

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2007

10:00 am – 10:30 am

**Responsible Officer** Geraldine Childerhouse

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### Present

J Barrow, B J Craig, G L Dakin, E J Everall, E A Hartley, J Hurst-Knight, M J Owen and M G Pate (Chairman)

Dr J E Jones and Mr A Mosley were present in accordance with paragraph 21.4 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules.

### 1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 An apology for absence was received from Mr P Nutting.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 No declarations of interest were made.

### 3. Minutes

3.1 **RESOLVED:** that the non-exempt and exempt minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2007, as circulated, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### 4. Public Questions

4.1 No questions, statements or petitions had been received.

### 5. Matters Referred from Council/Scrutiny

5.1 No matters were referred from Council or Scrutiny.

### 6. Reports of Scrutiny Committees

6.1 Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel: Joint Use 'Task and Finish' Group Report – Community Use of Joint Use Sports and Leisure Centres in Shropshire..

Cabinet received the final report of the Task and Finish Group – copy attached to the signed minutes – which had been prepared following extensive research to review current arrangements for the provision of community use of school sports facilities during the school day.

Dr Jones, in her capacity as Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Panel introduced the report and expanded on the background to the review, its widened brief and the input from both District Council officers and external challenge. She stressed that child safety had been paramount when formulating recommendations and emphasised that maximising community use of Joint Use centres should be integral to the unitary council's vision for the future.

Mr Hurst-Knight expressed concern regarding maintaining safety for children if members of the public were accessing sports facilities on school premises during the school day and also of problems with car parking which might arise.

Mr Mosley referred to recommendation (d) in relation to the adoption of a Leisure Trust form of management and asked whether it would be included in the Leisure Services Workstream. The Chief Executive explained that it would be a matter for the new council to decide, that work streams were currently working on arrangements for the transition to the new authority and that work on the transformation of services would follow.

The Chairman commended the report and thanked the Scrutiny Panel for their work. He did however make reference to paragraph (e) in the Evaluation and Outcome section of the report and it was agreed that the word "generous" be replaced with "adequate". He also commented on the capital investment and stressed that capital funding for joint use facilities would have to compete with other capital priorities

**RESOLVED:** that subject to the amendments set out in the paragraph above,

- A. The report be noted
- B. The Task and Finish Group be thanked for their work
- C. The actions listed under "Evaluation and Outcomes" be approved.

## **7. Budget Monitoring for the Third Quarter 2007/08**

- 7.1 Cabinet received a report of the Director of Resources – copy attached to the signed minutes – which set out the projected financial position for the County Council for 2007/08
- 7.2 The Chairman introduced the report and informed Cabinet that he had made clear to officers that as the pressures on Adults with Learning Difficulties and Out-County placements for children and young people had been substantially addressed in the budget strategy, he would not expect future monitoring reports to show a large overspend in those areas.

**RESOLVED: that**

- A. the projected overspend of £549,000 at the end of the third quarter of 2007/08 be noted.
- B. The virements set out in Appendix 5 that have been approved by the Director of Resources in accordance with Financial Rules be noted for information.
- C. In accordance with Financial Rules, Council be recommended to approve the following virements:
  - i. £84,000 from Treasury Management to fund the development works at the Craven Arms Discovery Centre (Appendix 5);

- ii. £48,000 from Treasury Management to fund the cost of pension fund strain relating to the restructure of Adults with Learning Disabilities (Appendix 5);
- iii. £92,000 from Treasury Management to fund the costs of transition cases from young people to Adults with Learning Disabilities (Appendix 5);
- iv. £380,000 contribution to the VER Reserve (Appendix 5);
- v. £250,000 transfer from the LABGI Reserve to the VER Reserve (Paragraph 24).

## **8. Capital Monitoring Report – Quarter 3 2007/08**

- 8.1 Cabinet received a report of the Director of Resources – copy attached to the signed minutes – which informed of the capital spend for the third quarter to 30 November 2007 compared to the 2007/08 revised capital budget. The report also identified changes to the capital budgets and re-profiling during the third quarter and included the revised 2008/09 budget for known changes.
- 8.2 The Chairman reported that he had expressed some concern regarding the level of capital expenditure to date but had been assured that it would be spent by the end of the financial year.
- 8.3 Mr Dakin referred to the major scheme of Whitchurch Civic Park Phase 3 and asked why no capital appraisal had been included in the report. Mr Hurst-Knight explained that Advantage West Midlands was awaiting a quotation for electricity supply but gave an assurance that it would be resolved in the near future. The Chief Executive suggested that that might be an appropriate scheme for the Community Land Assets Trust.

