



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 21st SEPTEMBER 2021

PRESENT: Councillor M Oates (Mayor), Councillors M J Greatorex, M Bailey, J Chesworth, R Claymore, T Clements, D Cook, M Cook, A Cooper, S Doyle, A Farrell, R Ford, J Harper, T Jay, J Jones, D Maycock, K Norchi, J Oates, S Peple, Dr S Peple, R Pritchard, S Pritchard, R Rogers, M Summers, P Thurgood and J Wade

The following officers were present: Andrew Barratt (Chief Executive), Stefan Garner (Executive Director Finance), Nicola Hesketh (Monitoring Officer) and Jodie Small (Legal, Democratic and Corporate Support Assistant)

Apologies received from: Councillor(s) D Box, P Brindley, S Goodall and B Price

27 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th August 2021 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor Dr S Peple)

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

29 TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, LEADER, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive Mr Andrew Barratt made the following announcement-

“Thank you Mr Mayor at the meeting of Tamworth Borough Council held on Tuesday, 20th July 2021 it was resolved that pursuant to section 249 sub section 5 of the Local Government Act 1972 this Council does hear by confer the title of Honorary Alderman of the Borough upon Mr John Faulkner In recognition of his eminent service to the Borough of Tamworth whilst he was an elected member of the Borough Council, with that I would ask Mr Faulkner to join the Mayor on stage to receive his certificate thank you.”

Mr John Faulkner made the following announcement –

“Thank you for this honour, but more than thank you for putting up with me over the last 23 years.

It has been said that democracy begins in conversation and debate. Good decisions are made taking in to account all view points.

It is a sad fact in the age of social media that we seek out views which only support our way of thinking; even sadder that there are those who seek to silence and trivialise those with whom they do not agree.

Some think that politics is about personalities, or between goodies and baddies. To my mind is it about the future and how we can best get there together.

I wish you all the best in your deliberations, those here now and those who will follow. Thank you.”

Councillor J Oates made the following announcements -

“Thank you Mr Mayor I do have a number of announcements so I will go through those.

If you will remember Mr Mayor, not at the last Council meeting but the one previous to that we congratulated and thanked Councillor Paul Brindley , Mr Lee Bates , Zoe Adelle Clark-Coates and Eric Horabin on their awards under the Queen Honours that they received for services and efforts made in Tamworth, well this evening Mr Mayor I would like to add another congratulations to a local individual and on the 23rd July this year the German Ambassador in London presented local politician Terence Alec Dix or Terry or uncle Terry as some of us know him with the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany. This was for his tireless work and effort since he was Mayor of Tamworth and in forging Twinning links with Bad Laasphe and also for the effort's and the work he's done around the war graves in Cannock Chase where there are nearly 5000 fallen German and Austrian soldiers are buried so for these two things and the amount of work he's done over the last 40 years he received the Federal Cross of Merit. For those who are not aware of what this is I believe it's on par with the honours that we receive in this country for the Queens honours and it is awarded for achievement in the field of political, socio-economic and intellectual activity that has served the reconstruction of the fatherland and should mean an award to all those whose work has contributed to the peaceful rise of the Federal Republic of Germany. So Mr Mayor I would like to announce that Terry Dix of Tamworth has received this award from the German Government and I think that should be recognised.

Mr Mayor if I may continue to the other two announcements.

I think it should be recognised the wonderful work and achievement of not a Tamworth resident but a celebrity has done in terms of supporting the Tamworth Cancer and well-being Centre and that is the work of the comedian Joe Lycett who has again raised £30,000 for the centre and I think that should be noted Mr Mayor by this Council and I for one would like to send my thanks to Joe Lycett for

using his famous celebrity status and actually supporting what is an essential piece of work that takes place in Tamworth.

Mr Mayor I will finish with my third announcement and that is, you will remember at the Annual Council meeting I suggested I would like to improve engagement across all Councillors where ever possible, bit later on we have a report that relates to this but for now I would just like to draw members attention to the creation of a Housing Committee which will be managed as part of Councillor Farrell's Housing Portfolio.

