



Committee and Date

Council

19th September 2019

COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2019

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

10.00 am - 12.05 pm

Responsible Officer: Julie Fildes

Email: julie.fildes@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 257723

Present

Councillors Ann Hartley and Peter Nutting (Leader)

Councillors Vince Hunt (Speaker), Peter Adams, Roy Aldcroft, Nicholas Bardsley, Joyce Barrow, Thomas Biggins, Ed Bird, Andy Boddington, Gwilym Butler, Karen Calder, Dean Carroll, Ted Clarke, Gerald Dakin, Steve Davenport, Julian Dean, Pauline Dee, David Evans, Roger Evans, Rob Gittins, Nat Green, Kate Halliday, Simon Harris, Nigel Hartin, Nick Hignett, Richard Huffer, Tracey Huffer, Roger Hughes, Ioan Jones, Simon Jones, Heather Kidd, Matt Lee, Elliott Lynch, Robert Macey, Chris Mellings, Paul Milner, David Minnery, Dan Morris, Pamela Moseley, Alan Mosley, Cecilia Motley, Peggy Mullock, Kevin Pardy, William Parr, Tony Parsons, Alexander Phillips, Lezley Picton, Ed Potter, John Price, Madge Shingleton, Dave Tremellen, Kevin Turley, David Turner, David Vasmer, Claire Wild, Brian Williams, Leslie Winwood, Michael Wood, Tina Woodward and Paul Wynn

19 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Aspinall, L Chapman, S Charmley, H Fraser, M Jones, J Mackenzie, M Pate and V Parry.

20 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.

21 Minutes

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2019, as circulated with the agenda papers, be approved and signed as a correct record.

22 Announcements

Chairman's Engagements

The Chairman referred Members to the list of official engagements carried out by herself and the Speaker since the last meeting of the Council on 16th May 2019, which had been circulated at the meeting.

Customer Portal Demonstration

The Chairman advised Members that on the rising of Council there would be a demonstration of the new Customer Portal outside the Council Chamber.

23 Motion without Notice

Councillor Mosley moved the motion without notice under Part 4 Section 17[q] of the Constitution.

RESOLVED:

That under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, the reasons for the failure of Councillor Jane Mackenzie to attend meetings of the authority due to ill health be approved and the matter reviewed at the Council meeting to be held 19th September 2019, if necessary.

24 Public Questions

Question 1 – from Mr K Piggott, Shrewsbury resident

Mr Piggott asked when the work to the lighting column on Underdale Lane would be undertaken. Councillor Davenport Portfolio Holder for Highways and Car Parks agreed to meet with Mr Piggott after the meeting to discuss the matter.

25 Questions from Members

The Speaker advised that six questions from Members had been received in accordance with Procedure Rule 15 (copy of the report containing the detail questions and their formal responses is attached to the signed minutes).

- i) Received from Councillor D Turner and answered by Councillor S Davenport, Portfolio Holder for Highways and Car parks, in relation to Highways issues.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Turner asked for the Portfolio's comments on problems with drainage which created unsafe road conditions. The Portfolio Holder responded that it was not a problem confined to Much Wenlock and addressing flooding issues had been identified as a highway priority.

- ii) Received from Councillor D Vasmer and answered by Councillor S Charmley, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Assets, Economic Growth and Regeneration, in relation to the rents received from retailers situated in the Shrewsbury shopping centres.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Vasmer asked the Leader to comment on the downturn in rental income from the shopping centres. The Leader responded that the Shopping Centres in Shrewsbury had been

purchased as a long-term investment with the expectation that this would happen. He continued that the investment return was still greater than the return the capital would have received from the banking sector.

- iii) Received from Councillor A Boddington and answered by Councillor S Davenport Portfolio Holder for Highways and Carparks in relation to highway repairs by the utility companies and the disruption this caused.

Councillor Boddington had no supplementary question.

- iv) Received from Councillor A Boddington and answered by Councillor S Charmley, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Assets, Economic Growth and Regeneration, in relation to the Community Lottery.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Boddington asked to see the Officers report advising not to continue with the lottery scheme. The Chairman responded that this would be discussed outside the meeting.