### **RESOLVED: that**

- A. The revised 2007/08 capital budget of £60,564,506. (Appendix 2) be approved
- B. The capital expenditure as at 30<sup>th</sup> November 2007 of £33,049,540 which represents 54.6% of the total budgeted expenditure for 2007/08 spent in 8 months be noted.
- C. The Victoria Centre – refurbishment scheme be approved with a budget of £65,664 funded from a virement of £35,000 capital receipts from the Highley/Alveley Bridge scheme and £30,664 from ERDF – Regenerating Communities grant. The budget has been included in 2007/08.
- D. The Marches ICT secondary school scheme be approved with a budget of £750,000 funded from the DCSF targeted capital funded. The budget has been included in 2007/08.
- E. The Strategic Technologies scheme be approved with a budget of £429,688 funded by the DCSF. The budget has been included in 2007/08.
- F. The Weston Farm, Oswestry scheme be approved with a budget of £50,514 funded by Advantage West Midlands. The budget has been included in 2007/08.
- G. The Access Road at Oswestry (Railway Land) scheme budget increase of £1,203,600 funded by Advantage West Midlands be approved. The budget profile is £250,000 for 2007/08 and £953,600 for 2008/09 be .

- H. The Chartwell Business Park – Bridgnorth scheme with a budget of £85,335 funded by Advantage West Midlands be approved. The budget profile is £45,335 for 2007/08 and £40,000 for 2008/09.
- I. The Countryside Safety works scheme with a budget of £37,000 funded from capital receipts which have been vired from the Highley/Alveley Bridge scheme as a budget saving be approved. This budget has been included in the 2008/09 budget.
- J. The Village Hall grants scheme with a budget of £50,000 funded from capital receipts which have been vired from the Highley/Alveley Bridge scheme as a budget saving be approved. This budget has been included in the 2008/09 budget.
- K. The Bridgnorth Public Conveniences scheme with a budget of £200,000 funded from capital receipts for inclusion in the 2008/09 budget be approved.
- L. The Cleobury Mortimer Business and Community Resource Centre scheme with a budget of £748,000 funded by Advantage West Midlands for inclusion in the 2008/09 budget be approved.
- M. The removal of the Improvements to Highways Network scheme in 2008/09 £2,000,000 and 2009/10 £1,500,000 be approved as these budgets are no longer proceeding.
- N. The revised 2008/09 budget of £66,320,532 be approved.

## **9. Revenue Budget Strategy**

- 9.1 Cabinet received a report of the Director of Resources – copy attached to the signed minutes – which set out the County Council's Revenue Budget Strategy for 2008/09 and identified some significant improvements in the resource projections presented to Cabinet in July and October 2007.
- 9.2 The Chairman commented on the significant increase in available resources which had allowed the Administration to limit the increase in council tax, to address budget pressures and to put £200,000 back in the Highways Maintenance budget. He did however remind Cabinet of the low funding base for Education and reported that he would be meeting with the Government Minister to press for fairer funding for Shropshire's schools.
- 9.3 Mr Mosley also acknowledged the better than anticipated Settlement but regretted that the representation regarding education funding had not been cross party. Mrs Hartley explained that members of the Administration had been invited by the local Conservative MPs to meet the Minister and were therefore unable to issue invitations to other political groups on this occasion.
- 9.4 The Chairman acknowledged the need for a united cross party view in relation to education funding and welcomed the support of the Labour Group. He went on to comment on the budget consultation generally and reported that this year's consultation process had been working well and had been received positively throughout the County.
- 9.5 The Director of Resources informed Cabinet that the final position was awaited in relation to collection funds which might require changes to resources and requested that authority be delegated to the Director of Resources in consultation with the Leader of the Council to make minor amendments to the resource projections.

**RESOLVED** that subject to paragraph 9.5 above:

- A. Cabinet recommend to Full Council on the 22nd February the Revenue Budget Strategy for 2008/09 as set out in Recommendations A to D below.
- B. To approve the proposed revenue budget strategy for 2008/09 comprising:
- (I). A council tax rise of 4.4% resulting in a basic amount of council tax for a Band D property of £1,018.59 calculated in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (section 44)
- (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 authorities area be as follows:-

Band	2008/09 Council Tax £	Increase £ per Week
A	679.06	0.55
B	792.24	0.64
C	905.41	0.73
D	1,018.59	0.83
E	1,244.94	1.01
F	1,471.30	1.19
G	1,697.65	1.38
H	2,037.18	1.65

- (III). A total precept of £109,049,716 be levied on the billing authorities to include general expenses for the County Council (Appendix One).
- (IV). In accordance with the provisions of Section 40 (2) of the 1992 Act, the amount calculated (in accordance with section 48 of the 1992 Act) as payable by billing authorities for 2007/08 as follows:-

Billing Authority	Council Tax Tax Base	Precept (£)
Bridgnorth	20,484.18	20,864,981
North Shropshire	21,683.63	22,086,729
Oswestry	13,246.30	13,492,549
Shrewsbury and Atcham	34,844.47	35,492,229
South Shropshire	16,800.90	17,113,229
Total	107,059.48	109,049,716

- (V). The Director of Resources be authorised to issue the necessary precepts and information to the billing authorities in accordance with the provisions of Chapter IV of the 1992 Act.
  - (VI). Savings of £3,339,000 as set out in Appendix Two.
  - (VII). Growth of £3,932,000 (of which £1m funded from balances) as set out in Appendix Three.
  - (VIII). A net revenue budget after growth and savings of £317,182,047.
- C. To note that this report is based on the Provisional Grant Settlement announced by the Government on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2007 and may be subject to change as the Provisional Grant Settlement is subject to a consultation period that ends on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2008.
- D. To note that subject to Council approving recommendation B above, the additional resources available following the Provisional Formula Grant Settlement have enabled further growth to be targeted at the following priority service areas:

	2008/09 Budget Strategy (as at 10.10.07)	2008/09 Budget Strategy Additional Growth Following Settlement	2008/09 Budget Strategy (as at 31.12.07) Total Priority Control
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Waste Management	300	0	300
Looked After Children	500	700	1,200
Services for Older People	500	200	700*
Adults with Learning Disabilities	0	800	800
Transport	0	462	462
Highways	0	200	200
<b>Total Growth Priority Services</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>2,362</b>	<b>3,662</b>

Please note that for Older Peoples' Services we also have a new grant of £468,053 for 2008/09 rising to £1,106,176 in 2009/10 and to £1,376,222 in 2010/11. We also have growth for continuing health care from the PCT.

This means that services for older people have growth exceeding that for all other priority services. One of the main reasons for this level of growth is the rising number of older people in the County.

## 10 Capital Programme 2008/09 to 2010/11

- 10.1 Cabinet received a report of the Director of Resources – copy attached to the signed minutes – which provided details of the proposed Capital Budget for 2008/09 and outlined provisional Capital Budgets for 2009/10 and 2010/11
- 10.2 The Chairman drew particular attention to the allocation for Community Grants of £500,000.

### **RESOLVED: that**

- A. The updated funding allocations for the Local Transport Plan and School be noted;

- B. Full council be recommended to approve the fully funded 2008/09 Capital Budget of £64,875,560;
- C. The provisional Capital Budgets for 2009/10 and 2010/2011 be noted;
- D. Full Council be recommended to approve the £500,000 new scheme for the Community Grant scheme, funded from capital receipts

**11. Consumer Credit Act – Illegal Money Lenders**

- 11.1 Cabinet considered a report of the Head of Trading Standards – copy attached to the signed minutes – which sought approval for Shropshire County Council to authorise Birmingham City Council to investigate and institute proceedings against illegal money lenders operating within the Shropshire County Council area.
- 11.2 Mr John Hurst-Knight, portfolio holder for Economy and Waste highlighted the key issues raised in the report and commended the proposals which would afford an opportunity to tackle the evil trade of illegal money lending.
- 11.3 The Chairman suggested that the final report should proactively publicise legitimate low interest loans which were available through such organisations as the Credit Union.

**RESOLVED: that**

- A. The function of enforcement under Part III of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 be delegated to Birmingham City Council to enable them to investigate and institute proceedings against illegal money lenders operating in Shropshire;
- B. The Head of Trading Standards be authorised to enter into a “Protocol for Illegal Money Lending Team Investigations” with Birmingham City Council regarding processes and practices in relation to this arrangement and to approve minor alterations as required.

**12. Annual Report on Health and Safety Performance for 2006/07**

- 12.1 Cabinet received a report of the Health and Safety Manager – copy attached to the signed minutes – which reviewed the health and safety performance for 2006/07, detailed the key health and safety challenges for the Council and progress on last year’s Annual Report and identified key priorities for 2007/08.
- 12.2 Mrs Barrow explained that the report had been submitted to Corporate Support Services Scrutiny Panel in December and that their comments had been incorporated into the report now before Cabinet.
- 12.3 **RESOLVED:** that the report be noted and the key actions for 2007/08 approved.

Signed: ..... (Chairman)

Date: .....30 January 2008.....

