



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 21st FEBRUARY 2017

PRESENT: Councillors K Norchi (Chair), J Chesworth (Vice-Chair), R Bilcliff, S Claymore, T Clements, D Cook, C Cooke, A Couchman, S Doyle, J Faulkner, R Ford, J Goodall, S Goodall, M Greatorex, A Lunn, A James, T Madge, J Oates, M Oates, S Peale, T Peale, R Pritchard, R Rogers, P Seekings, P Standen, M Thurgood and P Thurgood

The following officers were present: Anthony E Goodwin (Chief Executive), John Wheatley (Executive Director Corporate Services), Stefan Garner (Director of Finance), Jane Hackett (Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer), Natalie Missenden (Public Relations Officer) and Janice Clift (Democratic and Elections Officer)

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Gant, R Kingstone and M Summers

37 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2016 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor D Cook and seconded by Councillor S Peale)

38 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

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

The following Announcements were made:-

The Leader of the Council Councillor D Cook:-

Just to advise Council that at Healthier and Safer Scrutiny a couple of weeks ago recommendations were reviewed and put towards Cabinet around Teenage Pregnancy. All Members will be aware that Teenage Pregnancy has been a long running historic issue in Tamworth. While the figures are improving it doesn't mean we take our eye off the ball. Just to announce one of the recommendations that came out of that meeting and was accepted by Cabinet was that a petition has been set up to send to the Government in the hope that actually they will start putting warnings on boxes of the pill that state "that should you be ill or taking any medication it can negate the effects of the pill". In the research that was done by Councillor J Oates who led on this piece of Scrutiny actually a lot of young girls didn't know the pill can be negated by certain medication and certain illnesses so in the hope that warnings can be put on the box. This is just really to encourage Members to go on-line and circulate the petition and sign it please?

The Mayor Councillor K Norchi:-

Full Council in March has been cancelled and moved to 4 April and this will be held at the Town Hall due to the Council Chamber being used for Election Training.

40 QUESTION TIME:

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 1

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor T People will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor D Cook, the following question:-

"In the 2011 budget meeting you said that scrutiny is very important. Do you still support this sentiment?"

Councillor D Cook gave the following reply:-

To be honest Councillor People, I have absolutely no recollection of such a conversation at Budget Scrutiny in the year 2011. It is perfectly feasible I said it, but I do not recall the context or subject matter it related too thus could not answer.

Also, in 2011 the constitution called for a Budget Scrutiny in December and another in January leading up to the final budget in February. Thus are we talking January 2011 or December 2011 as they are completely different budget processes?

As Councillor People would also not have been a member in 2011, I am also sure he could not remember the context either so I am a little lost?

Councillor T People asked the following supplementary question:-

“Can you explain why it is that we have been informed that prior to the meetings of Healthier and Safer Scrutiny Committee we have been informed by Members of your own group that they are being invited to take part in pre-meetings where the Opposition are not invited?”

Councillor D Cook gave the following reply:-

As I have promised the Labour Group on a number of occasions I keep out of Scrutiny these days so I would advise talking to the Chairs of the Committees as I have no clue what they get up to.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 2

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor T Peple will ask the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Councillor S Doyle, the following question:-

“Can you assure the people of Tamworth, despite the upcoming change in provider, the excellent services currently provided by the Citizens Advice Bureau will be maintained?”

Councillor S Doyle gave the following reply:-

Yes, as the successful bidder was Citizens Advice East Staffordshire - an existing Citizens Advice Bureau with a good record in the delivery of advice services and who demonstrated an ability to deliver to the standards set out in the service specification.

I therefore anticipate that in the short term service users will continue to receive the same level of service as previously. The expectation is that over time that services will benefit from deployment of technology in some of its simplest forms and so become more responsive to the needs of Residents.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 3

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor S Peple will ask the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Councillor S Doyle, the following question:-

“On occasions, Sheepcote Lane is physically blocked at the time when pupils are being picked up from school. Would the council agree to write to the school, as it has large grounds, to see if it is possible to alleviate this problem for residents?”

Councillor S Doyle gave the following reply:-

I would thank the Councillor Peple for his question and also the concern he shows for his residents although I would suggest his request is better directed elsewhere.

I am also interested in how you believe the Borough can best help resolve a traffic management issue and open to discussion outside the Chamber.

From the enquires I've made this would seem to be County Council matter, could I suggest that you work with your fellow Councillors and look to approach the local County Councillor for the area?

Failing that may I suggest you ask a member of the County Council to raise the matter on your behalf at County?

Councillor S Peple asked the following supplementary question:-

"The reason that I was asking was that it's simply that I wanted to add this Council's concern to those of others. The street in fact covers three different wards and two different County Councils so I was more concerned to say that we at Tamworth Borough Council are on board. All I can suggest is that the Councillor has offered to discuss it further with me then I shall ask him to do so on that basis?"

Councillor S Doyle gave the following reply:-

I don't think there is anything to reply on that one.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 4

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor S Peple will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor D Cook, the following question:-

"Would the Leader of the Council confirm that following the meeting of group leaders with the health providers, there are still plans for a seminar for all councillors to follow?"

Councillor D Cook gave the following reply:-

Thank you Councillor Peple.

I believe we have set a meeting on the 15th March 2017 for Group Leaders with the Health providers to follow up on the meeting myself and Councillor Doyle had in December.

We can discuss it then of course but, notwithstanding any arrangements already being considered by the NHS on the matter yes, I hope to get a seminar arranged in the next couple of months for the benefit of all Councillors to raise the concerns of the residents they represent.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 5

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor A Couchman will ask the Portfolio Holder for Assets and Finance, Councillor R Pritchard, the following question:-

"Can you please tell me why this council is advertising the councils own activity sessions and fit tots on "Netmums" and not on our own council website?"

Councillor R Pritchard gave the following reply:-

Limited information about sessions is mentioned under the Community Development section of our website however it draws minimal traffic and generated hardly any enquiries from the public. This was the same for press releases that were sent out when the sessions were initially launched.

As a father I know that social media and services like "Mums In The Know" and "Netmums" are the best place to find activities for my children. Like most other parents I use these platforms first and foremost and, while it may come as a shock to many, the Council website is rarely the first place residents look for activities for their children, if ever.

When the organisers used Netmums to advertise the sessions they had a massive response. I think the officers should be congratulated for, both identifying the best platforms to reach the public, and then using them. It shows that the Council doesn't have a dogmatic approach to communications and a mind-set where we must only use official council channels, which often are not the best platform to engage the public.

We often have to communicate with our residents on the platforms they use to seek information, and this is one such example.

Councillor A Couchman asked the following supplementary question:-

"On speaking with mums who are on my ward they also look at Staffordshire County Council's website under which they have a long list of different playgroups and different play sessions. Is there any way we could also advertise on there because I know a lot of people are directed from health visitors to their website. So if you could look at putting it on there as well?"

Councillor R Pritchard gave the following reply:-

I am happy to ask the question of Staffordshire County Council.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO. 6

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor A Couchman will ask the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Councillor S Claymore, the following question:-

"The proposed re-development of Kirtley and Broadsmeath garage sites are very important, however this will impact greatly on those residents essentially with the closure of the car parking spaces. Should the council forewarn our residents and assist them to find suitable parking spaces before development starts?"

As this question falls under the Portfolio Holder for Housing Services Councillor M Thurgood gave the following reply:-

Firstly thank you to Councillor Couchman for her question. I am delighted she has raised our development of garage sites, which as members will be aware is a £2m project to deliver 19 new council houses to our housing stock.

As you're aware all of the consented schemes have been through planning where parking has been scrutinised via our planning policy.

I and our officers are very conscious of the disruption that may be caused to local residents when the car parking areas are closed at the Broadsmeath 1 and Kirtley sites. We have worked with planning and highways colleagues to ensure that, once the re-development works are completed, a number of parking spaces will be re-instated and the areas will be positively enhanced by environmental improvements that are part of the planned works for each site.

I can confirm that Tamworth Borough Council and the developer will be communicating with surrounding residents in advance of works starting in March. These works are anticipated to be completed in December 2017. I will also ensure that all relevant ward members are updated in advance, so they are aware and able to provide guidance to their residents.

The contractors will be subject to a traffic management plan and will provide contact details in case of any specific issues that residents wish to discuss with us. However, we are extremely limited in what can be done to alleviate any issues arising as the parking areas must be closed during the construction works for health and safety reasons.

Finally, this is a great opportunity for the residents in these areas to have greatly improved localities.

41 CORPORATE VISION, PRIORITIES PLAN, BUDGET & MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017/18

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet requested the approval of the Vision Statement, Priority Themes, Corporate Priorities and Outcomes and their inclusion in the Corporate Plan and Support Service Plan. Also approval was sought of the recommended package of budget proposals and to comply with the requirement of the Council's Treasury Management Policy in reporting to Council the proposed strategy for the forthcoming year and the Local Government Act 2003 with the reporting Prudential Indicators.

- RESOLVED:**
- That Members
 - 1** approved the Vision Statement, Priority Themes, Corporate Priorities and Outcomes for 2017/18;
 - 2** approved the proposed revisions to Service Revenue Budgets (Policy Changes);

- 3 approved the sum of £80,965 be applied from Council Tax Collection Fund surpluses in reducing the Council Tax demand in 2017/18;
- 4 approved the sum of £338,112 be applied from Business Rates Collection Fund surpluses in 2017/18;
- 5 approved that on 24th November 2016, the Cabinet calculated the Council Tax Base 2017/18 for the whole Council area as 21,093 [Item T in the formula in Section 31B(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the "Act")];
- 6 approved that the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2017/18 is £3,517,258;
- 7 approved the following amounts as calculated for the year 2017/18 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act:
 - a. £53,723,148 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act (Outgoings excluding internal GF Recharges);
 - b. £50,205,890 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act (Income excluding internal GF Recharges);
 - c. £3,517,258 being the amount by which the aggregate at 7(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 7(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year (Item R in the formula in Section 31A(4) of the Act);
 - d. £166.75 being the amount at 7(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T (at 5 above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year;
- 8 approved the Council Tax level for the Borough Council for 2017/18 of £166.75 (an increase of £5.00 (3.09%) on the 2016/17 level of £161.75) at Band D;
- 9 approved an aggregate Council Tax (comprising the respective demands of the Borough Council,

Staffordshire County Council, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority) of £1,562.01 at Band D for 2017/18 be noted;

- 10** approved the Council Tax levels at each band for 2017/18;
- 11** approved the sum of £1,454,266 be transferred from General Fund Revenue Balances in 2017/18;
- 12** approved the Summary General Fund Revenue Budget for 2017/18;
- 13** approved the Provisional Budgets for 2018/19 to 2019/20 as the basis for future planning;
- 14** approved the minimum level for balances of £500k to be held for each of the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, General Capital Fund and Housing Capital Fund;
- 15** be authorised to release funding from the General Contingency budget and that the release of funding for Specific Contingency items be delegated to the Corporate Management Team in consultation with the Leader of the Council;
- 16** approved the proposed HRA Expenditure level of £15,178,750 for 2017/18;
- 17** approved rents for Council House Tenants in General Accommodation for 2017/18 be reduced by an average of £0.86 per week (1%) to £85.29 (2016/17 £87.38), over a 48 week rent year;
- 18** approved rents for Council House Tenants in Supported Accommodation for 2017/18 be reduced by of 1%;
- 19** approved rents for Council House Tenants due for 52 weeks in 2017/18 be collected over 48 weeks;
- 20** approved the HRA deficit of £359,990 be financed through a transfer from Housing Revenue Account Balances in 2017/18;

- 21** approved the proposed 3 year General Fund Capital Programme of £5.765m;
- 22** approved the proposed 5 year Housing Capital Programme of £50.557m;
- 23** approved to delegate authority to Cabinet to approve/add new capital schemes to the capital programme where grant funding is received or there is no net additional cost to the Council;
- 24** approved the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, the Treasury Management Policy Statement, Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy and Annual Investment Statement 2017/18;
- 25** approved the Prudential and Treasury Indicators and Limits for 2017/18 to 2019/20 contained within;
- 26** approved the adoption of the Treasury Management Practices contained within ANNEX 7; and
- 27** approved the detailed criteria of the Investment Strategy 2017/18 contained in the Treasury Management Strategy within ANNEX 3.

(Moved by Councillor D Cook and seconded by Councillor R Pritchard)

The Mayor

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