We are still at shadow stage of this, just waiting for some final tweaks before we bring it to Council as an amendment to the constitution including Constitutional review, however that committee will be starting to meet this week in shadow form and will begin to form itself and gel itself together so that announcement is the creation of a Sub Committee of Cabinet which relates to the Housing and Homelessness Portfolio. Thank you Mr Mayor."

Councillor K Norchi made the following announcement-

"Thank you Mr Mayor, it was simply to let everyone know at the meeting tonight that I will not be seeking re-election back to Council next May I've had a wonderful and challenging time over nearly 20 years that I've been on the Council and I thank all the people of the Bolehall and old Glascote ward for giving me the chance to be their councillor.

The reasons are simple I want to spend more time with my family and friends. As we know time creeps on and one never knows, also I shall be reaching the age of 70 at the end of November and as you're probably aware by now I'm throwing a party down at the Swifts the doors are open, if you don't come through it it's your own fault. Also my dear mother and I'm sure that dear mother will make it, will be 90 at the end of January next year and obviously a bit more time spent with mother would be great. Just to finish Mr Mayor if it hadn't been for that wonderful person the late Peter Seekings I would never have arrived on the scene of Council or local politics. There's many thanks to be given out to people I'm not going to start tonight. Thank you very much. Thank you Mr Mayor."

Councillor Mayor M Oates made the following announcement-

"Thank you councillor Norchi, I regret that you're leaving us and thank you for all your hard work that you have done over the years I know you have worked for the benefit of Tamworth especially. Thank you sir."

Councillor J Oates made the following announcement-

"Thank you Mr Mayor and I know it's not within the rules but I would like to respond to Councillor Norchi's announcement if I may as Leader of the Council

I would too like to thank Councillor Norchi for the efforts and the work he has done as a Councillor representing the ward of Bolehall.

Casting my mind back I remember there was some discussions many years ago about the Local Plan and the impact on the area that Councillor Norchi represents and I lived in the area at the time, Councillor Norchi was physically going out and knocking doors asking people's opinions on that piece of Local Plan he was there in the forefront taking the abuse as well, but he was there and he was doing proper grassroots Council stuff and I remember that vividly.

Mr Mayor I'm looking around the room and I'm trying to work out who else was on the Council when he joined us in 2002.

I have fond memories of working with Ken I will support him within his last few months on the Council and anything you need give me a call.

The one thing I will always take away from Ken and I was told many years ago as a child if you don't take anything away from conversation then there's no point in having the conversation. Well the thing I take away from Ken sorry Councillor Norchi is every time he has met me in the members room since 2006 the first thing he said is "are you growing a beard or acting the goat" and that's never gone away, but thanks Ken for all your efforts and representation given to the people of Bolehall.

We will support him for his next few months on the Council till he finishes and if he needs anything give me a shout.

I look forward to having a pint with you either before or after you finish next May but thank you very much Councillor Norchi."

30 QUESTION TIME:

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 1

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor Daniel Maycock will ask the Leader of the Council Councillor Jeremy Oates, the following question:-

"Tamworth Borough Council became a co-signatory of the Armed Force Covenant in 2015, enshrining the Councils commitment to support the Armed Forces Community within Tamworth, whether that be serving members, service families or Veterans. Since then, there has been a review by the Local Government Association in 2016, which sets out best practice for Local Authorities in achieving the commitments of the Armed Forces Covenant.my question is has Tamworth Borough Council implemented any of this Best Practice guidance, ensuring they are servicing in the best way they can the Armed Force Community in Tamworth?"

Councillor J Oates gave the following reply –

"Thank you Mr Mayor and thank you Councillor Maycock.

Tamworth Borough Council is committed to supporting veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families through a variety of different ways, and if I may Mr Mayor, I will list these.

- Priority award is given under the Councils Allocations policy and access to the housing register and that seeks to accelerate re-housing
- The homelessness Strategy also identifies current and former members of the armed forces, partnering with organisations such as SSAFA to prevent homelessness and crisis
- We Recently received an award from MHCLG which funded tackling rough sleeping and that award was £100k and will help signpost vulnerable applicants, including veterans, through a range of social and health pathways
- In 2018 Mr Mayor, The government introduced the Homelessness Reduction Act and this requires the Secretary of State for Defence to refer members of the Regular Forces, who may be considered to be homeless or threatened with homelessness within 56 days, to a housing authority of their choice, this is an accelerated path which we are keen to provide support for and also to provide priority accommodation.
- Subject to the Councils policies, additional leave is given to voluntary members of the Non-Regular armed Forces allowing them to attend training camps etc., there is a maximum of two weeks paid leave on offer with our employment framework.
- A Reservist Policy is in place recognising that many of the skills that reservists gain during their training are transferable to the workplace, and we look to support them whilst also taking advantage of those skills.
- The Council actively support a number of celebrations including Armed Forces Day, Reserves Day, the Poppy Appeal and other Remembrance activities, and I'm sure you be aware recently we gave the Mercian regiment the Freedom of the Borough to parade as it was the place where that regiment was formed. We celebrate with those as often as possible. Thank you Mr Mayor."

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 2

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor Dr S People will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jeremy Oates, the following question:-

"Following the assurance he recently gave to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, would the Leader of the Council confirm that the interests of Tamworth Youth Trust and those of the young people of Tamworth be protected during the process of selling the site of the former courts and youth centre. In the original "masterplan" for the area, it was suggested that the College might use part of the

area to establish a café and salon to help students gain valuable work experience. What steps is the leader taking to ensure that opportunities for training and development for young people in Tamworth are maximised now that the College is planning to move to a different site? At the committee meeting it was agreed that the term “masterplan” did not reflect the reality of competing to attract inward investment so would the Leader confirm such terminology will no longer be used?”

Councillor J Oates gave the following reply –

“Thank you Mr Mayor and I think there was a number of questions disguised as one in there so I will try and pick them off.

I would refer Councillor People to the County Council charities and Trust board decision on 15th June, and this was where the County Council recommended that if the building were to be disposed of, a new process be put into place where the financial proceeds of that disposal are used to fund local organisations and youth activities.

This Council will continue to support and liaise with colleagues at County to ensure that is delivered and the needs of our residents are met. I will ask Mr Mayor that a copy of those minutes or a link to those minutes are included in this answer so it's traceable afterwards and we can find it easier.

The Council has worked in close partnership with the College over the past 2 ½ - 3 years with the sole remit of improving the offer and opportunities for training and development of all Tamworth residents, not just the young people of Tamworth. We have seen some of the fruits of this relationship with the award of the Future High Street Funding which we know includes the movement of the college to the Town Centre, amongst other things.

The new College will continue to allow for vocational courses and development of that area, I can't say now any detail of future curriculum because that is for the College to set however we will do what we can, when we can and have those discussions making sure the College is providing the education that generates the skills required for our local businesses.

In terms of the phrase “Masterplan” I'm not sure how we worded it at the Committee meeting but the sentiment was absolutely right, the word “masterplan” has being misinterpreted and has caused a few issues.

The document we produced was produced as a masterplan as it created a list of activities and projects across the Town Centre and it refers to the fact there are a number of opportunities there. In the absence of a different phrase I'm not sure how I could replace that masterplan but I take the sentiment that Councillor People raises, that it causes confusion, it's not a set of instructions it's not a set design, its literally a plan in the same way as a local plan identifies areas for development that doesn't mean that area of development is coming along in that particular sense, so in absence of a good alternative its staying there for the time being but I appreciate the sentiments and the confusion that's been raised by Councillor People this evening.”