- v) Received from Councillor C Mellings and answered by Councillor G Butler, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place, Planning and Regulatory Services, in relation to creating a market towns vitalisation fund.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Mellings asked if the revitalisation package was going to be available to support all market towns in Shropshire. The Portfolio Holder responded that he was in agreement that the agenda to revitalise the market towns needed to be set out again. He continued that the successful completion of Place Plans provided useful intelligence across the county to identify the important issues for individual areas.

- vi) Received from Councillor C Mellings and answered by Councillor S Davenport Portfolio Holder for Highways and Carparks in relation to the performance of the highways contract.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Mellings asked if the contract with Keir would be terminated in the event that performance did not improve. The Portfolio Holder responded that that the company's performance would be considered by the Place Overview Scrutiny Committee on 5th September 2019. Contract termination would not be considered until the company had been given a period of time to improve its performance.

26 Financial Outturn 2018/19

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Nutting, and seconded by Councillor Minnery, that the report of the Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance on the Financial Outturn 2018/19, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

Members commented on the uncertainty caused by the Comprehensive Spending Review and the Fair Funding Review, and the marked difference in funding between urban and rural areas, with a difference of around 50% more funding per-capita in favour of urban areas.

Members raised concerns regarding the impact of increases in statutory spending for Children's Services and Adult Social Services and unbudgeted pressures; on low interest rates on funds held in the bank; and, the financial risk of proposed spending on large projects.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Corporate Support, Councillor Minnery responded that the Council was working to deliver a sustainable budget and it was to be expected that during the year there would be deviations from the budget set at the start of the financial year. He agreed that there had been unexpected growth in the expenditure for Children's Services, reflected nationally, and congratulated the Service on its achievement in keeping costs down. He reminded Members that the interest rates referred to were on accounts where access to funds was required for cash flow and so were realistic for that type of account.

The Leader, Councillor Nutting, responded that the County's Members of Parliament had been made aware of the unfairness in the funding formulas between rural and urban areas. He commented on the level of Member confusion between capital and revenue budgets.

RESOLVED:

- i) That it be noted that the outturn for the revenue budget for 2018/19 is a controllable underspend of £0.167m. This represents 0.03% of the original gross budget of £561.950m.
- ii) That it be noted that the level of the General Fund balance after adjusting for the outturn underspend and insurance position stands at £15.537m, which is above the anticipated level assessed in February 2019.
- iii) That it be noted that the Outturn for the Housing Revenue Account for 2018/19 is an underspend of £3.859m and the level of the Housing Revenue Account reserve stands at £9.813m (2017/18 £8.225m).
- iv) That it be noted that the increase in the level of Earmarked Reserves and Provisions (excluding delegated school balances) of £4.986m in 2018/19 and the reasons for this.
- v) That it be noted that the level of school balances stand at £4.178m (2017/18 £5.381m).
- vi) That the net budget variations of £0.848m to the 2018/19 capital programme, detailed in Appendix 5 / Table 11 and the re-profiled 2018/19 capital budget of £60.703m be approved

- vii) That the re-profiled capital budgets of £69.243m for 2019/20, including slippage of £15.728m from 2018/19, £22.181m for 2020/21 and £16.001m for 2021/22 as detailed in Appendix 5 / Table 15 be approved
- viii) That the outturn expenditure set out in Appendix 5 of £50.975m, representing 76% of the revised capital budget for 2018/19 be accepted.
- ix) That retaining a balance of capital receipts set aside of £20.515m as at 31st March 2019 to generate a one-off Minimum Revenue Provision saving of £0.621m in 2019/20 be approved.

27 Audited Statement of Accounts 2018/19

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor Nutting, and seconded by Councillor Minnery, that both the report and addendum report of the Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance, copies of which are attached to the signed minutes, and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

Thanks were conveyed to the Finance Team for the amount of work undertaken within demanding timescales.

In responding to comments from Members, the Leader, Councillor Nutting recognised that savings targets set out in the budget had been ambitious. He expressed confidence for the future whilst remaining aware that it held challenges to be overcome with a continued common-sense approach.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the 2018/19 Statement of Accounts be considered and approved and that the Chairman of the Council signs them (in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015).
- ii) That the Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance be authorised to make any minor adjustments to the Statement of Accounts prior to the 31st July 2019.
- iii) That the Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance and the Chairman of the Audit Committee sign the Letter of Representation in relation to the financial statements on behalf of the Council and send to the external auditor.

28 Annual Assurance Report of the Audit Committee to Council 2018/19

It was proposed by Councillor P Adams and seconded by Councillor B Williams that the report of the Director of Finance, Governance and Assurance, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

Council was pleased to note that an unqualified report was imminently expected from the Council's auditors. Councillor R Evans congratulated the Committee on their work.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the Annual Assurance Report 2018/19 be considered and accepted.

29 Adoption of Woore Neighbourhood Plan

It was proposed by Councillor R Macey and seconded by Councillor R Aldcroft that the report of the Director of Place, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

In response to a Member's question, Councillor Macey agreed that support would be provided to all communities wishing to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan and that it aligned with the Development Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the Woore Neighbourhood Plan be adopted and brought into force as part of the Development Plan for Shropshire.

30 Portfolio Holder Annual Report for Communities, Place, Planning and Regulatory Services

It was proposed by Councillor G Butler, the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Place, Planning and Regulatory Services, and seconded by Councillor C Motley that the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

Councillor Butler presented and amplified his report and responded to questions, concerns and comments from Members including Councillors Turner, Shingleton, Hartin, Mosley, Vasmer, Evans, Kidd and Motley.

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the report be noted and approved.

**31 Constitution of Committees and the Allocation of Seats to Political Groups
(Pages 31 - 38)**

It was proposed by the Speaker, Councillor V Hunt and seconded by the Chairman, Councillor A Hartley that the report of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

Councillor R Evans stated his continued opposition to the reduction in the number of Planning Committees from three to two which had previously been agreed and on this basis could not support the recommendations within the report.

RESOLVED:

That the constitution of committees and the allocation of seats to each of the political groups for the remaining 2019/20 municipal year and the allocation of seats between the political groups, as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report [as circulated prior to the meeting] be confirmed.

32 Motions

The following motion was proposed in accordance with Procedure Rule 16, by Councillor Andy Boddington, and duly seconded by Councillor D Vasmer on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group:

There is growing interest among many organisations about introducing a four day week. Pilot trials and research show that a four day week improves staff wellbeing and innovation, without reducing productivity. Reducing staff travel to work will also contribute to national and council commitments to progress towards a zero carbon expectation.

This motion does not propose shutting council offices three days in seven but to give most staff flexibility in which four weekdays they work. It does not apply to Shropshire Council employees in schools.

Shropshire Council must continue to operate public facing services Monday to Friday, as well as maintaining emergency and essential cover 24x7. But this should not be an impediment to introducing a four day week norm for staff and increasing use of flexible hours.

This council requests the chief executive and an appropriate cabinet member to examine the case for a four day working week with a view to reporting to cabinet and council by February 2020 on the feasibility of a four day week norm for council staff.

Following a debate it was

RESOLVED:

That the Notice of Motion be not supported.

33 Report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority

It was proposed by Councillor C Mellings that the report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, be received and noted.

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Shropshire and Wrekin Fire and Rescue Authority meeting held on 26th June 201, be noted.

34 Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED:

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

35 Support for the Marches Centre for Manufacturing and Technology

The Speaker, Councillor V Hunt, advised that this item had been withdrawn and would not be considered.

36 Mile End Roundabout Improvements - Housing Infrastructure and Construction Programme

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor P Nutting and seconded by the Speaker, Councillor V Hunt, that the exempt report of the Director of Place, a copy of which is attached to the exempt signed minutes, and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That five exempt recommendations as detailed in the exempt report be approved.

37 London Road, Shrewsbury Self Build Development

Councillor N Green left the chamber for this item.

It was proposed by Councillor R Macey and seconded by the Leader, Councillor P Nutting that the exempt report of the Director of Place, a copy of which is attached to the exempt signed minutes, and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That four exempt recommendations as detailed in the exempt report be approved.

38 Site Acquisition at Ennerdale Road Shrewsbury

It was proposed by the Leader, Councillor P Nutting and seconded by Councillor D Carroll, that the exempt report of the Director of Place, a copy of which is attached to the exempt signed minutes, and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That three exempt recommendations as detailed in the exempt report be approved.

39 Shrewsbury Business Park Investment

It was proposed by the Leader Councillor P Nutting and seconded by Councillor D Minnery that the exempt report of the Director of Place, a copy of which is attached to the exempt signed minutes, and the recommendations therein be received and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That two exempt recommendations as detailed in the exempt report be approved.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: