach and rectified its errors, e.g. by following proposals made at Council in July, at the private portfolio holder session 1 August and the meeting to discuss the call-in thereafter.

Hence this Council calls for the Administration to establish an all party investigation into this matter with a mandate to report on:

- What lessons can be learned from this case and whether there are other circumstances where a similar situation may arise;
- Whether the Council's policy on consultation and consideration of responses is fit for purpose, and if not how should it be changed;
- Any other related matters which may arise."

A background document will follow.

16 Report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority (Pages 43 - 50)

To receive two reports from the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority arising from its meetings held on 11 December 2013 and 26 February 2014.

Reports attached marked 16a and 16b.

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Committee and Date

COUNCIL

8 May 2014

Item

6

Public

MINUTES

MEETING OF SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2014

AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Mr P Adams
Mr A Bannerman
Mr N Bardsley
Mr T Barker
Mrs C Barnes
Mrs J Barrow
Mr K Barrow
Mr M Bennett
Mr T Biggins
Mr V Bushell JP
Mr G Butler
Mrs K Calder
Mr D Carroll
Mr L Chapman
Mr S Charmley
Mrs A Chebsey
Mr P Cherrington
Mr T Clarke
Mr G Dakin
Mr S Davenport
Mrs P Dee
Mr D Evans

Mr R Evans
Mrs H Fraser
Mr N Hartin
Mr R Huffer
Mrs T Huffer
Mr R Hughes
Mr V Hunt
Mr J Hurst-Knight
Dr J Jones
Mr M Kenny
Mrs H Kidd
Mr C Lea
Mr D Lloyd MBE
Mr R Macey
Ms J Mackenzie
Mr C Mellings
Mrs P Moseley
Mr A Mosley
Mrs C Motley
Mrs M Mullock
Mr P Nutting
Mr M Owen JP

Mr K Pardy
Mr W Parr
Mrs V Parry
Mr M Pate
Mr M Price
Mr D Roberts
Mr K Roberts
Mrs M Shineton
Mr J Tandy
Mr R Tindall
Mr D Tremellen
Mr D Turner
Mr A Walpole
Mr S West
Mrs C Wild
Mr B Williams RD
Mr M Williams
Mr L Winwood
Mr M Wood
Mrs T Woodward
Mr P Wynn

73. APOLOGIES

The Chief Executive reported that apologies for absence had been received from Mr T Bebb, Mr J Cadwallader, Mr J Everall, Mrs A Hartley, Mr S Jones, Mr D Minnery and Mr K Turley.

74. 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.

75. MINUTES

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

RESOLVED:

That, subject to it being recorded that a Supplementary Question was asked by Mr Mellings with a Supplementary Answer being given to him at Minute 65(d) as follows:

“Supplementary question - Do you think the deficit in parking income is as a result of the charging policy or because of over optimistic income targets?

Supplementary answer - No it is not the result of wrong policy. Nationally there has been a downward trend in car park income, and this is even more noticeable in the market towns where we have to be more creative in attracting people in the future.”

the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2013, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

76. ANNOUNCEMENTS

76.1 Chairman's Announcements/Engagements

The Chairman referred members to the list of official engagements carried out by himself since the last meeting of the Council on 19 December 2013, which had been circulated at the meeting.

The Chairman also reported receipt of a letter of support from Carlisle City Council in respect of recent flooding in the county.

76.2 New Year's Honours 2014

The Chairman reported that the following Shropshire residents had been awarded honours in the Queen's New Year's Honours List and advised that he had written to each of the recipients to congratulate them on their achievement.

Special congratulations were given by the Chairman to Mr Algernon Heber-Percy, Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire who had been awarded the Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (KCVO). He indicated that his work on behalf of the county had been immense and it was a well deserved honour.

Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (KCVO)

Mr Algernon Eustace Hugh HEBER-PERCY

Members of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)

Miss Jacqueline Margaret Brookes

For services to the Soroptimist International Bliston, West Midlands and the community in Moreton.

Mr Peter William Corfield

For services to the community in Ludlow, Shropshire particularly through the Friends of Ludlow Hospital.

Lady Veronica Cossons, DL

President, Shropshire Wildlife Trust. For services to Wildlife Conservation.

Mr John Home

Owner and Director, Willowdene Farm Rehabilitation and Training Centre. For services to the Rehabilitation of Offenders.

Mrs Patricia Mary McLaughlin

For services to Tourism and to the community in Shropshire.

Mr John Barry Lloyd Roberts

For services to Athletics and to the community in Oswestry, Shropshire.

(Oswestry, Shropshire)

Medallist of the Order of the British Empire (BEM)

Mrs Janet Caroline Brandon

For services to the community in Ratlinghope, Shropshire.

Mrs Patricia May Harding

For services to the community in Clunton, Shropshire.

77. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

77.1 Petitions

The Speaker advised that an e-petition bearing more than 1,000 signatures asking the Council to prioritise the very rural areas first for the provision of faster broadband, had been received from Patrick Cosgrove, on behalf of the South West Shropshire and The Marches Campaign for Better Broadband. Mr Cosgrove was given 5 minutes to open the debate and outline his case, which was briefly as follows;

- Last summer 1,208 people signed a petition to say it was unacceptable that the rural broadband programme was upgrading large numbers of premises that already had reasonable broadband speeds before many with no or poor service.
- Meanwhile 10% or so of homes and businesses remained uncertain of any improvement other than a guaranteed and rather paltry 2 Mb, and no plans existed for how that would be provided.
- Since then support for their campaign had grown and 41 parish and town councils had endorsed their campaign's aims. High speed broadband was essential for individuals and businesses to function effectively.
- They did not blame Shropshire Council for what had happened.
- Broadband UK provided local authorities across the country with the choice of BT as supplier or no-one, and by all accounts BT appeared to be using its position of publicly funded monopoly to its own advantage rather than to provide the best value for money.
- Nevertheless the Council had a responsibility for putting right what was not of its own making.
- New funding recently made available from BDUK's Superfast Extension Programme presented a watershed for rural broadband in Shropshire and the county's allocation of £11.38m was generous.
- This money required £1 for £1 match funding, which must be found. Matching could be sourced in different ways: grants, private investors and local communities own resources, or a mix of these.
- Once secured and matched, a more flexible approach was required.
- In addition to the functions of funder and contract manager Shropshire Council should take on a facilitating role to bring or find expertise if it was lacking.
- A commitment was required from the top to keep trying until everyone who wanted a superfast service could have it thereby ensuring that Shropshire did not get left behind.

Following debate, the Portfolio Holder summed up by emphasising the complex nature of rolling out broadband across the county and referred in particular to issues being experienced around not spots and poor coverage in rural areas. However he also explained that the provision of the Superfast Extension funds would help greatly in reaching more business and residents in the county albeit finding match funding was a major challenge and project for everyone. He indicated his support for the setting up of a partnership in

order that all interested parties could work together and share ideas on the project.

In conclusion Mr Charmley proposed that the action requested in the petition be taken and a partnership be formed to progress the potential of the Superfast Broadband Programme. This was duly seconded by the Speaker and the proposition was carried with the majority of Members voting in favour.

77.2 Public Questions

The Speaker announced that five public questions had been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 15 (a copy of the report containing the detailed questions and formal responses is attached to the signed minutes):

- (i) Received from Mr S Mulloy and answered by Mr M Price Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Commissioning (Central) in relation to the South West Shrewsbury Urban Extension – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Mulloy queried why Bicton Heath Parish Council appeared not to have been aware of the SWSUE development until it was in the Core Strategy and asked if the Council would investigate why the landowner had not advised them about it before the Core Strategy Examination.

In response the Portfolio Holder explained that it would be inappropriate for him to comment on Bicton Heath parish matters but reported on the number of times information had been sent to the Parish Council throughout both the Core Strategy and SAMDev process. He suggested that Mr Mulloy should raise the matter with the Parish Council direct.

- (ii) Received from Mr S Martin CPRE and answered by Mr M Price Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Commissioning (Central) in relation to the SAMDev – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Martin referred to the set allocation of housing sites and suggested that it would be more advantageous to give regard to historical delivery rates and that with the improving situation these numbers would rise in future. In referring also to a possible review of windfall allocations he concluded by commenting that central government were being greatly unfair in its rigid application of its policy re the 5 year housing land supply.