Councillor Dr S People asked the following supplementary question-

“Thank you Mr Mayor perhaps along with the link to the meeting details the Leader could also include the attendance list, members of the public noted that Tamworth’s Councillor on the Committee was absent which made it difficult to believe that Tamworth was fully understood and represented on that day. In addition to that Mr Mayor can I ask the Leader to perhaps refresh his memory, we agreed on the word “aspiration” instead of “master plan” the problem with master plan, it’s very good for engagement strategy but it doesn’t do a great deal to explain what’s really going on.

Mr Mayor can I ask that the Leader understands we are not looking for Tamworth youth trust funds to be used to replace existing County Council spending it must be on top off and specific for Tamworth it cannot be dredged away and the fact that the trustees are all appointed by the County Council has caused concern to residents of Tamworth that they lack the independence needed to fulfil the job of the original trust so I ask the Leader what his view would be on appointing a fresh set of trustees to ensure the money is spent in Tamworth, for Tamworth people and not as a substitute for revenues spending or otherwise. Thank you Mr Mayor.”

Councillor J Oates gave the following reply –

“Thank you Mr Mayor I take those thoughts and sentiments on board. I will go a little bit further in terms of the point around the increased revenue for youth provision, I 100% agree this cannot be absorbed in to a County budget that serves people elsewhere this was set up to serve the young people of Tamworth and any additional funding from the proceeds of disposal should be used in and for Tamworth and I am keen to push that and fight that as hard as I possibly can.

With regards to the refreshment of trustees I would have to find out what the situation is with that and how that is dealt with but if I can feed that back at a later date Mr Mayor I’m happy to do so.”

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 3**Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor Dr S People will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Jeremy Oates, the following question:-**

“The Leader of the Council will be aware that the County Councils Network have welcomed the appointment of Secretary of State, Michael Gove as a lead in to a greater number of County deals would the Leader of this Council please tell me whether he agrees that the provision of skills budgets be included as a focus of this devolution should it come about and would he also agree me that it would be an appropriate time to invite the Leader of the County Council to come and talk to us Councillors in Tamworth not just to the Leaders of the various authorities.”

Councillor J Oates gave the following reply –

“Thank you Mr Mayor, I think there was some slight difference in the wording to that question to the one submitted but I am happy to make the suggestion to Mr White who I am regularly in contact with on this very matter, being that County deals.

Our sole reason for being here Mr Mayor is to fight for what’s best for Tamworth whether that’s education, whether is infrastructure, whether we are supporting businesses, communities or residents. That’s our sole reason for existing as Councillors and it is that challenge I would like us all to take on with the Outside Bodies which we will be appointing later on this evening.

Members will be aware that there are a raft of different deals and opportunities within the current devolution plan and direction of the Government, what I will do is consider any offer and engage with whichever body it is that is pushing that offer to influence those discussions whether it be through Staffordshire County Council or whether it be through the Combined Authority. Any proposed schemes I will be keen to ensure that we thoroughly understand and are fully engaged with till such a point that we either make a decision to go along with an offer or a scheme or not.

The world of devolution is massively complex Mr Mayor and as Councillor People highlighted skills and post 16 education is one of the things that is currently being discussed as is transport and a number of others ,What I’m very keen to do Mr Mayor is ensure that County deals or the devolution offers that are being made whether is through the County Council or through the Combined Authority or even the unitary that we have within Staffordshire I’m keen to make sure that any deal benefits Tamworth and we are not disenfranchised and there’s no detriment to Tamworth. It’s our job and certainly mine to make sure that we fight to make sure that these aren’t power grabs and ensure we are actually getting the best deal for the people of Tamworth and if that relates to skills and has something on offer with skills then I will certainly be able to push it in the same way as I have with the Combined Authority, the GBS LEP and the Staffs and Stoke LEP. Thank you Mr Mayor.”

Councillor Dr S People asked the following supplementary question-

“Thank you Mr Mayor, Can I thank the Leader for that positive response I think it’s helpful.

One of the reasons I brought it up tonight I was at a meeting of the GBS LEP Scrutiny the other day and several members would share political affiliation with the Leader from authorities run by them complained that they never heard what was going on and I thought well the important thing is to go back to your authority and make sure these topics come up. The reason I have highlighted skills was because skills is one of the areas that is already been devolved to Mayors so

therefore by definition its most likely to be offered through a County deal and we in this chamber have regularly called for improvement in the provision of skills training because of the low educational attainment base from which much of Tamworth has struggled to achieve the jobs it needs and can I ask the Leader therefore to bear those thoughts in mind as we go forward because as he rightly said what we are here for is to be here for Tamworth and Tamworth's got to get the best it can to help it forwards I ask him to pledge to do that and I'm sure he will agree. Thank you Mr Mayor."

Councillor J Oates gave the following reply –

"Thank you Mr Mayor I think Councillor People is asking for my commitment to support the comments he made re skills etc., Councillor People is absolutely right they have already devolved the skills powers to Mayors and particularly within the CA. I have a particular view as to how we fit in to that agenda when we have a County Council which is effectively responsible for education attainment or be it schools are autonomous there are some challenges we need to iron out and as Councillor People says, skills like transport is one of those things that are on the table. I will leave Councillor People with this final thought The way the GBS LEP is set up in terms of representation we take a year out as a Director and become an observer, so for this year Councillor People has a vote on scrutiny for the GBS LEP and I'm merely an observer on the board and don't have a vote at all. So I look to Councillor People to exercise that vote in the right way and the best way for Tamworth. Thank you Mr Mayor."

Links for the County Council charities and Trust board decision meeting 15th June & attendance link included below as requested within question 2

[Agenda for Charities and Trusts Committee on Tuesday 15th June 2021, 11:00am - Staffordshire County Council](#)

[Meeting attendance - Meeting of Charities and Trusts Committee on Tuesday 15th June 2021, 11:00am - Staffordshire County Council](#)

31 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021

The Report of the Leader details Tamworth Borough Council's Pay Policy Statement so that statutory guidance as set out in S38 of the Localism Act is adhered to.

RESOLVED That;

The Pay Policy Statement 2021 was formally approved by Full Council for adoption and publication in line with the Localism Act 2011.

(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor R Pritchard)

32 DESIGNATION OF NOMINATIONS AND GRANTS COMMITTEE

The Report of the Leader to seek approval to change the current Nominations Committee to Nominations and Grants Committee

RESOLVED That;

Council agreed the re-designation in the Constitution to Nominations and Grants Committee and authorises the Monitoring Officer to update to the Constitution

(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor Dr S Peuple)

33 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT SERVICE AND ACTUAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2020/21

The Annual Treasury report of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Customer Services is a requirement of the Council's reporting procedures.

It covers the Treasury activity for 2020/21, and the actual Prudential Indicators for 2020/21.

The report meets the requirements of both the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. The Council is required to comply with both Codes in accordance with Regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003. It also provides an opportunity to review the approved Treasury Management Strategy for the current year and enables Members to consider and approve any issues identified that require amendment.

RESOLVED That;

1. Approved the actual 2020/21 Prudential and Treasury Indicators within the report and shown at Appendix 1;
2. Accepted the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2020/21; and
3. Approved the continuing investment of c. £8m in property funds before March 2022 as previously planned

(Moved by Councillor M Bailey and seconded by Councillor Dr S Peuple)

Councillor R Pritchard mentioned that this was the first time in 16 years he had not presented this report he wanted his thanks noted to all the staff past and present for their help over the years to prepare and produce these reports.

34 OUTSIDE BODIES LIST

The list of appointees for Outside Bodies had been circulated to Members

RESOLVED That,

Council noted the outside bodies list.

(Moved by Councillor J Oates and seconded by Councillor R Pritchard)

The Mayor