



Committee and Date

Council

21 July 2016

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2016

In the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND

10.00 - 11.45 am

Responsible Officer: Karen Nixon

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Present

Councillors Ann Hartley and Malcolm Pate (Leader)

Councillors Brian Williams (Speaker), Peter Adams, Andrew Bannerman, Nicholas Bardsley, Tim Barker, Charlotte Barnes, Joyce Barrow, Tudor Bebb, Thomas Biggins, Vernon Bushell, Gwilym Butler, John Cadwallader, Karen Calder, Dean Carroll, Lee Chapman, Anne Chebsey, Peter Cherrington, Ted Clarke, Andrew Davies, Pauline Dee, David Evans, Roger Evans, John Everall, Hannah Fraser, Nigel Hartin, Roger Hughes, Vince Hunt, John Hurst-Knight, Jean Jones, Simon Jones, Duncan Kerr, Heather Kidd, Nic Laurens, Christian Lea, Amy Liebich, David Lloyd, Robert Macey, Jane MacKenzie, Chris Mellings, David Minnery, Pamela Moseley, Alan Mosley, Cecilia Motley, Peter Nutting, Kevin Pardy, Vivienne Parry, John Price, Malcolm Price, Keith Roberts, Madge Shingleton, Jon Tandy, Robert Tindall, Dave Tremellen, Kevin Turley, David Turner, Arthur Walpole, Stuart West, Claire Wild, Leslie Winwood, Michael Wood, Tina Woodward and Paul Wynn

Before the formal meeting started members stood in silence for a minute in memory of former colleagues; Mr Brian Gillow, Mrs Pam Larney and Mr Charles Trotman.

1 ELECTION OF SPEAKER

The Chairman, Mrs A Hartley, took the Chair for this item, but before nominations were sought, she wished to place on record on behalf of Shropshire Council, sincere thanks to Councillor David Lloyd MBE for his excellent service to local government over a magnificent career spanning 51 years, including the last 7 years as Speaker for Shropshire Council. Mr Lloyd had undertaken varied work at many levels and his expertise was greatly valued.

Mr Lloyd thanked the Chairman, saying he had enjoyed his time in local government and more recently as Speaker. It had been a privilege. Going forward he said that he personally believed the Constitution was a framework to be worked within, whilst using a common sense approach and he hoped that approach would continue.

The Chairman then called for nominations for the election of Speaker and Vice-Chairman of Shropshire Council following Mr D Lloyd's resignation as Speaker.

It was proposed by Mrs A Hartley and seconded by Mr M Wood, that Mr B Williams be elected Speaker and Vice-Chairman of Shropshire Council for the 2016/17 municipal year.

RESOLVED:

That Mr B Williams be elected Speaker and Vice-Chairman of the Council to hold office until the Annual Meeting of the Council scheduled to be held on 18 May 2017.

The Speaker then took the Chair and subscribed his Declaration of Acceptance of Office before being invested with the badge of office. He thanked the members for electing him and looked forward to his new role, whilst he also thanked Mr Lloyd for his patience, courtesy and common sense approach as former Speaker.

The Chief Executive then informed Council that he had just received the formal resignation of the Chairman and Deputy Speaker Mrs A Hartley with immediate effect, thus enabling her to remain in the Chamber and vote in the event of her nomination for the office of Chairman and Deputy Speaker.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chief Executive reported that apologies for absence had been received from Mr A Boddington, Mr S Charmley, Mr G Dakin, Mr S Davenport, Mr R Huffer, Mrs T Huffer, Mr M Kenny, Mrs P Mullock, Mr W Parr and Mr D Roberts.

3 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND DEPUTY SPEAKER

It was proposed by Mr B Williams and seconded by Mr S West that Mrs A Hartley be elected Chairman and Deputy Speaker of the Council for the 2016/17 municipal year.

RESOLVED:

That Mrs A Hartley be elected Chairman and Deputy Speaker of the Council and hold office until the Annual Meeting of the Council scheduled to be held on 18 May 2017.

The Chairman and Deputy Speaker then subscribed her Declaration of Acceptance of Office and was invested with Chairman's badge of office. She thanked the Council for the honour it had bestowed on her.

4 DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Members were 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.

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2016, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

6 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman's Engagements

The Chairman referred Members to the list of official engagements carried out by himself and the Speaker since the last meeting of the Council on 25 February 2016, which had been circulated at the meeting.

7 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Speaker advised that one public question had been received from Mrs J Brand, in accordance with Procedure Rule 15 (a copy of the report containing the detail of the question and the relevant formal response is attached to the signed minutes), regarding council tax and the reduced level of services provided.

Mrs Brand commented that she was disappointed at the response and queried if Councillors were aware of the services lost in Ludlow, whilst the precept had been increased.

Mr Pate responded that members were always looking at ways to mitigate reductions. Mrs Brand's question was very complex and sadly answering such queries diverted officers from their work on savings. He offered to meet with Mrs Brand in the future to discuss any concerns she may have.

Mrs Brand thanked Mr Pate for his offer, but stated that because of her despair with the present situation she would refuse to pay her council tax forthwith.

8 CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEES AND THE ALLOCATION OF SEATS TO POLITICAL GROUPS

It was proposed by the Speaker, and seconded by the Chairman, that the report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

Mr A Mosley reported that the substitute Labour vacancy on Audit Committee would be filled by Dr J Jones with immediate effect, which was agreed.

RESOLVED: That subject to the foregoing, the constitution of committees and the allocation of seats to each of the political groups for the 2016/17 municipal year and the allocation of seats between the political groups, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report be approved.

9 SCHEME OF DELEGATION

It was moved by the Speaker, seconded by the Chairman and duly

RESOLVED: That the Responsibility for Functions, as set out in Part 3 of the Constitution and the Scheme of Delegation, set out in Part 8 of the Constitution be approved.

10 DATES OF COUNCIL MEETINGS

It was proposed by the Speaker and seconded by the Chairman that the programme of dates for meetings of Shropshire Council, as set out below, be approved and that meetings commence at 10.00 a.m.

- 21 July 2016
- 22 September 2016
- 15 December 2016
- 23 February 2017
- 18 May 2017 (Annual Council).

11 MOTIONS

The following motion was proposed by Mr A Bannerman and duly seconded by Mrs H Kidd:

“This Council regards the Government's pressure on schools to become academies as misconceived and a waste of precious funds. Despite the recent U-Turn on "blanket" academisation, the Education Secretary is clearly committed to the original policy, which is based on ideology rather than evidence, and shows no understanding of the situation of small rural schools.

This Council therefore asks the Chief Executive to write to the Government, asking them to abandon this policy and instead divert some of the cost of implementing it into supporting small rural schools. A copy should be sent to all Shropshire MPs, asking them to support this request.”

The following amended motion was circulated at the meeting on the day. This amended motion was proposed by Mr D Minnery and duly seconded by Mr N Bardsley;

‘This Council welcomes the Government’s revised policy on academies and supports the changes to remove the compulsory element of the proposals. It also asks government to look at fairer funding for small rural schools.

The Council recognises the efforts of our local MP's in securing changes to the proposed legislation that will protect small rural schools and thanks them for their continued support for the work of the Council.'

The amended motion was voted upon and carried with 35 voting in support, 24 against and 2 abstentions.

This substantive motion was then amended by Mr R Evans, who specifically proposed the following change to the second paragraph:

'This Council welcomes the Government's revised policy on academies and supports the changes to remove the compulsory element of the proposals. It also asks government to look at fairer funding for small rural schools.

This Council urges our local MPs to secure changes in the proposed legislation that will help with the transitional funding for our small rural schools.'

This amendment was supported by Mr D Minnery and the motion was duly carried with the support of the majority of members present.

12 REPORT OF THE SHROPSHIRE AND WREKIN FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY

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

In presenting the report, Mr S West commented that it was pleasing to report that Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority was in a sound financial position and he thanked Shropshire Council members for their support.

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

13 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

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

Question 1

Received from Mr D Kerr and answered by Mr M Price, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Housing, Regulatory Services and Environment regarding housing benefits for people under 35; what the Council was doing to ensure new tenants understood the changes and lobbying to increase the Discretionary Housing Allowance.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Kerr asked if the policy on Discretionary Housing Payments specifically relating to short-term awards could be reviewed.

The Portfolio holder replied that a review had already been undertaken via scrutiny the previous year. There was guidance in place and he assured that all applicants would be treated on their own merits.

Question 2

Received from Mr D Kerr and answered by Mr M Pate, Leader of the Council regarding savings and 'back office functions'.

By way of a supplementary question Mr Kerr asked why no timetable or timings had been supplied in the response for the sharing of back office services.

The Portfolio holder replied that the Council was already working with other authorities. It was work in progress and he invited Mr Kerr to meet with him to discuss this further.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: