

# TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 8 December 2015 commencing at 6:00 pm**

## **Present:**

The Worshipful the Mayor  
Deputy Mayor

Councillor R E Allen  
Councillor Mrs G F Blackwell

## **and Councillors:**

P W Awford, Mrs K J Berry, R A Bird, R Bishop, G J Bocking, K J Cromwell, Mrs J E Day, M Dean, R D East, A J Evans, J H Evetts, D T Foyle, R Furolo, Mrs P A Godwin, Mrs M A Gore, Mrs J Greening, Mrs R M Hatton, B C J Hesketh, Mrs S E Hillier-Richardson, Mrs A Hollaway, Mrs E J MacTiernan, J R Mason, A S Reece, V D Smith, Mrs P E Stokes, P D Surman, M G Sztymiak, H A E Turbyfield, R J E Vines, D J Waters, M J Williams and P N Workman

## **CL.36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

36.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D M M Davies, R E Garnham, Mrs H C McLain and T A Spencer.

## **CL.37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

37.1 The Committee's attention was drawn to the Tewkesbury Borough Council Code of Conduct which was adopted by the Council on 26 June 2012 and took effect from 1 July 2012.

37.2 There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

## **CL.38 MINUTES**

38.1 The Minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 22 September 2015 and of the Extraordinary meeting held on 23 November 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as correct records and signed by the Mayor.

## **CL.39 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

39.1 The evacuation procedure, as noted on the Agenda, was advised to those present.

39.2 The Mayor indicated that Councillor Derek Davies was unable to attend the meeting as he had recently had a fall which had resulted in a bad fracture of the shoulder. He advised that he intended to send a 'get well' card on behalf of the Council with its best wishes for a speedy recovery.

39.3 Referring to the terrible flooding currently being experienced in Cumbria, the Mayor advised that he intended, with the blessing of the Council, to send a letter of support to those Councils affected. He felt that the Borough knew only too well the distress that the area was experiencing and a letter offering support and understanding would be well received. Members agreed that they shared the Mayor's sentiments.

## **CL.40 ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

40.1 There were no items from members of the public on this occasion.

**CL.41 MEMBER QUESTIONS PROPERLY SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

41.1 The following question had been received from Councillor Mrs S E Hillier-Richardson to the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management. The answer was given by the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management, Councillor D J Waters, but was taken as read without discussion.

Question:

As 35% of New Homes Bonus money coming to this Council was available to other uses than supporting the budget, please could the Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management answer the following;

£959,606 of New Homes Bonus was used last year for the one-off programme, please provide a breakdown of exactly how this was used? Please could the information include the exact amounts granted to communities, stating the organisations involved and the communities this was supporting.

Answer:

The use of £959,606 of New Homes Bonus for the 2015-16 financial year was approved at Council on Thursday 19 February 2015. The approved useage was as follows:

- Uncommitted Reserve - £150,000.
- Business Rates Reserve - £250,000.
- Borough Elections - £120,000.
- Business Transformation - £109,606.
- Business & Marketing Grants - £50,000.
- Borough Plan Development - £60,000.
- Planning Capacity - £40,000.
- Grants Officer - £29,700.
- Community Grants - £150,000.

To date, £71,300 had been allocated from the Community Grants budget although the next quarterly meeting would take place on Tuesday 15 December. The grants awarded to date were as follows:

- Rugby World Cup Legacy Grant - £10,000 – Boroughwide.
- Severn Area Rescue Association - £10,500 – Boroughwide.
- Cheltenham Rugby Club - £19,000 – Southam.
- Tewkesbury Town Council (Mitton Play Area) - £18,300 – Tewkesbury.
- St Peter's Church - £10,000 – Dumbleton.
- St Mary's Church - £3,500 – Deerhurst.

41.2 The Mayor invited any supplementary questions and, in response, the Member

asked the following:

How much New Homes Bonus had been received by Tewkesbury Borough Council as a result of homes built and completed in Bishop's Cleeve since its inception; to include how many homes completed and money received as a result of those completions as well as an estimate to the end of the year?

- 41.3 The Lead Member advised that he would investigate and provide a detailed response following the meeting.

## **CL.42 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

### **Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 - 2020/21**

- 42.1 At its meeting on 25 November 2015 the Executive Committee had considered the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17-2020/21 and had recommended to Council that it be adopted.
- 42.2 The report that had been considered by the Executive Committee had been circulated with the Agenda for the current meeting at Pages No. 14-38.
- 42.3 The recommendation from the Executive Committee was proposed and seconded. During the discussion which ensued, a Member noted that the five year Medium Term Financial Strategy was based on the Council Plan which would need to be renewed next year. She therefore questioned whether it was the intention that the Medium Term Financial Strategy would be varied as a result of any changes to the Council Plan. In response, she was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy would definitely change, and probably in the very near future, for a number of reasons, not least the new Council Plan and the awaited financial settlement from the Government. The Strategy was a working document and therefore would be subject to change throughout its life. Referring to the Treasury Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provisions, a Member indicated that the Council's approach had been very risk averse since the Icelandic banking crash and he questioned what the new strategy would be. In response, the Deputy Chief Executive indicated that the Council would be looking to diversify its holdings and reduce risk to ensure it had security in investment overall. In addition, the Lead Member advised that the Treasury Management Strategy would be considered and approved by the Council in due course.
- 42.4 One Member expressed great concern about the large amount of New Homes Bonus which was being used to support the finances of the Council. She was of the view that a larger amount of the monies should go to the communities where houses were being built. The answer provided to the question she had asked at Agenda Item 6 showed that much of the money spent on the one-off programme was going to Tewkesbury Borough Council i.e. elections, planning development etc. so in theory it was actually over 90% that was propping up the Council's finances rather than the previously agreed 65%. In terms of the community grants budget she noted that not even half of that money had been used this year. She was of the view that the areas in the Borough where there was large scale housing development/completions needed that money for infrastructure etc. In response, she was advised that the New Homes Bonus funding was not allocated for any particular use by the Government and the reason it had been introduced was to force Councils to build houses. The point was taken about the needs of the communities but it should not be forgotten that Section 106 monies were negotiated for that purpose and, further to that, communities could apply for a share of the community grants pot should they wish. The hole in the Council's budget was very real and ideas were always welcome from Members as to how that could be addressed. Another Member expressed the view that New Homes Bonus had not been introduced to provide money to specific parts of the Borough where housing was built but rather to replace the loss of some of the revenue

support budget. With this in mind, he felt it was right that it be used as a general provision to the Borough to provide services across the whole area.

42.5 Having considered the information received, and points raised, it was

**RESOLVED** That the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17-2020/21 be **ADOPTED**.

#### **CL.43 GLOUCESTERSHIRE DEVOLUTION PROJECT - UPDATE**

43.1 The report of the Chief Executive, circulated at Pages No. 39-53, provided an update on the progress of Gloucestershire's devolution bid since its submission on 4 September 2015 and set out the next steps. Members were asked to note the current position in respect of the Gloucestershire Devolution Project.

43.2 The Chief Executive indicated that the bid document had been circulated to all Members of the Council for information shortly after its submission. There were two main areas upon which the Gloucestershire bid was based: economic growth and public sector reform. Within each of those areas there were two sub-workstream areas: Economic Growth - planning, transport and infrastructure (including housing growth) and business growth and skills development; and Public Sector Reform – healthcare commissioning and community safety. In addition, the bid included a 'governance' workstream which made a proposal to establish a Combined Authority for Gloucestershire.

43.3 Since submission, detailed conversations had been held with lead civil servants to develop the respective workstreams to allow an agreement with Government to be produced. The bid, as submitted, was welcomed by the Government and the Gloucestershire Partnership had initially been advised that it may be possible for a devolution deal to be agreed by Government for announcement in late November or early December 2015. However, this would be subject to the outcome of a 'Ministerial Challenge' meeting with the Secretary of State for local Government. That meeting had been held on 11 November 2015 and had involved a small group of representatives from the County including the Leader of the County Council, the Leader of Stroud District Council, both the Chairman and Chief Executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership and Tewkesbury Borough Council's Chief Executive. The meeting had been positive and the Secretary of State had been supportive of the proposals for business growth and skills, health commissioning and community safety. However, he had requested that further work be undertaken on the planning and housing elements of the planning, transport and infrastructure workstream and on the governance workstream. The lead civil servant for the Gloucestershire bid had indicated that it may be possible to conclude the agreement for Gloucestershire in January 2016 subject to the additional work being agreed.

43.4 In terms of the next steps for the bid, work was underway to address the two outstanding areas identified by the Secretary of State and a draft version of the bid would be considered by Leadership Gloucestershire on 9 December 2015. Those amendments would then be discussed with the civil servants and, once finalised, the bid proposals would be included in the draft devolution agreement to be signed off by the Secretary of State. Once drafted, the agreement would need to be approved by all partners prior to being announced by the Government and, as part of that process, the final draft documentation would be presented to Tewkesbury Borough Council, and other partner Councils and Boards, for approval in the New Year. In respect of the Combined Authority, a formal governance review, to include public consultation, would be required and this was planned for 2016. The detailed timescale for this would need to be considered by Leadership Gloucestershire at its meeting on 9 December; this would need to be carefully thought through due to the fact that a number of the partner Councils had elections in May 2016 which would have an impact.

43.5 During the discussion which ensued, a Member expressed the view that the Devolution Bill seemed to be changing over time and she questioned whether it was likely that the County would have an Elected Mayor imposed upon it as part of its devolution agreement. In response, the Chief Executive indicated that there were changes proposed to the Bill but at the moment there was no offer from Gloucestershire for an Elected Mayor and the Secretary of State had indicated that, whilst an Elected Mayor was his favoured model, it was unlikely he would force Gloucestershire to have one. There was certainly no change to the County's position that it did not want an Elected Mayor. In terms of public consultation, a Member questioned what form it would take and whether it would include both the public and Parishes. In addition, she noted that the Secretary of State wanted to see a larger number of homes built in Gloucestershire and she questioned how this would equate to the Joint Core Strategy and whether any such change would have to be considered by the Council before becoming part of the devolution bid. In response, the Chief Executive indicated that he was unsure at the moment exactly how the consultation would work but the details would be drawn up as part of the governance review. The Council was already undertaking some local engagement with Parishes and the voluntary sector etc. In respect of housing, the Secretary of State would like to see additional development but the fact was that development in Gloucestershire, as far as the strategic plans were concerned, had to be evidence based and this had been made clear to Government. The only additional development that was being considered was that which might be brought forward on public sector land and those would be windfall sites. It was known that there were a number of small sites like this and they would still be subject to normal planning decisions. The Joint Core Strategy would not be affected by the devolution bid.

43.6 Accordingly, it was

**RESOLVED** That the current position of the Gloucestershire Devolution Project be **NOTED**.

#### **CL.44 OUTSIDE BODY MEMBERSHIP - TEWKESBURY REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP**

44.1 The Mayor drew attention to the note on the Agenda for the current meeting and it was

**RESOLVED** That the amendment to the membership of the Tewkesbury Regeneration Partnership to replace the Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing with the Lead Member for Organisational Development be **NOTED**.

#### **CL.45 MOTION - SYRIAN REFUGEES**

45.1 The Worshipful the Mayor referred to the Notice of Motion set out on the Agenda and indicated that, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, it was necessary for the Council firstly to decide whether it wished to debate and determine the Motion at this evening's meeting, or whether it wished to refer the Motion, without debate, to a Committee for consideration with authority either to make a decision on the matter or to bring a recommendation back to Council. Upon being put to the vote it was proposed that the Motion would be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

45.2 The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee indicated that his Committee would need to know exactly what it was required to do if was decided by the Council that the Motion should be considered in that way. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that a report would be provided to aid the Committee's

consideration.

45.3 Accordingly, it was

**RESOLVED** That the Motion be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

**CL.46 SEPARATE BUSINESS**

46.1 The Chairman proposed, and it was

**RESOLVED** That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely discussion of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

**CL.47 SEPARATE MINUTES**

47.1 The Separate Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

**CL.48 REVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM STAFFING STRUCTURE**

*(Exempt –Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 – Information relating to any individual)*

48.1 Members considered the staffing structure of the Development Management Team and approved the staffing structure as set out within the report along with the use of market supplements for existing and new senior officer posts.

The meeting closed at 7:00 pm