In response the Portfolio Holder thanked Mr Martin for his support and indicated that a letter of support had also been recently received from the CPRE on the same matter. He confirmed that the Council's stance had been made clear at a recent meeting with the county's MPs and that many other local authorities were in a similar position. Representations were to be made to Parliament in the near future and all responses on the matter would be supplied to the Minister.

- (iii) Received from Mr D Kilby and answered by Mr M Price Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Commissioning (Central) in relation to the National Planning Policy Framework – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Kilby asked if Members would agree that the Shrewsbury West Urban Extension had failed to deliver in relation to amongst others, the North West Relief Road, the relocation of Oxon Park and Ride and the proposed Oxon link road with the Council's Core Strategy and Master-plan being outdated? He suggested a more viable option would be to deliver a safe off road pedestrian, cycle way along the protected route in order to offer children a safe and healthy option to get to school and be in line with the National Planning Framework.

In response the Portfolio Holder indicated that he did not agree with Mr Kilby's comments as the SAMDev process needed to deliver 27,500 homes up to 2026. In addition whilst the position regarding the future provision of funding for the North West Relief Road was unknown at present, it was only right that the necessary links should be put in place.

- (iv) Received from Mr J Waine of "Hands Off Oswestry Old Hillfort" and answered by Mr M Price Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Commissioning (Central) in relation to the SAMDev and proposed inclusion or removal of various sites in Oswestry – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Waine asked that the Council re-consider the matter and remove the area designated as OSW004 as part of the housing allocation in its SAMDev Plan?

By way of a supplementary answer the Portfolio Holder commented that although both objectors and the applicant had made representations on the matter, officers had to take a balanced view on the site and that he, too, was not prepared to change his mind and recommend the site be withdrawn from the Plan. Consultation would now take place on the Plan and be followed by a Public Hearing with the Planning Inspector making a decision on the OSW004 site.

- (v) Received from Mrs J Brand and answered by Mr M Bennett, Chairman of the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee in relation to the status of reports from the various scrutiny committees – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mrs Brand queried why no scrutiny committee minutes appeared to be available on the Council's website and asked for an assurance that scrutiny reports would be public documents and given due consideration through the democratic decision making process.

In response the Scrutiny Chairman confirmed that the minutes from the various scrutiny committees were available on the website. Furthermore the Council was working within a democratic system which had been nationally prescribed by a former Labour government. The role of scrutiny was to act as

a critical friend of the executive but it had no right to override decisions by Cabinet.

78. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

The Speaker advised that thirteen questions from Members had been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 15 (copies of the report and supplementary report containing the detailed questions and formal responses are attached to the signed minutes):

- (i) Received from Mr D Carroll and answered by Mr M Price Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Commissioning (Central) in relation to plans for a care home in the Bagley division – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Carroll suggested that a review be undertaken of the planning guidance in respect of a material change of use.

In response the Portfolio Holder indicated that he was unable to enter into discussion at Council in relation to individual cases but that in the instance referred to, he understood that the proposal did not require planning permission as it fell outside the policy but that the matter would be looked into further.

- (ii) Received from Mr R Evans and answered by Mrs C Wild, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport in relation to transport matters in Hanwood – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Evans asked if there was any news from the meeting being held that week with the Highways Agency and requested that he and local parish councillors be involved more in discussions on the matter.

In response the Portfolio Holder confirmed that the meeting with the Highways Agency was due to take place the following day and expressed the hope that the Agency would listen to the view of the local councils.

- (iii) Received from Mr A Mosley and answered by Mr Steve Charmley the Portfolio Holder for Business Growth, ip&e and Commissioning (North) in relation to the current situation regarding ip&e and ip&e (Trading) – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Mosley asked if the company would be holding an Annual General Meeting and, if so, would he be able to attend as a shareholder?

In response the Portfolio Holder confirmed that an Annual General Meeting would be held towards the end of the financial year, on a date to be set, and all Members would be invited to attend the meeting.

- (iv) Received from Mr A Mosley and answered by Mr G Butler, Portfolio Holder for Leisure Libraries and Culture in relation to the Quarry Swimming Centre and the future provision of swimming facilities in Shrewsbury – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Mosley referred to the commitment given to maintain a high quality swimming pool in Shrewsbury and also the fact that he knew the existing swimming site was now open to offers. He sought clarification regarding the Council's position should an offer be made for the site that same day.

In response the Portfolio Holder indicated that due consideration would be given to any offer received in conjunction with the commitment to provide a swimming facility. He reported on his contact with interested swimming groups and confirmed that any future proposal would be subject to public consultation. He also reminded Members that the Town Council representative (Mr K Parry) was now involved and that the Council was being transparent as far as it could on the issue.

- (v) Received from Mr A Mosley and answered by Mr M Owen, Portfolio Holder for Resources Finance and Support in relation to the use of agency staff – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Mosley queried the position in relation to the south of the county and also referred to the apparent lack of information relating to the Council's use of consultants and questioned whether these details were listed in the response. If not, he asked if the Portfolio Holder could provide him with further details of the consultants being used together with their value and brief?

In response the Portfolio Holder indicated that not all of the agencies listed were being used on a continuous basis and that many of the skills required from them would change as the Authority moved forward over the next three years. He also reported that he was unaware of any issues in the south of the county and offered to meet with the Member to discuss his comments in more detail.

- (vi) Received from Mr M Williams and answered by Mr K Barrow, the Leader of the Council in relation to debt – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Williams indicated that he was speaking in a personal capacity and asked whether the Leader would agree that the private financial sector should pay its fair share towards the country's debt problem in light of the problem being caused by their actions? He also queried whether the Leader would initiate a debate as to whether the financial sector should pay an extra tax on their functions as any small sum would contribute billions of pounds towards re-payment? This would then assist local councils to meet the challenges of the future in relation to their adult social care duties.

In response the Leader commented that the country's debt situation was not of the Council's making but that it was dealing with its own financial position in the best way possible. With regard to having a debate on the financial sector he was of the view that there would be little merit in doing so given the lack of local government influence upon central government.

- (vii) Received from Mr D Tremellen and answered by Mrs C Wild, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport in relation to potholes in the south east of the county – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Tremellen expressed his dissatisfaction with the repair action being taken in his division and queried whether the Portfolio Holder considered the problems were being satisfactorily addressed?

In response the Portfolio Holder re-iterated that weather conditions had been appalling since December which had resulted in a considerable amount of damage being caused, including some serious, to various roads in the county. Whilst acknowledging that there were some issues with dealing with the potholes and that this was not unsurprising given the conditions, she emphasised the tremendous staff effort being put into addressing these matters and expressed disappointment at the Member's criticism of their work. She invited the Member to speak to her direct should there be a specific problem with any section of road in his division.

- (viii) Received from Mr C Mellings and answered by Mr Steve Charmley the Portfolio Holder for Business Growth, ip&e and Commissioning (North) in relation to the current state and likely prospects for the county's economy – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Mellings asked what further steps could be taken to speed up the recovery of the area's economy and to help and support young people into employment, apprenticeships and training in Shropshire?

In response the Portfolio Holder commented that the county's direction of challenge appeared good with Shropshire's figures being some of the lowest in the region and unemployment numbers continuing to decrease. In referring to various small sums of money available in grant aid for small businesses he stressed that these contributions could make a huge difference in the local economy and invited Mr Mellings to accompany him on some visits throughout the county so that he could see the impact of these grants first-hand.

- (ix) Received from Mr C Mellings and answered by Mr M Price Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Commissioning (Central) in relation to the operation and use of food banks across Shropshire – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Mellings paid tribute to the work carried out by volunteers in this area and asked that more information should

be supplied in order to address the root cause of the need for these food banks in the county?

In response the Portfolio Holder supported the comments made by Mr Mellings regarding the tremendous efforts of the voluntary individuals and organisations. He indicated that some of the need for the banks arose from delays in benefit payments and measures were being introduced to help improve this particular area. It was also hoped that the scrutiny process being carried out at the present time would provide many of the answers to his request for further information.

- (x) Received from Mr M Kenny and answered by Mr M Price Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Commissioning (Central) in relation to the planning process and pre application discussions – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Kenny indicated that he was concerned primarily about pre discussions taking place between developers and resident groups and queried whether any encouragement was given to local persons to submit their points of view prior the formal planning process?

In response the Portfolio Holder indicated that practice varied between organisations and that pre application discussion was very much down to individuals. He confirmed that only a very small percentage of applicants carried out the practice and expressed dissatisfaction with this low figure. Efforts would be continued with applicants to raise the rate in the knowledge that in such cases where pre-discussion was undertaken, very often the application process was much better for all parties.

- (xi) Received from Mrs V Parry and answered by Mr G Butler, Portfolio Holder for Leisure Libraries and Culture in relation to the proposed savings to be made on Theatre Services – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mrs Parry indicated that local groups had previously been afforded a concession to use Theatre Severn but that in the last year fees had risen by a large percentage which had impacted adversely on their existing operation. She asked whether this practice was likely to be continued at the Theatre in future?

In response the Portfolio Holder confirmed the intention to make savings without unduly affecting services at Theatre Severn and advised that a liaison group was being set up with people passionate about the Theatre. Arrangements were being made for the first meeting between this Group and the new Manager, Mr David Jacks, albeit prices at the Theatre were influenced by the annual budget. He also placed on record his thanks and appreciation of the work carried out by the previous Theatre Manager, Mr Peter Nicholson.

- (xii) Received from Mrs P Moseley and answered by Mr Lee Chapman, Portfolio Holder for Adult Services and Commissioning (South) in relation to the

number of people with learning disabilities in Shropshire who were in nursing or residential placements – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mrs Moseley referred to the ever increasing cost of adult social care and asked how almost £23 million could be saved from the budget over the next three years unless it was at the expense of impacting on the county's most vulnerable residents and their families?

In response the Portfolio Holder advised that a range of methods were being used to address the budget constraints without reducing the care provided to the most vulnerable persons in the area. In brief, activity was being undertaken to provide new opportunities to persons within a community setting. Consideration was also being given to the ways of delivering social care and the social work procedures currently carried out on the ground. The Council had been invited to speak to other local authorities about their new practices and he therefore felt confident that savings would be delivered alongside improved outcomes.

- (xiii) Received from Mr M Kenny and answered by Mrs K Calder, Portfolio Holder for Health in relation to the influence of health matters upon the planning process and regulatory licensing powers – copy attached to the signed minutes.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Kenny referred to the importance of play and also asked what measures would be taken at the planning stage to ensure that Public Health encouraged people to use alternative methods of transport over journeys by car? He queried whether the Council might be able to limit the number of fast food outlets in favour of more healthy retail options?

In response the Portfolio Holder indicated that car ownership figures in the area were close to the national average but that numbers without a vehicle rose to a higher level in rural households. With regard to the impact of fast food outlets she agreed that this could possibly be explored further by a task and finish group to see if there was any connection between ill health and the increase in outlets. She supported the comments made regarding play and suggested that CIL monies might be used to provide facilities through the planning process. In conclusion she offered to provide the Member with more information about Public Health's proposals should it be required by him.

79. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K Barrow, and seconded by Mr A Walpole that the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendation contained therein, be received and agreed subject to the inclusion of the following additional recommendation B:

That a Working Party be set up comprising of the 4 Group Leaders, or their representatives, to look afresh at the Members' Allowance Scheme in light of recent and expected changes to the role of elected Members in order that proposals might be submitted for future consideration to the Independent Remuneration Panel.

It was proposed by Mrs H Fraser and seconded by Mrs C Barnes that the recommendations be amended to read as follows:

That the Members' Allowance Scheme attached at Appendix 1 to the report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be approved subject to the following amendments:

- From Section 4f, remove "and five scrutiny chairs";
- Replace Section 4g with "The five Scrutiny Panel Chairmen receive a Special Responsibility Allowance which is 0.5 times the Basic Allowance;
- Replace Section 4h with "The role of Speaker and Chairman of Council is combined and receives a Special Responsibility Allowance which is 0.5 times the Basic Allowance;
- In Section 4i, replace "0.5" with "0.25";
- Remove Section 4j;
- In Section 4k, replace "0.25" with "0.125";
- In Section 4l, replace "0.25" with "0.125";
- In Section 4n, replace "0.5" with "0.25";
- Replace Section 4o with "The Chairman of the Pensions Committee receives a Special Responsibility Allowance of 0.125 times the Basic Allowance; and
- Replace Schedule 1 of Appendix 1 with the Schedule set out below.

1st April 2013

		£	Multiplier
BASIC ALLOWANCE	(74)	11514.00	
SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES			
Chair of Council and Speaker	(1)	5757.00	(0.5)
Leader of Council (inc group leader)	(1)	23028.00	(2)
Deputy Leader of Council & Portfolio	(1)	14392.50	(1.25)

Holder			
Executive Members (Portfolio Holders)	(8)	11514.00	(1)
Deputy Portfolio Holders	(7)	0.00	(0)
Opposition Group Leaders	(2)	5757.00	(0.5)
Chairs of Scrutiny Committees	(5)	5757.00	(0.5)
Chairs of Area Planning Committees	(3)	2878.50	(0.25)
Vice Chairs of the area planning committees	(3)	0.00	(0)
Chair of Strategic Licensing Committee	(1)	1439.25	(0.125)
Chair of Licensing subcommittee/vice chair of strategic licensing committee	(1)	1439.25	(0.125)
Chair of Audit Committee	(1)	2878.50	(0.25)
Chair of Pensions Committee	(1)	1439.25	(0.125)

On being put to the vote the amendment was lost with a large majority of Members voting against.

After further debate, on being put to the vote, the original proposition was carried by a large majority of Members voting in favour.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the current Members' Allowance Scheme, attached at Appendix 1 to the report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be approved.
- (b) That a Working Party be set up comprising of the 4 Group Leaders, or their representatives, to look afresh at the Members' Allowance Scheme in light of recent and expected changes to the role of elected Members in order that proposals might be submitted for future consideration to the Independent Remuneration Panel.

80. BUSINESS PLAN AND FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2014/15 TO 2016/17

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

Mr A Mosley and Mr R Evans exercised their right as Group Leaders to speak to the budget proposition with Mrs M Shinton speaking on behalf of Mrs P Dee.

After further debate the Leader exercised his right to reply to comments made on the Administration's budget proposals as a whole.

On being put to a recorded vote the proposition was carried with 41 Members voting in favour and 17 against as follows:

For

Mr P Adams, Mr N Bardsley, Mr T Barker, Mrs J Barrow, Mr K Barrow, Mr M Bennett, Mr T Biggins, Mr G Butler, Mrs K Calder, Mr D Carroll, Mr L Chapman, Mr S Charmley, Mr P Cherrington, Mr G Dakin, Mr S Davenport, Mrs P Dee, Mr D Evans, Mr R Hughes, Mr V Hunt, Mr J Hurst-Knight, Mr C Lea, Mr D Lloyd, Mr R Macey, Mrs C Motley, Mrs P Mullock, Mr M Owen, Mr W Parr, Mr M Pate, Mr M Price, Mr K Roberts, Mrs M Shingleton, Mr R Tindall, Mr D Turner, Mr A Walpole, Mr S West, Mrs C Wild, Mr B Williams, Mr L Winwood, Mr M Wood, Mrs T Woodward and Mr P Wynn (41).

Against

Mr A Bannerman, Mrs C Barnes, Mr V Bushell, Mr T Clarke, Mr R Evans, Mrs H Fraser, Mr N Hartin, Dr J Jones, Mr M Kenny, Mrs H Kidd, Mr C Mellings, Mrs P Moseley, Mr A Mosley, Mr K Pardy, Mrs V Parry, Mr J Tandy, Mr M Williams (17).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Final Business Plan and Financial Strategy attached at Appendix 1 and the proposals for setting the Council's budget for the three years 2014/15 to 2016/17, be agreed.
- (b) That the projected funding gap over the period 2014/15 to 2016/17 of £80m; £41.531m falling in 2014/15 be recognised.
- (c) That the savings identified in 2014/15 of £39.892m and rephasing of growth proposals of £1.639m to meet the funding gap be approved.
- (d) That the adjustments to the budget for the internal market be agreed to ensure that the costs of these services and the recharge cost and income for these services are no longer both reflected in the gross budget.
- (e) That the budget for 2014/15 of £573.139m, after savings and internal market costs adjustments be approved.
- (f) That agreement be given to accept Council Tax Freeze Grant for 2014/15 of £1.307m on the basis that Council Tax will be frozen for 2014/15.
- (g) That the financial implications of the transfer of the Programme Management Office and Business Design Team to ip&e be noted.
- (h) That the revised Capital Programme for 2014/15 to 2016/17 as set out within the report be approved.
- (i) That in accordance with the regulations, approval be given to a Capital Allowance of £1million for 2014/15 to enable the Council to retain in full, capital receipts received from the disposal of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) assets (excluding Right to Buy sales). Furthermore, that the capital receipts from such sales be reserved for expenditure on the Council's housing stock.

- (j) That the Statement of Chief Financial Officer on the Robustness of the Estimates and Adequacy of Provisions and Reserves 2013-16 as set out in Appendix 2 be agreed, noting the Council's general fund balance over this period.
- (k) That the Pay and Reward Policy for all Council staff for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix 3 be agreed.

(At this point the meeting adjourned at 1.15 pm for a lunch break and resumed at 2.15 pm)

81. TREASURY STRATEGY 2014/2015

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

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Treasury Strategy for 2014/15 be approved.
- (b) That the Prudential Indicators, set out in Appendix 1 of the report by the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance be approved in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003.
- (c) That the Investment Strategy, set out in Appendix 2 of the report by the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance be approved in accordance with the CLG Guidance on Local Government Investments.
- (d) That the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement, set out in Appendix 3 of the report by the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance be approved.
- (e) That the Section 151 Officer be authorised to exercise the borrowing powers contained in Section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003 and to manage the Council's debt portfolio in accordance with the Treasury Strategy.
- (f) That the Section 151 Officer be authorised to use other Foreign Banks which meet Capita's creditworthiness policy and Money Market Funds again if required as money markets continue to stabilise.
- (g) That it be noted that the proposed Prudential Indicators would enable the Authority to use the equivalent of up to 3% of Council Tax in 2014/15 or future years, to fund borrowing under the Prudential Code should the Council decide to do so.

82. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT RENT LEVEL 2014/15

It was proposed by the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Commissioning (Central) Mr M Price and seconded by Mr T Barker that the report of the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Social Housing rents for 2014/15 be increased in line with the Government recommended formula rent which will result in an average increase of 5.4%.
- (b) That Affordable Rents be increased by 3.7% in line with Government guidance.
- (c) That Un-pooled service charges be not increased in 2014/15.

83. COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION 2014/15

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

On being put to a recorded vote the proposition was carried with 44 Members voting in favour and 4 against as follows:

For

Mr P Adams, Mr N Bardsley, Mr T Barker, Mrs C Barnes, Mrs J Barrow, Mr K Barrow, Mr M Bennett, Mrs K Calder, Mr D Carroll, Mr L Chapman, Mr S Charmley, Mr P Cherrington, Mr G Dakin, Mr S Davenport, Mr D Evans, Mr R Evans, Mrs H Fraser, Mr N Hartin, Mr V Hunt, Mr J Hurst-Knight, Mr M Kenny, Mr D Lloyd, Mr R Macey, Mr C Mellings, Mr A Mosley, Mrs C Motley, Mrs P Mullock, Mr M Owen, Mr W Parr, Mrs V Parry, Mr M Pate, Mr M Price, Mr K Roberts, Mrs M Shingleton, Mr R Tindall, Mr D Turner, Mr A Walpole, Mr S West, Mrs C Wild, Mr B Williams, Mr L Winwood, Mr M Wood, Mrs T Woodward and Mr P Wynn (44).

Against

Mr V Bushell, Mr T Clarke, Mrs P Moseley and Mr K Pardy (4).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That approval be given to a 0% Council Tax rise resulting in a basic amount of council tax for a Band D property of £1,164.72 in the billing authority's area, calculated in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (section 44) and the Local Government

(Structural Changes)(Further Financial Provisions and Amendment) Regulations 2008.

- (b) That in accordance with the provisions of Section 40(2) of the 1992 Act, the amount of Council Tax calculated for each category of dwelling in the billing authority's area be as follows:

Property Band	2014/15 Charge £
A	776.48
B	905.89
C	1,035.31
D	1,164.72
E	1,423.55
F	1,682.37
G	1,941.20
H	2,329.44

- (c) That a total precept of £117,025,463 be levied.
- (d) That the formal council tax resolution be approved as set out in Appendix 1 of the report by the Head of Finance, Governance and Assurance to determine the levels of Council Tax for Shropshire Council for 2014/15.

84. SITE ALLOCATIONS AND MANAGEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT (SAMDev) PLAN: PROPOSED SUBMISSION OR FINAL PLAN STAGE

It was proposed by Mr M Price, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing and Commissioning (Central), and seconded by Mr L Chapman that the report by the Head of Economic Growth and Prosperity, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That Council's endorsement be given to the changes proposed following Cabinet to proposals for Oswestry to exclude sites OSW002 and OSW003 and for Church Stretton to exclude sites CSTR027 and ELR070 and include sites CSTR019 and ELR078 in the Proposed Submission document.
- (b) That authority be delegated to the Head of Economic Growth and Prosperity in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing

and Commissioning (Central) to approve the final version of the draft documents including any minor editorial corrections prior to publication.

85. SEX ESTABLISHMENTS POLICY

It was proposed by Mr S Charmley, Portfolio Holder for Business Growth, ip&e and Commissioning (North), and seconded by Mr R Tindall that the report of the Head of Public Protection, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Sex Establishments Policy as set out in Appendix A of the report by the Head of Public Protection be agreed and the Policy be adopted with effect from 1st April 2014. (Note: A paper copy of the appendix had been made available in the Members' Library and emailed to all Members of Council.)
- (b) That the Public Protection Officers (Specialist) be delegated authority with regard to the power to reject objections to sex establishment licence applications that were not relevant to the grounds set out in Schedule 3 Paragraph 12 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 or were frivolous or vexatious or which related to moral grounds.
- (c) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Public Protection, Public Protection Service Managers and the Team Manager with responsibility for the licensing function, to determine applications for sex establishment licences, where there were no valid objections submitted during the representation period.

86. SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL BETTER REGULATION AND ENFORCEMENT POLICY

It was proposed by Mr S Charmley, Portfolio Holder for Business, ip&e and Commissioning (North) and seconded by Mr B Williams that the report of the Head of Public Protection, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendation contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed Better Regulation and Enforcement Policy be approved as set out in Appendix A of the report by the Head of Public Protection and the Policy be adopted with effect from 1st April 2014. (Note: A paper copy of the appendix had been made available in the Members' Library and emailed to all Members of Council.)

87. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS, POLLING PLACES AND POLLING STATIONS 2014-15

It was proposed by Mr M Owen, Portfolio Holder for Resources, Finance and Support, and seconded by Mr M Bennett that the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer), a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendation contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That approval be given to the completion of a review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations throughout the county in advance of the General Election in 2015.

88. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION – PART 5 – LOCAL PROTOCOL FOR COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS DEALING WITH REGULATORY MATTERS

The Speaker drew Members' attention to the following recommendation of the Enterprise and Growth Scrutiny Committee to amend Part 5 of the Council's Constitution:

"Planning Committee members do not vote or take part in the Committee debate when applications from their own Ward are considered. (The Member to physically move away from the Committee "table" but stay in the room). This will allow Members to speak freely on applications from their own area and to provide advice to their local Parish/Town Councils on these matters."

In view of the full recommendation of the Scrutiny Committee conflicting with other parts of the Constitution in relation to the planning committees the Speaker proposed that the Constitution be amended only to prevent Planning Committee members from voting on applications for development within the electoral division that they represented. For clarification Members would still be required to leave the room if there were concerns regarding bias and predetermination or if they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the matter under discussion. The proposal was seconded by Mr M Price, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Commissioning (Central).

During the ensuing debate concerns were raised by some Members that the proposal would reduce their ability to represent the views of their local constituents. In turn several Members referred to proposals to deal with more planning applications through delegated procedures in future and the existing practice whereby local Members were not able to sit on licensing act sub-committees when matters within their Ward were due for determination.

In response the Speaker commented that Council should be aware of the public perception in relation to such matters and that although the proposal did not take away the Planning Committee Member's right to present their

case on the application, it might clarify the position further if the recommendation was amended to specify that they could address the Committee on applications for development within their electoral division. The consensus of Members present was to accept this course of action.

RESOLVED:

That Part 5 of the Council's Constitution be amended to enable Planning Committee Members to address the meeting on applications for development within the electoral division that they represented but that they be prevented from voting on such matters.

89. SECOND REPORT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN

It was proposed by Mr L Chapman, Portfolio Holder for Adult Services and Commissioning (South), and seconded by Mr T Barker that the report of the Director of Adult Services, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and the recommendation contained therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the general approach recommended within the report by the Director of Adult Services be accepted and that the final response to the Local Government Ombudsman be delegated to the Director of Adult Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services and Commissioning (South).

90. 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, Local Government Act 1972 and paragraph 10.4(3) of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, the public and press be excluded during the consideration of the following item.

91. SOUTH AREA ACCOMMODATION REVIEW – BRIDGNORTH

It was proposed by Mr M Owen and seconded by Mr K Barrow that the exempt report of the Head of Commercial Services, a copy of which is included within the signed exempt minute book and the recommendations therein, be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That due to the estimated value of Westgate being in the region of £1 million, Council approval be given to the disposal of the premises.
- (b) That Westgate be declared surplus to the Council's requirements and sold, and the Head of Commercial Services be authorised to settle the method and terms for disposal.

Speaker

Date: 8th May 2014

The meeting closed at 3.40pm

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MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

AGENDA ITEM 9

QUESTION 1

MR MILES KENNY will ask the following question:

A lot of time, a lot of effort and a lot of money has been invested in the Museum in Shrewsbury with excellent results, but what a disappointment to find that the café is not serving Fairtrade produce. Shropshire Council reaffirmed the commitment given by Shropshire County Council to support Fairtrade shortly after becoming unitary which met no opposition from members. This commitment was and is an important part in making and keeping Shropshire as a Fairtrade County.

Many towns in Shropshire are Fairtrade towns, including Shrewsbury which was and continues to be supported by Shrewsbury Town Council, businesses, communities and churches in the town, an achievement carried out almost entirely by volunteers.

There are few who do not understand the benefits of Fairtrade to the Fairtrade producer and their communities. These benefits extend to businesses in the developed world who support Fairtrade. Consumers worldwide, not just Europe, UK or Shropshire seek out Fairtrade suppliers in preference to those who do not serve Fairtrade and more and more shops and cafes serve Fairtrade as they know it is good for business.

So, when granting the contract or café rights in the Museum why was it not stipulated that Fairtrade produce would be served?

More to the point what are you going to do about this?

Café staff have said they might serve Fairtrade produce – when are you going to ensure that they do, in accordance with Council Policy?

MR STEVE CHARMLEY, the Portfolio Holder for Business Growth, ip&e and Commissioning (North) will reply:

I would like to thank Councillor Kenny for his complementary remarks about the refurbishment of the Music Hall and I would also like to add to this by saying what a wonderful asset it is to both our County town and the County, as both a celebration of our rich history and heritage and a key attraction for our tourism industry.

With regard to the specific question around Fairtrade at the Stop Café at the Music Hall, we will look to review how our Fairtrade commitment is embedded into our wider procurement approach. I understand that in the case of commercial lease arrangements such as the Stop Café we are not currently mandating Fairtrade. That said, detailed below is a statement from the Stop Café regarding their sourcing policy:

Just because something doesn't have the Fairtrade mark, it does not necessarily mean it has not been ethically or fairly traded.

We know that the farmers that grow our beans get a higher price than they would under the Fairtrade scheme due to the superior quality of their product. The coffee bean importer that our supplier uses is well established and does offer blends under the Fairtrade banner. However, they also offer blends that are negotiated directly with the farmers where quality of the bean is matched by a higher price - in the case of our blend, a mix of Brazilian and Indian washed robusta. The importer also takes its social responsibilities seriously and invests in the local community, including helping building schools and developing the local infrastructure. Given this approach, we believe we trade ethically.

We are an independent, family run business. We pride ourselves on sourcing most of our menu locally, we employ local people and we support local initiatives and the community in which we trade. Unlike many of the big 'brands' we feel we are making a positive contribution to the local economy and are proud of this approach.

In light of this statement and as the contract has been let, we do not propose to do anything retrospectively to change the arrangements with Stop Café.

Shropshire Council will however fully commit to ensuring Fairtrade is a clause in any new lease or contractual arrangements.

QUESTION 2

MRS PAM MOSELEY will ask the following question:

Last year, following the demise of the government's community care grants and crisis loans for living, top-tier local authorities were encouraged to set up local welfare assistance schemes to replace them. With its share of the government's Local Welfare Assistance Fund, Shropshire Council responded by developing the Local Support and Prevention Fund.

Could the Portfolio Holder advise, for the financial year 2013/14:

- 1.) How much was allocated to the Council for this provision?
- 2.) How much of this was spent on assisting residents who applied for help?
- 3.) How many requests for help were received, and of these, how many were approved and how many rejected?

Also, what expenditure is planned for 2014/15?

Additionally, it has been announced that the government is to end the Local Welfare Assistance Fund in 2015/16. As such, what measures is Shropshire Council to put in place to help its citizens who are for a variety of reasons suffering financial crisis, and need urgent help in circumstances which can include ill health, the loss of a home or job, leaving care, and the need to flee domestic violence?

MR LEE CHAPMAN and MR MIKE OWEN the Portfolio Holders for Adult Services and Resources, Finance and Support will reply:

The Welfare Reform Act reformed the social fund administered by the DWP because it was believed to be complex, over-centralised, poorly targeted and failing those it was meant to help the most. It was believed by transferring the administration of parts of the fund to us we would be better placed to determine how to deliver this critical service as we are closer to people who need support. We would be able to diagnose the underlying causes of an individual's problems rather than just providing grants or additional loans which may in the past have compounded financial problems by increasing personal debt. The changes would mean the social fund is sustainable in the future and supports the move to Universal Credit.

This scheme transferred to us from 1 April 2013. To differentiate from the old Social Fund the new scheme was renamed 'The Local Support and Prevention Fund'. This new scheme seeks to identify and prioritise those most in need. It targets those within the community who have been identified as the most vulnerable and in need of urgent financial assistance or support. The scheme also considers paying awards under two types of need: to those customers who require immediate support and to customers who require assistance to establish or maintain a home in the community.

Customers most likely to require this form of assistance may include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Families under exceptional pressure;
- Homeless people or rough sleepers;
- Vulnerable older people;
- People fleeing domestic violence;
- Young people leaving care;
- People moving out of institutional or residential care;
- Ex-offenders leaving prison or detention centres;
- Chronically or terminally ill people;
- People with alcohol or drug issues; and
- People with learning difficulties.

From the period April 2013 to February 2014 we received 1,579 applications which resulted in 1,124 applications being granted at a total cost of

£37,382.27. The biggest request by far was for food with 650 parcels provided over the period followed by gas and electricity requests.

The following key figures have been noted over the first year of running the scheme: -

Family Types

Single 1,019 (64.5%)
Lone Parent 238 (15%)
Couple with children 146 (9.2%)
Couple no children 113 (7.1%)
Pensioner 63 (3.9%)

Items provided

Household goods (including food) 948
Other 769
Furniture 565
White Goods 538
Utilities 508
Bedding 84
Travel expenses 155
Clothing 16

It is noted that majority of people are single that claim from the fund. These claims are mainly for food, gas and electricity after losing income through the DWP sanction process. The remaining family types claim due to a particular circumstance for things like furniture, carpets, moving costs or travel expenses. It is also noted that the number of pensioners that claim is extremely low. On investigation to services and organisations that deal predominately with the elderly it has been identified that this is the case for a number of reasons (mainly pride, culture differences and the fact that they are not subject to working age regimes). Of the 1,579 applications received 1,124 or approximately 71% were successful. The main reasons for refusal are that there are alternative methods available to resolve the situation. These alternatives are explored with the customer upon any refusal. It became clear almost immediately that the previous social fund had created somewhat of a 'claim culture'.

