



Committee and Date
ANNUAL COUNCIL

29 April 2010

Item

5

Public

MINUTES

OF

MEETING OF SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

HELD ON 25 FEBRUARY 2010
AT 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Mr P Adams
Mr P Andrews
Mrs B J Baker
Mr T Barker
Mrs J B Barrow
Mr K R Barrow
Mr T Bebb
Mr M Bennett
Mr W Benyon
Mr T H Biggins
Ms K Burgoyne
Mr V Bushell JP
Mr G Butler
Mrs A J Caesar-Homden
Mrs K D Calder
Mr S Charmley
Mrs A M Chebsey
Mr J E Clarke
Mr G L Dakin
Mr S Davenport
Mr A B Davies
Mr T Davies
Mrs P A Dee
Mr A Durnell

Mr D W Evans
Mr R A Evans
Mr E J Overall
Mr J A Gibson
Mr J B Gillow OBE
Mr N J Hartin
Mrs E A Hartley
Mrs T Huffer
Mr R Hughes
Mr V J Hunt
Mr J Hurst-Knight
Mrs J Jones
Dr J E Jones
Mr S P A Jones
Mr J M W Kenny
Mrs H M Kidd
Mr C J Lea
Mr D G Lloyd MBE
Mr C J Mellings
Mr D J Minnery
Mr A N Mosley
Mrs C M A Motley
Mrs M Mullock
Mrs E M Nicholls

Mr P A Nutting
Mr M J Owen JP
Mrs E A Parsons
Mr W M Parr
Mr M G Pate
Mr P F Phillips
Mr M T Price
Mr D L Roberts
Mr K Roberts
Mrs D M Shineton
Mr J Tandy
Mr M Taylor-Smith
Mrs R Taylor-Smith
Mr R Tindall
Mr A E Walpole
Mr S J West
Mr M Whiteman OBE
Mrs C Wild
Mr B B Williams RD
Mr M Williams
Dr M Winchester
Mr L Winwood
Mr M L Wood
Mrs T Woodward

111. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chief Executive reported apologies for absence had been received from Mr G F Tonkinson and Mr P A D Wynn.

112. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

- (a) Mr C J Mellings declared personal interests in Items 9 - Shropshire Council Revenue Budget Strategy 2010/11 - as Chairman of Governors of St Peter's Primary School, Wem and because his wife was an employee of the Council and also Item 12 - Treasury Strategy 2010/11 - as a member of the Meres and Mosses Housing Association.
- (b) Mr T Barker declared a personal interest in Item 12 as a member of Severnside Housing Association.
- (c) Mrs D M Shingleton declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 12 as a member of the Shropshire Rural Housing Association.
- (d) Mrs H M Kidd declared a personal interest in Item 12 as Chairman of Shropshire Rural Housing Association.
- (e) Mr N J Hartin declared a personal interest in Item 12 as a tenant of South Shropshire Housing Association.
- (f) Mr B B Williams declared a personal interest in Item 12 as a member of Meres and Mosses Housing Association.
- (g) Mr A N Mosley declared a personal interest in Item 12 as a member of Severnside Housing Association.
- (h) Mr V J Hunt declared a personal interest in Item 18 - Motions - because his sons were members of the Army Cadet Force.
- (i) Mr P M Adams declared a personal interest in Item 7 - Shropshire's Community Strategy 2010/2020 : Final document for approval as he was a councillor representative on a charity,
- (j) Mr G H L Butler declared a personal interest in Item 10 - Shropshire County Council Capital Programme 2010/11 to 2014/15 - with reference to grant funding bringing older buildings back into use.
- (k) Mr R A Evans declared a personal interest in Items 9 because his wife of an employee of Age Concern and Item 12 as a member of a Housing Association.
- (l) Dr J E Jones declared personal interest in Item 7 as a Trustee of A4U – Aston Advice Advocacy.
- (m) Mrs T Woodward declared a personal interest in Item 12 as her husband was a housing developer.

113. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2010 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

114. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Chairman's Engagements

The Chairman referred Members to the list of official engagements undertaken by himself and the Speaker since the last meeting on 21 January 2010.

(b) Corporate Parenting Pledge

The Speaker welcomed to the meeting representatives of the Council Care Group who were in attendance to witness both himself and the Speaker signing the Corporate Parenting Pledge in recognition of their duties as corporate parents for the County's Looked After Children.

(c) Nottingham Declaration

The Chairman advised that Shropshire County Council had been on the early signatories for the Nottingham Declaration on climate change. However the new Council had been asked to recommit to this Declaration, pledging to systematically address the causes of climate change and to help prepare the local community for its impacts, which the Council would be doing through the new Carbon Management Plan which would be considered later during the meeting.

(d) Members' Individual Development Interviews

The Speaker explained that these provided an opportunity to identify individual personal development needs and encouraged all Members to sign up if they had not already done so.

(e) Death of Alderman J H Meredith

The Speaker reported the recent death of Honorary Alderman J H Meredith, a founder member of the former South Shropshire District Council and a member of its predecessor, the Ludlow Rural District Council, from 1969 to 31 March 2009.

Members noted that Mr Meredith had served on every committee of the Council during his 40 years tenure and had been Chairman of the District three times during that period. Members stood in silent tribute in respect of his memory.

115. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Speaker reported that in accordance with Procedure Rule 14, two petitions, a statement and two questions had been received before the deadline.

He invited Ms Heather Osborne, Chief Executive of Age Concern Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin, to present her petition regarding Meals on Wheels to the Leader. He then invited Mrs Jane Carroll, Deputy Mayor of Bishop's Castle Town Council to present her petition concerning the budget proposals to the Leader.

The Leader thanked both petitioners in turn.

The Speaker then invited Mr John Dodson of the Shropshire Association of Senior Citizens Forums, to make the following statement:

"Shropshire Association of Senior Citizen Forums' has been monitoring its members and Senior Citizens in general across Shropshire County to gauge the effects of the current economic situation on them from its onset some 18 months ago.

The effects have been adverse and worsened during this 18 months. The mental turmoil this has created for many Senior Citizens living alone in a community that offers some social contact is bad enough, but for those living alone across large rural areas of our county with little or no social contact is far more serious and compounds the anxiety felt by many through their isolation.

