

MINUTES OF THE IMPLEMENTATION EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON
29 FEBRUARY 2008 AT 12 NOON

PRESENT:

Bridgnorth District Council	Mr C Taylor, Mr M Whiteman.
North Shropshire District Council	Mr D Davies, Mr D Minnery.
Oswestry Borough Council	Mr B Ashton, Mr D J Lloyd.
Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council	Mr M Kenny, Mr P A Nutting, Mr D Roberts.
Shropshire County Council	Mr G L Dakin, Mr E J Everall, Mr J Hurst-Knight, Mr A N Mosley, Mr M J Owen, Mrs E A Parsons, Mr M G Pate (Chairman), Mr P F Phillips, Mr P Box, Mrs B J Craig, Mr C J Mellings, Mrs J E Jones.
South Shropshire District Council	Mrs H M Kidd, Mrs C Motley, Mrs G Ellis.

OFFICERS:

Carolyn Downs – Chair of JIT
Graham Biggs – Deputy Chair of JIT
Laura Rowley – S151 Officer
Claire Porter – Legal Advisor and Monitoring Officer
Richard Thomas

1. APOLOGIES

Mrs J Barrow, Mr K Barrow, Mrs E A Hartley and Mr M Taylor-Smith.

2. ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman remarked on the historic nature of the occasion and complemented his District/Borough colleagues for their work and the cooperation they had shown in recent months to achieve the vision of One Council for Shropshire.

He announced that, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, a further report on Delegation of Powers would be

considered on grounds of urgency and that Item 15 (Darwin Bicentenary – a Unique Visitor Economy Opportunity) had been withdrawn because the authority being sought already existed.

3. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman invited nominations for the office of Vice Chairman of the Implementation Executive.

Proposer	Seconder	Nominee
M Whiteman	Mrs B J Craig	Mrs C Motley
Mrs H M Kidd	Mr J M W Kenny	Mr P F Phillips

On being put to the vote, Mrs Motley received 15 votes and Mr Phillips 10 votes.

Resolved:

That Mrs Motley be elected Vice Chairman of the Implementation Executive to serve until the Countywide elections for the new Unitary Authority in May 2009.

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made:

- a) Mr P A Nutting declared a personal interest in Item 16 – Shrewsbury Music Hall – redevelopment as Heritage and Visitor Centre – as a Member of Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council
- b) Mr David Roberts declared a personal interest in Item 16 – Shrewsbury Music Hall – redevelopment as Heritage and Visitor Ccentre – as a Member of Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council
- c) Mr J M W Kenny declared a personal interest in Item 16 – Shrewsbury Music Hall – redevelopment as Heritage and Visitor Centre – as a Member of Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council
- d) Mrs E A Parsons declared a personal interest in Item 16 – Shrewsbury Music Hall – redevelopment as Heritage and Visitor Centre – as a Member of Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council
- e) Mr D J Minnery declared a personal interest in Item 9 (Community Asset Trust) as a Member of North Shropshire District Council
- f) Mrs B J Craig declared a personal interest in Item 9 (Community Asset Trust) as a Member of North Shropshire District Council
- g) Mr G L Dakin declared a personal interest in Item 9 (Community Asset Trust) as a Member of North Shropshire District Council
- h) Mr D Davies declared a personal interest in Item 9 (Community Asset Trust) as a Member of North Shropshire District Council

5. FORMATION OF THE JOINT IMPLEMENTATION TEAM AND IE SUB COMMITTEES

Consideration was given to the report on this subject, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes.

Carolyn Downs reported that Mr Andy Goldsmith, Assistant Council Manager, had replaced Robin Hooper on the Joint Implementation Team referred to at Paragraph 9 of Appendix A to the report. Mr Peter Phillips reported that he had replaced Mrs H M Kidd as one of the two Liberal Democrat representatives on the Resources Sub Committee and Mr M G Pate reported that Mrs G Ellis had replaced Mr L Chapman as one of the Conservative representatives on the Local Development Framework Sub Committee.

Resolved:

- a) that, subject to the foregoing, the Joint Implementation Team, as detailed in Appendix A to the report, be formally constituted;
- b) that, subject to the foregoing, the Resources, Service Transition/Transformation and Local Development Framework Sub Committees, as detailed in Appendices A and B to the report, be formally constituted.

6. BLUEPRINT DESIGN ONE COUNCIL FOR SHROPSHIRE

Detailed consideration was given to the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes.

Numerous comments were made about the wording of this document. Concerns were raised about the need for clarification of the role of the Member Champions; the relevance of Sub County Working, other than for regulatory matters; the term of election of the Chairman of the Council; the promotion of localism and local service delivery; over prescription in relation to the meeting cycle for the new Council; the arrangements for facilitating enhanced customer access through the use of Village Halls and broad places and the status of the document generally.

With regard to the status of the document, Carolyn Downs explained that the draft was based upon the content of the One Council Business Case. While Members were free to share the contents with District/Borough colleagues, it was not a consultation document and it would be this body which was ultimately responsible for all decisions taken.

Resolved:

That the content of the Blueprint document be noted and a revised draft be presented to a future meeting.

7. CONSTITUTION/MEMBER ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Carolyn Downs stated that this report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, was principally a consultation document.

It was suggested that operating local surgeries should be added to Members' local core duties. Reference was also made to the inclusion of the requirement to chair a Scrutiny Panel amongst the key responsibilities of the Leader of the Opposition. While it was accepted that it was presently unconstitutional, a number of Members expressed the view that the Leader of the Opposition ought to perform a proper and meaningful role.

The view was also expressed that where there were two or more substantial groups in opposition, this was not a credible role unless a person was chosen by both groups.

Resolved:

That Appendix 1 to the report be circulated to Members of the County and all District/Borough Councils for comment and that further consideration be given to this document at a future meeting of this body.

8. THE NEW NAME AND LOGO FOR THE UNITARY COUNCIL

In considering the report on this subject, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, Members noted that a Beacon Radio Poll conducted on the topic revealed that 53% of respondents supported the use of the name "Shropshire Council" for the new unitary body. Members indicated their general support for this view.

With regards to the logo of the new Council, it was felt that, in addition to the in-house Design Team producing 4 or 5 options, there should be wider public engagement in the process.

Resolved:

- a) that the new Unitary Council be named "Shropshire Council";
- b) that, in addition to the in-house Design Team commissioning 4 or 5 options, one of which should incorporate the Latin motto, secondary schools and Colleges within the County be invited to contribute to the range of options for consideration by Members

9. UNITARY PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT REPORT

In presenting the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, Carolyn Downs advised that only the Housing Project was currently designated at red – a condition where significant issues existed requiring consideration by the JIT and immediate action.

However, this was a most complex area and now that a new Project Manager had been appointed, she was confident that the outstanding issues would soon be addressed. With regard to those projects designated at amber –

being the LSP/LAA – Partnership and Places, Staff Transition, Preparing for Elections, Community Regeneration, and Environmental Health/Trading Standards – many of these had been dependent on the Department of Communities and Local Government issuing regulations or guidance.

A number of Members expressed their concern about the current state of the Housing Project but accepted the assurances given in relation to improvements.

Resolved:

That the progress achieved by each of the Project Boards identified in the Programme Management Report for Period 1(1/9/07 – 31/12/08) be approved.

10. SUB COUNTY WORKING ISSUES PAPER

Detailed consideration was given to this report which was presented by the Vice Chair, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes.

Considerable disquiet was expressed about the nature of this paper. Some Members thought that it contained many good ideas about localism and local working but the majority felt that it added a layer of bureaucracy which interrupted direct lines of accountability, while providing no nature cohesion between the areas identified. They felt that greater care was required to ensure that greater clarity was provided for all service users than was being suggested in the report.

Resolved:

That the report on Sub County Working be referred back in order for it to be re-written with simplicity and re-presented at a future meeting of the Implementation Executive.

11. LOCAL COMMITTEE PILOTS EVALUATION REPORT

The Councillor Champion presented this report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes and provided a summary of the findings from the evaluation of the Local Joint Committee Pilots carried out in five areas across the County, as well as two neighbourhood forums piloted in Shrewsbury. Members noted the successes, issues raised so far and the suggested improvements for the future, including increasing the number of pilots to eleven.

There was general agreement over the remit of the Local Committee Pilots, although some Members felt that the informal arrangements some had taken in relation to PACT's and Let's Talk meetings should become the norm.

As regard the six additional Local Joint Committee areas, concern was expressed with regard to the proposed Bridgnorth West/Bridgnorth East/Bridgnorth rural/Morfe area due to its size. However, the suggestion that the divisions be sub-divided was not supported by the majority on the basis that this had the potential for the total number to be increased from a maximum of 27 to over 50 Local Joint Committees on reorganisation.

Other comments concerned the amount of Officer time required to set up and sustain the Local Joint Committees and the effectiveness of their role in the scrutiny function which Members felt required further development.

Resolved:

- a) that the five Local Committees currently operating be continued and the Castlefields and Ditherington neighbourhood forum also continue to operate in its current format.
- b) that the programme be extended to improve six additional Local Joint Committees during 2008/9 in the Wem/Wem Rural, Bridgnorth West/Bridgnorth East/Bridgnorth Rural/Morfe, Underdale/Monkmoor, Corvedale, Oswestry town and Rea Valley county divisions
- c) that the possible reduction in the number of Local Joint Committees be investigated and a further report presented to a future meeting of the Implementation Executive
- d) that the County Council be recommended to discontinue its "Let's Talk" meetings in those areas now covered by Local Joint Committees
- e) that all Councillors be invited to attend a Local Joint Committee to obtain first hand experience of their manner of operation
- f) that Councillors involved in the roll-out of Local Committees be invited to shadow a member of one of the existing Local Joint Committees
- g) that the work of the Local Joint Committees be reported annually to Council
- h) that Local Joint Committees be given delegated authority to co opt people onto the Committee in a non voting capacity.

12. FINANCIAL BUSINESS CASE

Consideration was given to the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes, outlining a common starting point for future work, as well as a bench mark against which Members could assess progress at future meetings.

Resolved:

That the Financial Business Case be noted.

13. LOCAL PETITIONS AND CALLS FOR ACTION CONSULTATION

Detailed consideration was given to the consultation paper on Local Petitions and Calls for Action, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes.

With regard to Question (b) regarding the level of support required for petitions, Members disagreed with the proposed response to exclude local children from the range of relevant signatures. It was felt that this response should be re-worded to include all people over the age of 16 years.

Resolved:

That, subject to the foregoing, the draft response be approved for submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government.

14. NEW LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT 2008 – PROGRESS

Resolved:

- a) that the current status of the new LAA 2008 be noted
- b) that a Member Workshop be held on 11 April 2008 to look at the new LAA 2008
- c) that a Risk Management Workshop be held on 24 April 2008 to identify and assess risk associated with the new LAA 2008

15. APPOINTMENT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HOUSING SERVICES

Consideration was given to the report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes.

Carolyn Downs responded to questions relating to the timing of the decision. She advised that the post had been held vacant for over five months and covered by a Corporate Director in an acting capacity, which was not sustainable indefinitely. The proposal was totally in keeping with the business case and the appointment process had been deferred to enable the Implementation Executive to formally consider before any further action was taken.

Resolved:

That the commencement of the appointment process for the Corporate Director – Adult Social Care and Housing Services be approved.

16. DARWIN BICENTENARY – A UNIQUE VISITOR ECONOMY OPPORTUNITY

The Chairman reminded Members that this Item had been withdrawn because Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council had the authority to progress the matter.

17. SHREWSBURY MUSIC HALL: REDEVELOPMENT AS HERITAGE AND VISITOR CENTRE

Consideration was given to this report, a copy of which is attached to the signed minutes. Members agreed in principle to the project proceeding on the basis of the recommendation of the Implementation Executive's Resources Sub Committee.

Resolved:

- a) that the sum of £4m be made available from 1 April 2008 from Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council's uncommitted capital reserves to enable the Scheme to proceed in accordance with the project plans
- b) that a further sum of up to £5m be made available from 1 April 2009 to finance Phase 4 of the Music Hall redevelopment from capital receipts currently invested by Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council earning interest to support general fund expenditure
- c) that capital reserves be credited with any surplus raised from external sources i.e HLF, AWM, EU funding
- d) that within financial regulations relevant officers, in consultation with the Borough Council's portfolio holder for Culture and Leisure, be authorised to accept the most appropriate quotation/tender for works to be undertaken based on quality and price, not just price alone
- e) that, in the event of applications for external funding being unsuccessful, the project be re-presented to the Implementation Executive for it to determine the way forward

18. DELEGATION OF POWERS

Resolved:

- a) That the Implementation Executive endorse the proposed delegations to the County Council's Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) as set out below:
 - (i) It is proposed that the Director of Resources be given delegated authority by the Implementation Executive to agree disposals of land or property by the Shropshire Districts where the consideration for the disposal exceeds £100,000 but is less than £500,000. Any disposal of land or property in excess of £501,000 will be referred to the Implementation Executive
 - (ii) It is proposed that the Director of Resources be given delegated authority by the Implementation Executive to agree non capital contracts, including those extending beyond 1 April 2009 up to a total contract value of £500,000. Any such contracts of £501,000 or more will be referred to the Implementation Executive.

- (iii) It is proposed that the Implementation Executive delegates to each District Council authority to approve housing tenancies, homelessness placements and dropped curb crossing.

Chairman

Dated

The meeting concluded at 2pm