We would receive numerous calls from repeat customers who had been granted funds previously but had not remedied the situation that resulted in the claim. The majority of the people who request support have been sanctioned due to non-compliance with a DWP request (seeking work, attending an interview or training). We decided that we did not want to replicate the old social fund as this had clearly created a dependency and claim culture for some. Instead we wanted to create a cash free system that offered a holistic support service.

The worryingly high number of sanction cases we have received has prompted and informed the construction of our new Local Support Framework.

As funding has now ceased for this provision after this year we are using the money to ensure that we can provide support in the future to the most vulnerable. Through the construction of joint working with other support services, third parties, charities and foundations, churches and the community we are forming the new Shropshire Community Support Network to ensure that we can provide support to those most in need. Through a joint approach with all main stakeholders, including housing associations, DWP, CAB etc we have a robust and effective plan in place to ensure that we continue to provide much needed support in the future.

QUESTION 3

MR ROGER EVANS will ask the following question:

Following the quite explicit answer given at the Council meeting held on 27 February 2014 about the erection of signs on the A5 warning drivers of high sided vehicles about the low bridge in Hanwood; it is disappointing to residents that work, as of 16 April, has not yet started.

Can the portfolio holder please confirm again that work is programmed and give an indication of when this is expected to be completed.

MRS CLAIRE WILD, the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport, will reply:

The signs in question are required to be erected on the A5 Shrewsbury Bypass. The Highways Agency control this trunk road and are responsible for delivery of the signing scheme, through their contractor Amey. Shropshire Council have been advised that their current works programme identifies that these signage works are scheduled to start towards the end of May and will be completed by the end of June 2014.

QUESTION 4

MR ROGER EVANS will ask the following question:

The Court of Appeal (Civil Division) heard a case against Shropshire Council on 4th April 2014 and the result is now published. This concerned the specific closure of Hartleys Daycentre in Shrewsbury. The minutes of a Scrutiny Meeting held on 19th August quite strongly note that it was the contention of every member of the public, in the packed room where many had to stand, that a lawful consultation regarding closure had not taken place. During the whole of the approximate two and a half hours of the meeting no user or member of the public stated they had been asked their views about the closure of their day centres. The court now says that the council did not comply with their duty to consult at common law.

Can the chairman of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee now agree that to restrict the call in of the decision to close daycentres to just looking at whether a commission was needed to be set up was wrong.

MR GERALD DAKIN, the Chairman of the Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee will reply:

Thank you for the question. In reaching the decision I did I was very mindful of the extremely detailed and extensive consultation process that had taken place the previous two years as part of the transformation of adult services generally. Indeed, it was this consultation which the High Court held had, in fact, been lawful. It is true that subsequently the Court of Appeal overturned that decision but if you read the judgement in full you will see that the Court did find a number of positive actions by the Council as well as finding that the Council needed to do one further step which it will do in circumstances such as this in the future. In any event the issues raised in the call-in were much wider than those before the Court and at that point in time my responsibility was to ensure that effective meeting could take place. In my opinion that is exactly what happened with most people having a very good opportunity to raise their concerns.

QUESTION 5

MR KEVIN PARDY will ask the following question:

On the Shropshire Council website's meetings diary, the entry for July 17 reads "PROVISIONAL - Council". Is this because the date is subject to change, or that it may be the third full meeting of this Council to be cancelled since November last year?

MR DAVID LLOYD, Speaker, will reply:

In answer to the first part of your question No. At the moment I am advised that there is business to discuss at the July meeting so it will go ahead.



<u>Committee and date</u>
Council
8 May 2014

<u>Item No</u>
10
Public

RETURNING OFFICER'S REPORT

Responsible Officer Claire Porter

Email: claire.porter@shropshire.gov.uk

Telephone: (01743) 252763

I Claire Porter, the Returning Officer for the Shropshire Council area, do hereby certify that the person named below was elected as Councillor for the Ludlow North Division of the Shropshire Council area:

<u>Electoral Division</u>	<u>Name and Address</u>	<u>Description</u>
Ludlow North	Andy Boddington 11 Chestnut Grove Ludlow SY8 1TJ	Liberal Democrat

Dated this 14th day of March 2014

Claire Porter
Returning Officer
The Shirehall
Abbey Foregate
SHREWSBURY
SY2 6ND

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<u>Committee and date</u>	<u>Item</u>
Council	11
8 May 2014	Public

CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES AND THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

Responsible Officer Claire Porter

Email: claire.porter@shropshire.gov.uk

Telephone: (01743) 252763

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report deals with the overall constitution of committees, the overall entitlement of seats for each of the political groups and the proportionate allocation of seats between the groups across all committees.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council confirms the constitution of committees and the allocation of seats to each of the political groups for the 2014/15 municipal year and the allocation of seats between the political groups, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to this report.

REPORT

3.0 Local Government and Housing Act 1989

- 3.1 The provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 require the Council to review the representation of each political group on committees, panels etc. at each annual meeting or as soon as practicable after that meeting. The regulations require that all Scrutiny, Standing and Regulatory Committees are politically balanced across the total number of committee places. Subject to that overriding requirement, each committee must also be politically balanced, as far as it is reasonably practicable.
- 3.2 The Executive (Cabinet) is not subject to the political balance rules, but the Standards Committee is required to be balanced.
- 3.3 Advisory Committees and other ad hoc bodies and groups are not subject to the political balance rules either, but traditionally political proportionality has been applied to them outside the overall aggregate balance referred to in paragraph 2.1 above.

4.0 Constitution of Committees

- 4.1 The Council is requested to approve the overall constitution of committees.
- 4.2 This requires 90 seats to be allocated proportionately across all committees and the Council is requested to approve the overall constitution as set out below:

<u>Committee Name</u>	<u>Seats per Committee</u>
Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee	10
Performance Management Scrutiny Committee	10
Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee	10
Enterprise and Growth Scrutiny Committee	10
Young People's Scrutiny Committee	10
Pensions Committee	4
Audit Committee	5
Human Resources Committee	7
Strategic Licensing Committee	15
Standards Committee	9
Total	<u>90</u>

5.0 Allocation of Seats

- 5.1 The Council is required to approve the allocation of seats to the political groups for the coming year.
- 5.2 The recent Ludlow North by-election saw the Liberal Democrat Group gain the seat for that electoral division from the Conservative Group. Consequently the change in political balance has seen the Liberal Democrat Group gain an extra seat on the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee taking their number of seats on this committee from one to two. The Conservatives lose one on Scrutiny from the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee which reduces their seats on the committee from 7 to 6. To balance the numbers a consensus has been reached amongst the Group Leaders for the Independents to lose their only seat on the Environment and Services Scrutiny Committee and have one seat on the Performance Management Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.3 In accordance with this change the maximum number of seats available to each group within the political balance rules will be:

<u>Group Name</u>	<u>Seats per Group</u>
Conservatives	57
Liberal Democrats	16
Labour	11
Independent	6
Total	<u>90</u>

- 5.4 The proportionate allocation of seats to the political groups across all committees is set out in Appendix 1 and the proposed allocation of these totals to individual members, in accordance with the wishes of the respective Group Leaders, is set out in Appendix 2 to this report (To Follow).
- 5.5 The Council is entitled to 11 seats on the Shropshire and Wrekin Combined Fire Authority. Under the present arrangements, the Conservative Group is entitled to 7 seats, the Liberal Democrat Group 2 seats, the Labour Group 1 seat and the Independent Group 1 seat.
- 5.6 The proposed allocation of seats meets the legal requirements, however, should the Council wish, it is possible to agree allocations which are not strictly politically balanced if no member dissents.

6.0 Appointment of Area Planning Committees

- 6.1 With regard to the allocation of seats on the area based Planning Committees (North, South and Central – 11 members of each) the Constitution requires members to be drawn from each of the individual areas, North, South and Central and for this reason the political balance rules have been disapplied. However, it has been agreed by Council that in order to recognise the local representation of each of the areas, the members of each of the Area Planning Committees will reflect the political balance of each local area.

<p>List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)</p>
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<p>Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Regulations made thereunder.</p>

<p>Human Rights Act Appraisal</p>
--

<p>The contents of this report are compatible with the provisions of the Human Rights act 1998.</p>

<p>Environmental Appraisal: Not Applicable</p>

<p>Risk Management Appraisal</p>

<p>The Council is obliged to ensure that the membership of committees and related bodies is proportionate to individual group membership.</p>

<p>Community / Consultations Appraisal</p>

<p>Not Applicable</p>

<p>Cabinet Member: Keith Barrow</p>
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<p>Local Members: All</p>

<p>Appendices</p>

<p>Appendix 1 – Constitution of Committees and Allocation of Seats to Political Groups</p>
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<p>Appendix 2 – Proposed Allocation of Seats to Political Groups (To Follow)</p>
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ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

Group	Cons	Lab	Lib Dem	Ind	Total
	47	9	13	5	74

SCRUTINY

Health and Adult Social Care	6	1	2	1	10
Performance Management	6	1	2	1	10
Environment and Services	6	2	2	0	10
Enterprise and Growth	6	1	2	1	10
Young People's	6	1	2	1	10

STANDING AND REGULATORY

Pensions Committee	3	0	1	0	4
Audit Committee	3	1	1	0	5
Human Resources Committee	5	1	1	0	7
Standards	6	1	1	1	9
Strategic Licensing Committee	10	2	2	1	15
Aggregate No Seats Required	57	11	16	6	90

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Committee and date

Council

08 May 2014

Item

12

Public

REVISED CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

Responsible Officer Claire Porter

Email: claire.porter@shropshire.gov.uk

Tel: 01743352763

Fax:

1. Summary

At a meeting of the Council held on the 3rd of May 2012, a Code of Conduct for members was approved. The Committee on Standards in Public Life has now amended the General Principles of Conduct expected of public figures which are currently included in the Code of Conduct. Having regard to further guidance from the Department of Communities and Local Government, a new code of conduct is proposed.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the draft Code of Conduct appended to the report be approved and adopted with immediate effect.**
- 2.2 **That members notify the Monitoring Officer of any Trade Union interests that they have for inclusion in the Public Register of Interests**

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

The Council is required by the Localism Act 2011 to adopt a code of conduct which is consistent with the general principles of Standards in Public Life in order to demonstrate the promotion of good ethical governance. Failure to approve a suitable code will be a breach of the legislation and a failure to demonstrate the effective promotion of ethical governance.

It provides an opportunity to retain confidence in the ethical governance of the authority and demonstrates a commitment to public accountability for the actions of the members.

4. Financial Implications

No direct implications.

5. Background

- 5.1 A review has been carried out by the Committee of Standards in Public Life with regard to the general principles expected of public figures. The changes which were agreed amend the descriptions of the general principles which are included in the current code of conduct.
- 5.2 Guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government has highlighted the need for members to register any trade union interests they have in the public register of interests maintained by the Monitoring Officer
- 5.3 The Department for Communities and Local Government has also issued a revised draft Code of Conduct for use by Local Authorities and this has been used as the basis for the revised code attached to this report for adoption.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

None

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)
--

Keith Barrow

Local Member

All

Appendices

Draft Code of Conduct



CODE OF CONDUCT

You are a member or co-opted member of the Shropshire Council and hence you shall have regard to the following principles – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Accordingly, when acting in your capacity as a member or co-opted member -

You must act solely in the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person or act to gain financial or other material benefits for yourself, your family, a friend or close associate.

You must not place yourself under a financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence you in the performance of your official duties.

When carrying out your public duties you must make all choices, such as making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits, on merit.

You are accountable for your decisions to the public and you must co-operate fully with whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office.

You must be as open as possible about your decisions and actions and the decisions and actions of your authority and should be prepared to give reasons for those decisions and actions.

You must declare any private interests, both pecuniary and non-pecuniary, including your membership of any Trade Union, that relate to your public duties and must take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest, including registering and declaring interests in a manner conforming with the procedures set out in the box below.

You must, when using or authorising the use by others of the resources of your authority, ensure that such resources are not used improperly for political purposes (including party political purposes) and you must have regard to any applicable Local Authority Code of Publicity made under the Local Government Act 1986.

You must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in particular as characterised by the above requirements, by leadership and example.

REGISTRATION AND DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS

As a Member¹ of Shropshire Council (“the Council”) I am required to register certain interests (known as “disclosable pecuniary interests”) of my own and of my partner². These interests are set out in the table below. In addition, I will register my membership of any Trade Union.

When I am present at a meeting of the Council and I have a disclosable pecuniary interest (**which includes your own interest and that of your partner**) in any matter being considered which is entered in the Council’s register of interests, I do not need to disclose it to the meeting, but I will withdraw from the meeting room when the matter is being discussed and will not participate, or participate further, in any discussion of, or any vote taken on, the matter at the meeting.

If my disclosable pecuniary interest (**which includes your own interest and that of your partner**) is not entered in the Council’s register of interests, I will disclose its existence and, unless it is a sensitive interest³, its nature, to the meeting and will notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the meeting. I will withdraw from the meeting room when the matter is being discussed and will not participate, or participate further, in any discussion of, or any vote taken on, the matter at the meeting.

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Prescribed description</i>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain by you or your partner
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the Council) made or provided within the relevant period ⁴ in respect of any expenses incurred by you in carrying out your duties as a member, or towards your election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

¹ “member” means a member of the Council and includes a co-opted member;

² Partner includes your spouse, civil partner or person with whom you are living as if they were your spouse or civil partner

³ An interest is sensitive if its nature is such that you, and your Monitoring Officer, consider that its disclosure could lead to you, or a person connected with you, being subject to violence or intimidation.

⁴ “relevant period” means the period of 12 months ending with the day on which you give a notification of its existence

Contracts	Any contract which is made between you or your partner (or a body in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest ⁵) and the Council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land	Any beneficial interest in land ⁶ which is within the area of the Council.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the Council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to your knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the Council ; and (b) the tenant is a body in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities ⁷ of a body where— (a) that body (to your knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the Council ; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which you or your partner has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

5 “body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest” means a firm in which you or your partner is a partner or a body corporate of which you or your partner is a director, or in the securities of which you or your partner has a beneficial interest; and “director” includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society

6 “land” excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not carry with it a right for the relevant person (alone or jointly with another) to occupy the land or to receive income;

7 “securities” means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

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Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Chair's Report of the Meeting held on 11 December 2013

1 Proposed Merger of Standards and Human Resources Committee

Having considered recommendations from its Standards and Human Resources Committees, the Fire Authority agreed that the two Committees be merged into one and that the new Committee be known as the Standards and Human Resources Committee. The Fire Authority also agreed terms of reference for the new Committee and that the implementation date for these decisions be 1 April 2014.

2 Meeting Schedule 2014

The Fire Authority agreed the dates for its 2014 meetings and those of its committees. A schedule showing the dates of those meetings can be accessed via the following link.

<https://www.shropshirefire.gov.uk/sites/alpha.shropshirefire.gov.uk/files/fra/membershandbook/section-2-v1.1-february-2014.pdf>

3 2014/15 and Later Years Budget Summary

The Fire Authority considered the budgets proposed by its Strategy and Resources Committee, which were put forward for approval as the basis for consultation, leading to a final decision by the Fire Authority in February 2014.

The budget position in December 2013 showed that there was a predicted deficit of approximately £1.5 million by 2019/20. In addition, National Insurance contributions for employers were likely to increase, following the proposed pension reforms in 2016, although it was possible that this additional cost could be covered by a realignment of the pay and prices reserve.

When considering the Government's offer of council tax freeze grant, the Fire Authority noted that accepting the grant would mean that the expected deficit in its budget would be £500,000 larger by 2019/20. It also took into account the fact that, during recent consultations, the public appeared to be prepared to pay an increased precept. As a result, the Fire Authority agreed that the council tax freeze grant should be declined.

The Fire Authority then agreed the basis of its revenue budget planning and consultation and its capital programme, subject to consideration of the prudential guidelines and minimum revenue provision policy by its Strategy and Resources Committee in February 2014.

Having confirmed the current position of reserves and provisions and the level of the General Reserve, the Authority agreed to continue to base its planning

and consultation on a precept increase of 2% in 2014/15, and the years following.

Finally, it requested its Strategy and Resources Committee to prepare a final budget package in February 2014, for decision by the Fire Authority later that same month.

4 Meeting with Fire Minister

In early December the Chair of the Fire Authority (Councillor West), Councillor Carter and the Chief Fire Officer attended a meeting in the Houses of Parliament with all of the Shropshire Conservative MPs, Fire Minister Brandon Lewis, Neil O Connor, the Head of Fire and Emergency Planning at the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), and a number of civil servants.