We are all concerned about the cost of isolation on the public purse and I am aware and appreciate the efforts made by Shropshire Council and the major bodies if funds to minimise the adverse effects of such isolation and related serious problems such as depression.

However there is now another burden of anxiety that vulnerable Senior Citizens are facing. Many are reading and hearing about the crisis in funding for services provided by the Council and for a great number who only hear or read headline news about what they believe are cuts, the potential situation in their eyes is distressing.

The fabric of services for those living a rural life in particular has already received serious blows, not the least of which is the closure of village post offices and shops. Rural services have always been a comfort zone for Senior Citizens but for them to hear or read about potential cuts in rural bus services, reduction in the Meals on Wheels service, and possible cuts to the mobile library service simply adds to their anxieties.

Our Association fully accepts that the crisis in funding is already here and looks set to get worse. Our Association is endeavouring to help find ways of minimising the effect of this crisis and engage at whatever level necessary to find better, more efficient and cost effective ways of avoiding what many Senior Citizens see as potential cuts to services vital to them.

The very brief picture I have painted is one of reality, not one illustrating what could be, so I do plead with you as the elected members of this County, to consider the implications of what I have said and give assurances that before making any changes you consider the following:-

Try to avoid service changes without publicising a clear vision of how such changes will at least maintain the status quo of a service, or will offer a more appropriate alternative. In my opinion any changes that do not offer what I am suggesting will inevitably be seen as service cuts and will undermine the progress in service provision I know Shropshire County wants to maintain in these difficult times.”

The Speaker thanked Mr Dodson on behalf of the Council. He then invited Mrs M E Savage to ask her question, which was in seven parts, to which Mr S P Jones, the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, duly replied:

Question 1

1. Friends of Bishop’s Castle Community Care Home and Hospital are responsible for the recruitment and organisation of volunteers to deliver hot meals on wheels, for the last two years there have been no new referrals for hot meals in outlying areas of Bishop’s Castle. When was this decision made and by whom?

Mr S P Jones, the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, replied:

I do not believe this to be correct. In the Bishop’s Castle area there were 18 new referrals for hot meals services in 2009/10.

2. Can you confirm that new clients for a meal at home are only offered a frozen foods delivery service and are not given the choice of a hot meal? All new clients will receive full care assessments.

Mr S P Jones replied:

The Council has been offering hot meals to clients over the past year.

3. Is it the intention to re-assess those people already receiving meals on wheels? Is there a risk involved in the loss of daily contact for vulnerable people with mental health problems?

Mr S P Jones replied:

Yes, everyone will be reassessed and appropriate services offered. In many cases this will be additional services.

4. It seems to me that the social value of the daily personal visit with a hot meal has not been recognised. Recipients of hot meals are prompted to eat; the meal is prepared; volunteers make appropriate contacts when assistance is needed. Could you comment on this?

Mr S P Jones replied:

A five minute visit from someone delivering a meal is of limited benefit. We think that people should receive contact that is more meaningful.

5. Our local supplier of hot meals was told in January that their contract would be terminated in April? How did this happen when the budget is to be passed on 25 February.

Mr S P Jones replied:

The local supplier of hot meals was reaching the natural end of their contract with the Council and the discussions with them were part of the much wider contract renegotiation. During those discussions we made the contractor aware of the budget proposals which were being widely consulted upon and which would be going forward to Council in February 2010. This is part of the normal discussions we would have at any contract renegotiation. They were not given notice.

6. I am bewildered by the fact that Meals on Wheels contracts have been cancelled without the Council having any say in this. Can you explain why the officers of the Council have acted beyond their powers?

Mr S P Jones replied:

We have not cancelled the contract with the supplier of Meals on Wheels - the supplier has always understood that such a decision would be subject to the budget proposals being approved by Council. This is part of our contract renegotiation as noted in the previous answer.

7. If you are reviewing Meals on Wheels would you now consider offering clients hot meals rather than only frozen meals?

Mr S P Jones replied:

The review will identify where additional support is required both in terms of giving assistance to the person in having their meal and in identifying other more appropriate forms of support such as day care or a drop in service. Currently 42% of service users in Shropshire already receive frozen meals.

Question 2

Ms H Osborne asked the following question:

“Will the Council reconsider the proposals on page 42 of Item 9, Shropshire Council Budget Strategy proposals to make £200,000 efficiency savings within the Meals on Wheels Service?”

Mr S P Jones, the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services, replied:

This is not about cutting service it is about reducing costs and improving outcomes for people. Any money saved in this way will be invested in additional benefit to provide support to older people such as greater use of telecare and the help at home scheme run by Age Concern on behalf of Shropshire Council

By way of supplementary, Ms Osborne asked whether the Portfolio Holder could give an assurance that anyone currently receiving a hot meal would continue to receive one following their individual face to face interview.

Replying, Mr Jones advised that these reviews were currently being undertaken to determine the most appropriate service to offer those currently in receipt of Meals on Wheels and related services.

116. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

The Speaker advised that questions had been received from Mrs A M Chebsey and Mr P F Phillips in accordance with Procedure Rule 15:

- (a) Mr P F Phillips asked the Portfolio Holder for the Local Environment and Economy the following question:

“What has been the approximate weekly cost of winter gritting and snow clearance? Have you an estimate of costs for increased maintenance due to extra potholes and road surface damage?”

Mr D W L Roberts then replied:-

Salt Usage, for the period 13/11/09 - 05/02/2010 the authority has used 13,699 tonnes of salt at a cost of £478,165. This works out at an average of over £43,000 per week, although this is not weighted for the worst four weeks over Christmas when the average weekly cost rose to over £85,000

Every time there is a full turn out of the fleet, it costs the Authority £6,000 in payments to our Term Maintenance Contractor for operating the gritting fleet. Over this period there have been 70 full turnouts at a total cost of £420,000

Latest estimates for the cost of snow clearance (in addition to the gritting above) show costs of approximately £100,000. So in total we will spend more than budgeted on winter maintenance operations for 2009/10, but this extra cost will be met from the severe weather contingency fund of circa £1 million.

Adding the two together gives an average weekly cost over 11 weeks of £81,500 - for the four weeks over Christmas when there was practically a continuous full turnout of the fleet the average weekly cost rose to over £127,000. On top of this there are the fixed costs of having a winter gritting fleet available to use, and these amount to approximately £800,000.

As we are obliged to maintain the network in a safe condition, we are pro-actively repairing potholes as they arise, and such costs are being recorded. Due to seasonal conditions, many of these repairs will be of a temporary nature, and further works will be required in the spring/summer which may necessitate some maintenance works to be re-prioritised.

On a national scale, it is generally agreed that the severity of this winter has not been equalled since 1963, and it is not over yet. It is not yet possible to quantify the damage to the highway network that can be attributed to this winter's severe weather, but we have taken an initiative to record all obvious damage such as potholes caused by 'frost heave' since December. By spring this will enable us to quantify a good deal of the superficial damage that has been caused by this winter's weather. However, the apparent deterioration caused to the network will not become evident until condition surveys are carried out and analysed in the future.

Mr Phillips said that he was aware of the severe weather contingency fund and asked by way of a supplementary question if the Portfolio Holder would acknowledge that this provision resulted in a consequent reduction in the funding for highway maintenance of £1 million.

Replying, Mr Roberts stated that £1 million would be included within the severe weather reserve to meet future contingencies.

(b) Mrs Anne Chebsey asked the Portfolio Holder for Adult Services the following question:

“The issue of Respite has recently been the subject of a consultant study. What is the outcome?”

Mr S P A Jones replied:-

The Council only recently received the report following the audit of respite provision. Officers have not yet had an opportunity to consider the findings of the report and to develop the appropriate plans.

This work has commenced and the recommendations, including the report itself will be made to the Carers Partnership Board as soon as possible. The Board is chaired by myself.

Mrs Chebsey thanked the Portfolio Holder for the reply. She asked by way of a supplementary question, what plans there were to meet the current and increasing needs of 14-18 year olds with severe and complex issues needing respite care,

By way of reply, Mr Jones undertook to write to Mrs Chebsey and to copy the letter to all members of the Council.

(c) Mr P F Phillips asked the Portfolio Holder for the Local Environment and Economy the following question:

1. “Can you confirm you intend to discontinue community skip services to achieve a putative budget reduction of £49,000?”
2. Please confirm which skips you envisage being discontinued in the Bishop’s Castle division.”

Mr D W L Roberts replied:

Following pre Scrutiny on the 9th March 2010 a report will be presented to Cabinet on the 17th March 2010 seeking approval to discontinue community skip services that operate in the old district areas of North and South Shropshire. This service is not provided in other parts of Shropshire. The reasons for this proposal are multiple including 1) To reduce the volume of waste that is sent to landfill, as the community skips provide no opportunity for the sorting and recycling of waste, 2) To reduce trade waste being received by Shropshire Council in the guise of domestic waste, 3) To make a saving on the cost of waste collection and disposal of circa £47,000 per annum and 4) To provide an equitable service across Shropshire based on kerbside collections and recycling, household recycling centres and bring banks.

It will be recommended that the fortnightly Thursday skip service at the Crowgate recycling centre is discontinued.

Mr Phillips thanked the Portfolio Holder for an interesting reply. He asked by way of a supplementary question why the response predetermined the outcome of the forthcoming scrutiny review whether he was aware of the clear undertaking in the Council's unitary case to level services up across the County. If so, was it not appropriate to restore amenity skips in those areas without the service, rather than taking them away from those which still benefited from them? In reply, Mr Roberts advised that the Council had been considering the cessation of the service for a long time. The matter would first go to Scrutiny and then to the Cabinet for determination.

- (d) Mr P F Phillips asked the Member Champion for Asset Management the following question:

"The numbers of Property Services Staff engaged in the letting and management of our industrial/business estates.

1. Prior to Unitary i.e. in the previous District and County Councils;
2. After 1 April 2009."

Mr M J Owen replied:-

Prior to 1 April 2009, the arrangements within Shropshire County Council were that an Estates Surveyor post (1 FTE) with support from an Assistant Estates Surveyor (0.5 FTE) were responsible for the management of the County Council industrial units in Oswestry, Harlescott, Whitchurch and Bridgnorth. In addition, these staff also undertook the management of Bridgnorth District Council's units and North Shropshire District Council units at Ellesmere. Other councils did not have staff dedicated to this purpose but dealt with tasks as part of a much larger portfolio of work.

Since 1 April 2009, a number of units from South Shropshire District Council and Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council have transferred over. These units are also managed by the same people (1.5 FTE) and additional support is provided from within the Estates Team as and when it is required.

Mr Phillips expressed his gratitude for the response, but expressed his surprise that the Council's property estate was only being managed by 1.5 full-time equivalents. While it explained the delay in re-letting the premises it was concerning and he asked the Portfolio Holder if he would provide him with a copy of Property Services Structure Plan incorporating job titles and job descriptions.

Responding, Mr Owen confirmed that he would endeavour to do so as quickly as possible, adding that while the number of units belonging to the Council had increased, this did not mean that staff resources needed to increase in direct proportion.

(e) Mr P F Phillips asked the following question:

In view of the intense public opposition to the putative building of a biomass plant on the industrial estate at Bishop's Castle, are you prepared to make a statement that Shropshire Council will not be willing to sell land for this purpose at Bishop's Castle and that it will encourage its part-owner, AWM, to do likewise.

Mr K R Barrow, the Leader, replied:

Cabinet will be considering a report on this matter at its meeting on 24 February. The report will recommend a disposal strategy for the land at the business park.

117. SHROPSHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2010-2020 : FINAL DOCUMENT FOR APPROVAL

It was proposed by Mr G H L Butler and seconded by Mr R Tindall that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed Minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

Mr Butler outlined the steps taken by the Shropshire Partnership Team to develop a robust Community Strategy to present a final document for approval, together with a separate summary document. He explained that the Community Strategy provided an outcome based framework, rather than a delivery mechanism.

Referring to paragraph 3.1 of the report, Mr N J Hartin asked with regard to the West Mercia Police Authority whether anything was missing relative to work which had been already undertaken in Hampshire. Mr P A Nutting made reference to the style of the Council's logo, while Mr P M Adams invited the Portfolio Holder to comment on the problems identified on page 5 of Appendix A to the report.

Responding, Mr Butler accepted that these were valid comments on how Shrewsbury would develop, but they also involved the aspirations of the Council's partner. It was therefore necessary to get their commitment to the Council's vision of 'total place'.

RESOLVED:

That the Shropshire Community Strategy document and the highlights be approved.

118. SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL DRAFT TRANSITIONAL CORPORATE PLAN 2010-2013

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow and seconded by Mrs C M A Motley that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed Minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

In presenting the report, the Leader stated that the document was transitional because the Plan was a work in progress. It was likely to be amended as the Council progressed through the year.

Referring to page 12 of the report, Mr N J Hartin asked whether it would be possible to include an explanation of the scrutiny function, so that this was clear to the public. He also challenged the targets for affordable housing included in the table on page 22 of the report.

Dr J E Jones referred to the new leisure facilities and questioned how young people from the Broseley area would be able to access the new school pathfinder facility at Much Wenlock given the lack of public transport facilities outside school hours. She added that this was a flagship initiative which needed to be viewed holistically if the health benefits to the local population were to be maximised. The concerns about public transport were echoed by Mrs D M Shingleton who also pointed to the current difficulties being encountered with the utility companies, particularly and the detrimental effect this was having on the development of affordable housing.

Referring to page 15, Mrs E A Parsons stated that the paragraph referring to the Shropshire Partnership Equalities Forum was misleading because it seemed to refer only to hate crime and racism. As Champion for Equalities she considered that all issues relating to equality and diversity should be included and asked that the wording be reviewed. She also drew attention to the need to correct the entry in the glossary referring to the Health Overview and Crime Reduction Scrutiny Committee.

Mr A N Mosley expressed his support for the alignment of the Council's transitional Corporate Plan with those of its partners, particularly those elements relating to joint planning and the setting of joint strategies. Referring to paragraph 13 on page 31 of the report, he expressed surprise at the lack of information regarding health inequalities between affluent and non-affluent communities, stating that this was the nub of what the Council needed to challenge. He suggested that some more meaningful indicators than the levels of breastfeeding should be used to measure the differences.

Mr M T Price expressed his satisfaction with the format and content of the document. With regard to affordable housing he stated that the figures were predictive, but it was hoped that more would be provided over the life of the Plan. He shared the concern over the tardiness of the utility companies to invest in essential infrastructure. This was unjustifiable and action was being taken to address the delays.

Responding, the Leader expressed his delight with the various comments and with the well written, simple style of the plan document. He undertook to include a definition of scrutiny, advised that another £500,000 had been included in the budget to promote rural transport and reiterated that action would be taken to reduce delays resulting from the policies of the utility companies. He also thanked Mr Mosley for his comments on health inequalities which would be considered.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That, subject to the annual review process the Shropshire Council draft Transitional Corporate Plan 2010-2013 be agreed.
- (b) That the Corporate Plan be reviewed as part of the Council's corporate planning cycle.

119. SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL REVENUE BUDGET STRATEGY 2010/2011

The Speaker explained the format of the debate required by Procedure Rule 18.4. This included each Group Leader's right to make one speech of up to ten minutes duration on the debate which was, in addition to their right to speak for a further five minutes on any amendment. He added that any amendment to the Revenue and Capital Budget had to be put in writing and any amendment which varied the revenue budget requirement had to indicate the consequent variation to the formal precept recommendation in order to comply with the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow and seconded by Mr B B Williams that the Administration's budget, incorporating the Revenue Budget Strategy Report 2010/2011, as amended, the Budget Book 2010/2011, copies of which are attached to the signed minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed. The Leader advised that, in the light of public consultation, he now proposed to amend the Budget recommendation contained in paragraph A(v), so that the savings resulting from the review of the Meals on Wheels procurement and provision would be reinvested in additional services provided to support older people.

A. That the proposed Revenue Budget for 2010/11 be approved comprising:

- (i) a Council Tax rise of between 0%-3.5% resulting in a basic amount of council tax for a Band D property in each of the former District Council areas as follows: -

| | 2010/11 Band D | 2010/11 Annual Increase |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| | £ | % |
| Former Bridgnorth DC | 1,164.72 | 3.50 |
| Former North Shropshire DC | 1,164.72 | 0.71 |
| Former Oswestry BC | 1,216.58 | 0.00 |
| Former Shrewsbury & Atcham BC | 1,164.72 | 1.29 |
| Former South Shropshire DC | 1,216.62 | 0.00 |

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) Regulation 2008.

- (ii) 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 each billing authority's area be as follows:

| Property Band | Former BDC | | |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | 2010/11 Charge £ | Annual Increase £ | Weekly Increase £ |
| A | 776.48 | 26.26 | 0.51 |
| B | 905.89 | 30.63 | 0.59 |
| C | 1,035.31 | 35.02 | 0.67 |
| D | 1,164.72 | 39.39 | 0.76 |
| E | 1,423.55 | 48.15 | 0.93 |
| F | 1,682.37 | 56.89 | 1.09 |
| G | 1,941.20 | 65.65 | 1.26 |
| H | 2,329.44 | 78.78 | 1.52 |

| Property Band | Former NSDC | | |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | 2010/11 Charge £ | Annual Increase £ | Weekly Increase £ |
| A | 776.48 | 5.51 | 0.11 |
| B | 905.89 | 6.42 | 0.12 |
| C | 1,035.31 | 7.35 | 0.14 |
| D | 1,164.72 | 8.26 | 0.16 |
| E | 1,423.55 | 10.10 | 0.19 |
| F | 1,682.37 | 11.93 | 0.23 |
| G | 1,941.20 | 13.77 | 0.26 |
| H | 2,329.44 | 16.52 | 0.32 |

| Property Band | Former OBC | | |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | 2010/11 Charge £ | Annual Increase £ | Weekly Increase £ |
| A | 811.05 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| B | 946.23 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| C | 1,081.40 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| D | 1,216.58 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| E | 1,486.93 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | 1,757.28 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| G | 2,027.63 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| H | 2,433.16 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

| Property Band | Former SABC | | |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | 2010/11 Charge £ | Annual Increase £ | Weekly Increase £ |
| A | 776.48 | 9.92 | 0.19 |
| B | 905.89 | 11.57 | 0.22 |
| C | 1,035.31 | 13.23 | 0.25 |
| D | 1,164.72 | 14.88 | 0.29 |
| E | 1,423.55 | 18.19 | 0.35 |
| F | 1,682.37 | 21.49 | 0.41 |
| G | 1,941.20 | 24.80 | 0.48 |
| H | 2,329.44 | 29.76 | 0.57 |

| Property Band | Former SSDC | | |
|---------------|---------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| | 2010/11 Charge £ | Annual Increase £ | Weekly Increase £ |
| A | 811.08 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| B | 946.26 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| C | 1,081.44 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| D | 1,216.62 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| E | 1,486.98 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| F | 1,757.34 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| G | 2,027.70 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| H | 2,433.24 | 0.00 | 0.00 |

- (iii) A total precept of £127,799,354 be levied.
- (iv) To approve the formal council tax resolution as set out in Appendix J to determine the levels of Council Tax for Shropshire Council for 2010/11.
- (v) A net revenue budget (including schools) of £371,067,664 (Appendix B) with the following adjustment:

Reinvest the financial savings arising from the review of Meals of Wheels procurement and provision (Appendix D Pp 42) to give older people better early intervention/prevention services, including the greater use of telecare and Help to Live a Home schemes such as the one currently run on our behalf by Age Concern.

Fund the £200,000 as a result of this additional investment from the remaining contingency for pay related increases in 2010/11.

- (vi) To note the expenditure by Shropshire Council to be incurred in meeting the costs of voluntary early retirement and redundancy for staff leaving the Council's employment (Appendix E).
 - (vii) The Director of Resources be authorised to make any final changes if necessary.
- B. To approve the following increases in charges relating to the Housing Revenue Account:
- (i) To approve the Housing Revenue Account rent increase of 1.94%. This increase is consistent with the Formula Rent guideline calculated by the Government.
 - (ii) To approve the increase in garage rents by 3% with an additional increase in Bridgnorth to achieve convergence with Oswestry in 3 years (presently Bridgnorth garage rents are 73p per week less in Bridgnorth than in Oswestry).
 - (iii) To approve that service charges for Council tenants increase inline with inflation (3%).
- C. To approve that parking season tickets increase as detailed in Appendix H. (N.B. all other fees and charges were agreed by Cabinet on 6th January 2010.)

With the aid of PowerPoint, Mr Barrow reminded Members of the Council's Corporate Plan vision and aims and identified the key components of the Administration's budget which had been the subject of extensive consultation. He informed the Council that he had enjoyed the consultation process and additional resources totalling £3.3million more than had been anticipated were available and these would be used to improve services for looked after children, public transport and the transition of young people with learning disabilities into adult social care. Further, the financial savings arising from the review of the procurement and provision of Meals on Wheels would be reinvested to give older people better early intervention/

prevention services. This would include greater use of telecare and help to live at home schemes, such as the one currently being managed on the Council's behalf by Age Concern. The potential saving of £200,000 resulting from this modification would be funded from the remaining contingency for pay related increases in 2010/2011.

Mr Barrow stated that the Administration had kept the promises it had made at the 2009 Elections to deliver services at an affordable cost. He thanked the Director of Resources and her staff for the assistance they had provided at the various public meetings and for the preparation of the budget book.

In seconding the motion, Mr B B Williams stated that the parameters for the 2010/2011 budget were set in the unitary pledge to Shropshire's residents about the level of Council Tax increases for the following three years. However, this statement had been made before the current financial crisis had shaken the national economy. In 2011/2012 it was predicted that local authorities would be facing the reality of 1974 resource levels to deliver their services. It was therefore inevitable that this would be the last generous expenditure budget for some time.

The Speaker announced that the Liberal Democrat group had given formal notice of an amendment to the Budget recommendations.

At the Speaker's invitation Mr N J Hartin proposed by way of amendment the following which was duly seconded by Mr P F Phillips:

| | £ |
|--|-----------|
| Amendment A | |
| Reinstate Saving on Meals on Wheels Procurement and Provision | 200,000 |
| Amendment B | |
| 1) Review Equalisation & Increase of Charges for Leisure Services | 310,000 |
| 2) Secure & Expand 'Keep Shropshire Warm' & Allied Initiatives | 200,000 |
| 3) Reinstate Saving on Economic Development Grants to voluntary bodies | 58,000 |
| Amendment C | |
| Maintain Area Partnership Funding | 405,000 |
| | 1,173,000 |
| Funded by: | |
| Amendment A | |
| Deletion of Contingency for Pay Related Increases in 2010/11 | 200,000 |
| Amendment B | |
| Deletion of Contingency for Pay Related Increases in 2010/11 | 113,625 |
| Reduction in the Provision for the Costs of Prudential Borrowing | 454,375 |
| Amendment C | |
| Reduction in the Provision for the Costs of Prudential Borrowing | 405,000 |
| | 1,173,000 |

Speaking to the amendment, Mr Hartin advised that, given the Administration's decision to reinstate the saving on Meals on Wheels procurement and provision, he would withdraw Amendment A. He thanked the Leader for this change and stated that the Liberal Democrat Group would support that element of the budget.

However, with regard to Amendment B, the intended saving pre-empted the ongoing scrutiny of the equalisation of leisure services. Similarly, additional expenditure of £200,000 on securing and expanding the “Keep Shropshire Warm” and allied initiatives dovetailed with the Carbon Management Plan report which was to be considered later in the meeting. Finally, with regard to Amendment C, Mr Hartin outlined his concerns over the discontinuance of area partnership funding, for which his Group proposed an additional provision of £405,000. He explained that this was a further example of a premature cut which was being made while a scrutiny review was in progress and unlikely to be completed before April/May.

In conclusion, Mr Hartin pointed to the impact of the delayed decision on the schools funding formula which would leave some of the larger primary schools with a deficit budget and the inability to fund key areas. He suggested that the Cabinet give further consideration to whether additional funding could be provided to the larger primary schools by way of capital grants of up to £10,000 to each of the 15 largest primary schools to fund the purchase of IT equipment in the short term. This would have the benefit of providing them with an additional resource while the Schools Forum deliberated on its decision about revenue funding.

Mrs P A Dee, the Leader of the Independent Group, also thanked the Leader of the Council for the Administration’s change of heart over the proposed saving on Meals on Wheels procurement and provision. She remarked that the communications around this issue had not been handled particularly well and questioned whether the contracts for the supply of hot meals had already been withdrawn. She added that the initial contacts which had been made with service users over the telephone was inappropriate and a Task and Finish Group would have been a better way of establishing how current policy could be improved. She applauded the additional £500,000 for looked after children, but added that she would be supporting the Liberal Democrats’ suggestion that capital grants be given to the 15 largest primary schools to offset delays in the setting of the schools funding formula.

Mr A N Mosley spoke in support of Amendment B, while Dr J E Jones expressed support for both amendments. She added that she also supported the Liberal Democrat proposal to provide capital grants to the 15 largest primary schools to counteract the significant budget pressures they were experiencing. It was important not to disadvantage the children in these schools because of decisions to safeguard the future of small schools in rural areas.

Mrs E M Nicholls, Mr R A Evans and Mrs H M Kidd all spoke in support of the amendment. Mrs Nicholls and Mr Evans pointed to the detrimental effect that the Administration’s proposals would have on both the Local Joint Committees and Area Partnerships, both in terms of the areas of representation and the allocation of grant assistance to essential charitable, voluntary and community organisations, such as the South Shropshire Furniture Scheme and the Play Bus. They expressed the need to explore the impact that withdrawing such financial assistance would have and determine the best method to help partner agencies provide essential community services.

Recognising that difficult economic times were ahead, Mr Mellings welcomed the Leader’s statement in relation to Meals on Wheels, but sought an assurance that those people receiving hot meals at present would be allowed to continue to do so if they so chose. He also supported the initiative to provide capital grants to the 15 largest primary schools because they represented 25% of the primary school population.

Mrs H M Kidd expressed reservations about the budget process. She stated that as Chairman of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee, she had not been provided with the detailed information regarding the proposals affecting leisure services or Meals on Wheels. She asked where budget proposals had a fundamental impact on service users that such information should be provided in good time so that the necessary work could be undertaken to inform the budget debate. In relation to Amendment C, she expressed concern over the effect of cutting grant funding to voluntary organisations, such as the South Shropshire Furniture Scheme.

Speaking against the amendment Mr G H L Butler stated that the Liberal Democrats' proposals played with people's emotions and concentrated on cost, not people or service delivery. Mr M T Price, referring to the proposal to commit £200,000 to the "Warm Front" initiative, stated that while 5,000 properties had already benefited from this government initiative, only 14 of this total had asked for top-up funding. Consequently, there was no need to provide any additional support. The work was being allocated to local contractors and the Council had its own grants available which were currently underspent, so further capacity already existed. However, the position might not be the same in 2011/12.

Mr B B Williams commented that the amendments did not acknowledge the hard times yet to come. With regard to leisure services, it was important to equalise charges prudently and in line with current levels in inflation. With regard to the 'Warm Front' Initiative, the carbon report illustrated the most appropriate way to assist local residents. Further, the proposed savings to fund the additional expenditure were not realistic either. It was not prudent to rely on the contingency for pay related increases and it was also important to undertake prudential borrowing to support the revenue consequences of the capital schemes which had important benefits for Shropshire's residents.

Mr P F Phillips drew attention to the petition submitted earlier in the meeting by the Deputy Mayor of Bishop's Castle which had been signed by 557 people concerned with the threats to the mobile library service, Meals on Wheels and the withdrawal of the amenity skips service from the rural areas. He stated that this number would have been much greater if the full effects of the proposed cuts had been made clear to the Scrutiny Committees earlier in the year which meant that the consultation process had been flawed.

In the current recession the issues of employment, fuel poverty and economic development needed addressing urgently. In many of the Council's electoral divisions unemployment was in excess of 7%. So it was surprising that the Administration was looking to reduce the level of grant funding available for economic development and especially to tourism, which generated employment opportunities.

Replying, the Leader stated unequivocally that there were no plans to cut the mobile library service. Similarly, the grant to the South Shropshire Furniture Scheme would not be cut. The opposition groups had been briefed in November 2009 about the proposed policy change relating to Meals on Wheels. It was therefore distressing that vulnerable people were being upset when the intention was to enhance not reduce the quality of services being provided to them. In conclusion the Leader extended an invitation to Mr Mellings to participate in the review before urging members to vote against the amendments.

On being put to the vote, Amendment B was declared lost with 18 members voting in favour, and 50 against.

On being put to the vote, Amendment C was declared lost with 13 members voting in favour, 50 against and with 2 members abstaining.

The Speaker then opened the debate on the Administration's budget, being the substantive motion.

Mr A N Mosley stated that in his opinion this was a reasonable budget given the circumstances, which had a large measure of cross party support in recognition of the more difficult times ahead and the need for partnership working. As a unitary budget it showed the true extent of the savings resulting from reorganisation of local government in Shropshire. And, while the Administration would claim to be the architects, all groups had contributed to the significant benefits which had resulted from this change. While the Administration had been given the opportunity to develop the advantages of unitary governance, the Labour Group would work with the Administration in seeking to deliver what were the best services for the people of Shropshire based on the following principles:

- Protected services that directly;
- Eliminated waste and improved the efficiency of less productive services;
- Protected vulnerable people; and
- Prioritised service provision in the most deprived and vulnerable communities.

It was proposed by Mr P A Nutting and duly seconded that the motion now be put in accordance with Procedure Rule 17(J). However, under the Procedure Rule 17, the Speaker ruled that the debate should be allowed to continue.

Mr R A Evans sought reassurance that the provisions for home to school transport and also looked after children were sufficient to meet the Council's obligations, given the overspending in these areas in previous years. He also expressed concern about the use of £2 million to balance the revenue funding and asked how much longer this was sustainable. He concluded by expressing a desire for the Council's budget to be scrutinised properly in future.

It was proposed by Mr P A Nutting and duly seconded that the motion now be put under Procedure Rule 17(J).

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried with 50 members voting in favour, 20 against and with one abstention.

The Speaker then called on the Leader to reply to the debate.

The Leader stated that he was happy to allay any fears regarding the under-funding of home to school transport. Following an electronic auction of the routes, the Council had achieved savings approaching £1 million over five years on this service. The Administration was determined to deliver good services at low cost. In the 1990s council tax had risen substantially each year under previous Liberal/Labour administration. The Conservatives had promised to keep council taxes low and had been able to deliver on that promise. This was an excellent budget and he commended it to the Council.

On being put to the vote, 50 members voted in favour, 14 against with 3 members abstaining.

RESOLVED:

That recommendations A(i) – (vii), B and C be approved.

The meeting was adjourned for lunch at 12.35 p.m. and resumed at 1.45 p.m.

120. SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11 - 2014/15

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow, and seconded by Mrs C M A Motley that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed Minutes and the recommendations contained therein be received and agreed.

The Leader informed the Council that the Capital Programme which extended to over £125 million, was the largest ever undertaken in Shropshire. The programme included both the existing capital budgets for 2010/11 and 2011/12 inherited from the previous authority, together with new capital allocations and proposed schemes for 2010/2011 to 2014/2015. These included:

- The new William Brookes School at Much Wenlock
- New Leisure Centre for Oswestry
- The redevelopment of Shrewsbury Music Hall
- Energy saving initiatives with a pay back period of two years
- Improved leisure provision in Church Stretton
- Market Drayton Relief Road
- Support for the delivery of “Shrewsbury Vision”

He stated that not only would the programme produce essential new facilities but would be extremely good for the local economy.

Referring to paragraph 75 of the report, Mrs E A Parsons welcomed the proposal for a fourth children’s home. In supporting this proposal, Dr J E Jones asked whether it would be feasible for this new facility to be used to prepare care leavers for independent living. She also welcomed the inclusion of £460,000 in the capital programme for improving access to the Frankwell Footbridge for the disabled and other people such as parents with pushchairs and, as Champion for Equalities and Diversity, asked whether the proposed funding of £300,000 per annum for improving access to the former District Council properties extended for the full five years of the programme.

Mr P F Phillips referred to the £9 million provision set aside for the amalgamation of three primary schools and asked in the advance of discussions on this subject, whether the Leader could identify which ones they were.

Referring to paragraph 74 and 75, Mr R A Evans welcomed the proposal to use prudential borrowing to help finance the reorganisation of school accommodation and also the provision of a further children’s home, but urged the Leader to investigate whether further assistance could be given to the 15 largest primary schools pending completion of the review of the funding formula. Mr C J Mellings described the capital programme as both exciting and ambitious and echoed the need for capital funding to be used to release revenue in the 15 largest primary schools.

Referring to the bridge guard programme referred to in paragraph 83, Mr A N Mosley pointed to the abject failure to resolve the longstanding problem at the Dana Steps, which linked the communities of Castlefields and Underdale to Shrewsbury town centre. He understood that the Shropshire Horticultural Society had failed to progress an alternative access point through the Castle Gardens and asked for the Leader's assistance to expedite a satisfactory conclusion.

Mrs C M A Motley considered this to be a programme which demonstrated considerable forward thinking and would help the local economy in the difficult times ahead. She expressed her pleasure with the reaction to the proposal to build another children's home.

Replying, the Leader, thanked Mrs Parsons for the comments she had made with regard to improving access to the Frankwell Footbridge and confirmed that the £300,000 provision for improving access to the former District Council buildings was a commitment for each of the next three years. With regard to improvements at the Dana Steps, Mr Barrow confirmed that a positive meeting had been held with the Shropshire Horticultural Society on this subject recently.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried, with 50 members voting in favour and with 8 members abstaining.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the 2010/11 capital budget of £124,048,159, as detailed in Appendix 4 to the report be approved.
- (b) That the use of prudential borrowing to fund schemes totalling £47.1 million in the period 2010/11 to 2014/15 be approved.
- (c) That the list of energy saving in carbon reduction schemes with "pay back" periods of two to five years, proposed to be financed from existing budgets and £6.4 million in short term prudential borrowing be approved.
- (d) That, in accordance with the regulations, a capital allowance of £1 million for both 2009/10 and for 2010/11, so as to allow the Council to retain in full capital receipts received from the disposal of housing revenue account (HRA) assets (excluding right to buy sales) be approved and, furthermore, that the capital receipts from such sales be reserved for expenditure on the Council's housing.
- (e) That the estimated additional £234.2 million that will be made available to the Council for capital purposes in the period 2010/11 to 2014/15 through central government grants, supported borrowing and revenue contributions to capital for schools, highways, transport and housing be noted.
- (f) That the landmark schemes which are included as an Appendix to the capital programme and which are subject to the attraction of external funding, be noted.
- (g) That the provisional capital budgets for 2011/12 (£70,774,347) and 2012/13 (£53,104,281) be noted.

121. SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL CARBON MANAGEMENT PLAN

It was proposed by Mrs E A Hartley and seconded by Mr T Barker that the report and the addendum thereto, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

Mrs Hartley stated that she took great pleasure in bringing the Carbon Management Plan to the Council for approval. A Carbon Management Team had been established that had identified potential projects capable of generating future carbon and financial savings and the Council was being asked to agree a target which reduced carbon emissions from Council operations by 35% by 31 March 2014 from the baseline set at 2008/09 level. The document had been scrutinised and approved by the Cabinet and if Council concurred, it would be submitted to the Carbon Trust for signature.

Under the plan, the Council would take the lead across Shropshire and would start by replacing the old boilers and lighting systems in Council's offices. Office Green Champions had been appointed to promote recycling and schools would be brought into the process too. She thanked the officers for their ingenuity and commitment adding that the pay back period for the £24,000 loan from Salix Energy Efficiency to progress these initiatives was estimated at between 2-5 years.

Mr T Davies, Mr N J Hartin and Mrs H M Kidd all spoke in support of the proposal and commented on the quality of the documentation produced to explain the policy.

Mr A N Mosley also passed on his congratulations to the Portfolio Holder and the Officer team for an excellent scheme, but asked whether it would be possible to produce an executive summary of the plan document.

Replying, Mrs Hartley confirmed that she would investigate the suggestion of an executive summary and thanked the Director of Resources for the work done to date.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the financial implications of the proposed Carbon Management Plan be noted and included in the capital programme 2010/11 – 2014/15.
- (b) The proposed Carbon Management Plan, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
- (c) That the additional application for a Salix Energy Efficiency loan of approximately £24,100 in order to undertake works in area HQ building to provide long term savings, be approved.

122. TREASURY STRATEGY 2010/11

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

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the revised Treasury Management CIPFA Code of Practice 2009, set out in Appendix 1 to the report be, be adopted.