During the meeting the Chief Fire Officer outlined the Fire Authority's funding position going forward, and the likely consequences of implementing proposals to reduce the budget, together with three proposals, which would alleviate the funding pressures on the Authority. The MPs were all supportive of the Fire Authority's approach. The Minister responded that, although he was sympathetic to the Fire Authority's position as a rural fire service, he thought that meeting its proposals would be difficult.

The Minister responded to each of the three key proposals as follows:

Review of the funding formula

The DCLG had no plans to review the formula. He understood the inequality in funding between fire services but had no plans to address it via a review of the formula at present.

A flat rate increase in precept

This had been introduced last year as a one off but would not happen again this year, because it was outside government policy.

Sparsity

When asked if he could look at removing the damping mechanism to allow funding to flow from the urban areas to the rural areas, he agreed to do so. What this meant was unclear.

The Minister gave no indication of any planned changes to the funding mechanism or to any other policy that would give the Authority some optimism, apart from a recognition of the need to look again at sparsity. The meeting was useful in that it was an opportunity to state the Fire Authority's case and at the same time support the wider rural / urban funding lobby.

5 2020 Strategic Planning Process

Phase 2 of the Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) 2020 process was continuing with Members of the Fire Authority attending numerous meetings with staff, local councillors and MPs to discuss the various options being explored as part of the Impact Appraisal process. The results from Phase 2 would be considered and recommendations would be brought to the February 2014 meeting of the Fire Authority.

Implementation of Phase 3 of IRMP would run from April to June 2014, with a view to publishing the Fire Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan 2015-20 and implementation starting in January 2015 onwards.

6 The Scheme for Payment of Members' Allowances 2014/15

The Fire Authority agreed its 2014/15 Scheme for the Payment of Members' Allowances to take effect from 1 April 2014, including that no increases would be applied to basic, special responsibility, travel or subsistence allowances.

Before closing the meeting, the Chair wished all Members and officers a Happy Christmas and New Year and thanked them for their support during 2013.



Stuart West
Chair
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
December 2013

Background Papers

Agenda Papers for the meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 11 December 2013

The agendas and reports (with the exception of exempt or confidential items) for all Fire Authority meetings and those of its Committees appear on the Service's website:

www.shropshirefire.gov.uk

To access reports go to the Authority's website. Click on Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority on the right hand side of the screen, then Meetings, then Fire and Rescue Authority, then 11 December 2013 and the various reports and appendices will be listed.

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Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority Chair's Report of the Meeting held on 26 February 2014

1 Capital Programmes and Prudential Guidelines

The Fire Authority confirmed its 2014/15 to 2018/19 capital programmes, and approved its Prudential Guidelines, the Treasury Strategy for 2014/15 and the Minimum Revenue Provision 2014/15.

2 Adequacy of Provisions and Reserves and Robustness of Budget

The Fire Authority agreed the reserves and provisions, recommended by its Strategy and Resources Committee, and noted the Treasurer's assurances covering the robustness of the 2014/15 budget and adequacy of the reserves and provisions, together with the material uncertainties from 2015/16 onwards.

3 Revenue Budget and Medium Term Financial Planning 2014/15

Since the December 2013 meeting of the Fire Authority a 2% council tax referendum threshold had been announced. There had also been an increase in the business rates income figures for 2014/15, which would be factored into planning assumptions for 2014/15 and future years. Although previously a budget deficit of £1.9m in 2019/20 had been predicted, the projections now indicated a deficit of £877,000 in 2019/20.

The Fire Authority considered recommendations made by its Strategy and Resources Committee and Strategic Risk and Planning Group Members' Working Group in relation to the revenue budget for 2014/15. Both the Committee and the Group had given much thought to the precept issue and had concluded that raising the precept by 1.99% gave more benefit to the Authority than accepting the council tax freeze grant. The Fire Authority, therefore, agreed a precept increase of 1.99% for 2014/15.

4 Revenue Budget: 2014/15 Precept

The Fire Authority agreed:

- A net budget requirement of £21,379,887
- A total precept of £13,091,142 to be levied on the billing authorities
- A Council Tax resulting in a basic amount of Council Tax at Band D of £90.42
-

- The amount payable by billing authorities for 2014/15, as follows:

Council	Precept £
Shropshire Council	9,084,966
Borough of Telford & Wrekin Council	4,006,176
	<hr/> 13,091,142 <hr/>

5 Integrated Risk Management 2020 Process

The Fire Authority considered the outcomes from Phase 2 of the Integrated Risk Management Planning (IRMP) 2020 Process and the recommendations from its Strategy and Resources Committee and Strategic Risk and Planning Group Members' Working Group.

In relation to the five proposals put forward to the Fire Authority it agreed that:

- The closure of the four 'Low Risk' fire stations (Baschurch, Clun, Hodnet and Press) should not go forward to Phase 3
- The removal of a Wholetime fire engine from the Shrewsbury or Telford area should not go forward to Phase 3
- The possible merger of the Service's Fire Control function, with at least one other service, should go forward to Phase 3
- Changes to the current Wholetime shift system, capable of producing up to £400k worth of savings, should go forward to Phase 3 and
- Changes to the current shift system operated in Fire Control should not go forward to Phase 3, but might need to be explored further, if an option for change to the function arose.

It was possible to make these decisions in light of budgetary announcements by the Government and generally improving economic conditions across the County. The forecast budget deficit was now approximately £0.9m, as opposed to between £1.5 and £1.9m, which had been projected at various stages of Phase 2 of the IRMP process.

The Fire Authority noted that the following proposals, which are within the remit of the Chief Fire Officer, would be considered, with staff, during Phase 3.

- Reduce the budgeted contributions to Capital Reserve, for items purchased from Reserve
- Reduce the Ill-Health Retirement Contribution budget
- Reduce the Occupational Health budget
- Review the current hydrant maintenance contract
- Reduce the recruitment advertising budget
- Reduce the Medical Reports budget
- Reduce the non-specialist work costs in Workshops
- Reduce the support staff pay budget
- Convert Business Fire Safety grey book posts into green book posts
- Use retained duty staff to cover short to medium-term wholetime vacancies

Phase 3 will consist of formal consultation on the proposals identified above. Whilst only one or two of these will require involvement from the public and other external stakeholders, staff will have an opportunity to comment on all of the Phase 3 options.

6 Annual Service Plan 2014/15

The Fire Authority agreed the outline format and contents of the Service Plan 2014/15. It reaffirmed the following three strategic aims:

To be there when you need us in an emergency
with a professional and well equipped team

To reduce the number of fires in our community

To reduce the number of fire related deaths and serious injuries

and amended its fourth strategic aim to:

To deliver a fire and rescue service, which provides
value for money for our community now and into the future

In addition the Fire Authority delegated responsibility to its Strategy and Resources Committee to agree the Public Value Measures 2014/15, which support the Fire Authority's four Strategic Aims.

7 Code of Corporate Governance 2013/14

The Fire Authority reviewed and formally adopted its 2013/14 Code of Corporate Governance. It noted that Internal Audit had completed its independent annual audit of the Code and had given the assurance opinion of "Good – There is a sound system of control in place, which is designed to address relevant risks, with controls being consistently applied". No recommendations emanated from the audit and no exceptions were identified.

8 Annual Review of Charges for Special Services

The Fire Authority has completed its annual review of the tariff for special services charges and agreed an increase of 1% with effect from 1 April 2014, in line with the 1% pay increase awarded to firefighters during 2013/14.

9 Amendments to the Pay Policy Statement

The Fire Authority has conducted its annual review of the Pay Policy Statement and agreed minor changes to bring it up to date. The amended Statement has now been published and will be reviewed annually, following notification of national pay decisions determined in respect of Gold, Grey and Green Book staff each year.

10 Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services

At its meeting in April 2013 the Fire Authority agreed to establish Shropshire Fire Risk Management Services, a company controlled by the Fire Authority. The Board of Directors of the company held its inaugural meeting on 16 July 2013, at which it agreed that trading should commence from that date.

The Fire Authority received a progress report on the company, which provided an update on performance and other matters.



Stuart West
Chair
Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority
February 2014

Background Papers

Agenda Papers for the meeting of Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority held on 26 February 2014

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