- (b) That the Treasury Strategy for 2010/11 be approved.
- (c) That the prudential indicators, set out in Appendix 2 to the report, in accordance with the Local Government Act 2003 be approved.
- (d) That the Investment Strategy, set out in Appendix 3 to the report in accordance with the ODPM (now DCLG) Guidance on Local Government Investments, be approved.
- (e) That the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement, set out in Appendix 4 to the report, be approved.
- (f) That the Director of Resources 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.
- (g) That the Director of Resources be authorised to use foreign banks which meet sectors credit worthiness policy and money market funds again if required as money markets continue to stabilise. That it be noted that the proposed prudential indicators would enable the Council to use up to 5% of Council Tax in 2010/11 or future years, to fund borrowing under the Prudential Code, should the Council decide to do so.

123. REPORT OF THE POLITICAL STRUCTURES MONITORING GROUP

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow and seconded by the Chairman, Mr M G Pate, that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed Minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

Mr A N Mosley welcomed the proposals contained within the report, adding that they should provide more lively and meaningful Council meetings. However, he questioned the need to provide the Leader and Portfolio Holders with five clear day's notice of intended questions, as this would remove the spontaneity of the event. He asked whether this point could be reconsidered.

Mr N J Hartin also stated that he was broadly in support of the proposals, but asked whether it would be possible to delete Procedure Rule 17(j) (That the Motion now be put). Further, he expressed reservation about the process contained in Recommendation 12 regarding the Leader's ability to approve all future appointments on outside bodies. Mr P F Phillips also stated that the changes were to be welcomed but, in relation to Recommendation 16, requested that a requirement for officers to adopt the same level of timeliness when replying to Members' correspondence, as they did for that received from the general public, be codified.

In reply, Mr Barrow acknowledged the problems connected with giving prior notice of intended questions. However, he stated that unless Members adopted this approach it would be difficult to give comprehensive answers in the first instance. Answers relating to the review of the Executive's work would be delivered orally and Members would also have the opportunity of putting a supplementary question, thereby enhancing the spontaneity of the event. With regard to the need for timeliness in officer responses to Members' correspondence, he advised that he could see no benefit resulting from Mr Phillips' suggestion.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the foregoing, recommendations A(1-7), B(8-10), C(11), D(12-14) and E(15-16) be adopted.

124. STANDARDS COMMITTEE REPORT

It was proposed by the Leader, Mr K R Barrow and seconded by Mr M Bennett that the report, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes and the recommendations contained therein, be received and agreed.

Mrs E A Hartley, as Chairman of the Member Development Group encouraged all those Members who had not already done so to complete their Personal Development Plans as quickly as possible. This would enable the Members' Services team to design individual programmes for member training. She advised that the Member Development Group did not have a closed membership and all those wanting to get involved were welcome to do so.

RESOLVED:

That the options specified in paragraph 4.1(a)-(d) of the report be adopted.

125. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT ANNUAL REFRESH 2009/10

RESOLVED:

That the refreshed Local Area Agreement be approved and authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to agree any further amendments.

126. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

RESOLVED:

That Mr V J Hunt be appointed to serve on the Health Overview and Crime Reduction Committee in place of Mrs E A Hartley and that Mrs P A Dee be appointed as one of the Liberal Democrat representatives on the North Area Planning Committee in place of Mr T Davies.

127. LEADER'S STATEMENT ON THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL'S CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

The Speaker announced that the Leader's Statement and the appendix detailing notable successes over the past six months, copies of which are attached to the signed Minutes had been presented for information. They were intended to be indicative of the style of documentation that was likely to be produced for forthcoming meetings.

128. MOTION

It was proposed by Mr P F Phillips and seconded by Mr C J Mellings:

“Council urges the Government:

1. To resist any further cuts in the funding of the Army Cadet Force;
2. To abandon any thoughts of closing the Regional Army Centre in Shrewsbury.

The Army Cadet Force in Shropshire is very large by national standards and I was particularly impressed on visiting it at the numbers of young people who are brought into positive and productive activities. It works closely with various other agencies including the Police and Probation Service and makes a tremendous difference to these young peoples' lives.

Shrewsbury Army base is one of those being floated as a possible closure in any forthcoming defence review. It will have a horrible effect on the county town in Shropshire if it closed.”

Speaking in support of the Motion, Mr Phillips stated that the cuts to the defence budget were being imposed by Government. However, he wished to add the words “and local commanders” to the first sentence, even though it was important to go to the source of the problem and raise the nature of the Council's concerns with local MPs.

Mr C J Mellings, speaking in support, stated that there was good reason to lobby Government on this subject. The army cadet force was highly valued across the county and well supported. Further, it made a significant contribution to many other county organisations and the proposed cuts should be viewed with concern.

Mr M Taylor-Smith proposed by way of amendment, which was seconded by Mr J B Gillow, the following:

“Council understands the budgetary difficulties faced by our armed forces, but urges the local Commanders:

1. To resist any cuts in the funding of the Cadet Forces; and
2. To maintain the Regional Army Centre in Shrewsbury.

The Cadet Forces in Shropshire are well supported by national standards, and the Council is particularly impressed at the numbers of "young people" who are brought into positive and productive activities, and at the close working with various other agencies, including the Police and Probation Service, which makes a tremendous difference to these young people's lives.

The Shrewsbury Army base is a vital part of our local community. It will have a detrimental effect on the county town in Shropshire if it closed.

The Council pledges its continuing support to the local armed forces, including the Territorial Army, and to any actions designed to ensure they have a flourishing future.

We want our local servicemen and women to feel valued within their local communities and by their local council.”

Speaking to the amendment, Mr Phillips stated that there had been a 20% cut in the army cadet force during the current year. The Government must be the Council’s first target, as they were the funders of the service and he invited Mr Taylor-Smith to withdraw his amendment.

On being put to the vote, the amendment was carried with a substantial majority voting in favour, 6 members voting against and with 1 member abstaining it was

RESOLVED accordingly.

129. RETIREMENT OF DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE’S SERVICES

The Chairman announced that this would be the last Council meeting that the Director of Children and Young People’s Services would be attending because of her imminent retirement. He and the Group Leaders each paid tributes to a tremendous servant of the Council who initially as the Director of Education and latterly the Corporate Director for Children and Young People’s Services had so expertly led these Directorates during very challenging times.

SPEAKER

DATED.

The meeting closed at 3.05 p.m.