

TEWKESBURY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Minutes of a Meeting of the Council held at the Council Offices, Gloucester Road, Tewkesbury on Tuesday, 25 January 2022 commencing at 6:00 pm

Present:

The Worshipful the Mayor
Deputy Mayor

Councillor A S Reece
Councillor J W Murphy

and Councillors:

R A Bird, G F Blackwell, G J Bocking, C L J Carter, C M Cody, K J Cromwell, M Dean, P A Godwin, M A Gore, D W Gray, D J Harwood, E J MacTiernan, J R Mason, H C McLain, P D McLain, C E Mills, H S Munro, C Reid, J K Smith, R J G Smith, V D Smith, M G Sztymiak, S Thomson, R J E Vines, M J Williams and P N Workman

CL.49 ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

CL.50 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

50.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Berliner, R D East, J H Evetts, M L Jordan, P W Ockelton, P E Smith, C Softley, R J Stanley and P D Surman.

CL.51 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

51.1 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.

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

CL.52 MINUTES

52.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021, copies of which had been circulated, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor subject to the following amendment to Minute No CL.46.4 (fifth line):

'Another Member raised a query in terms of infrastructure **highlighting infrastructure that was not on the list but identified in the JCS such as schools, particularly the new secondary school identified for the Innsworth/Twigworth development and also a new doctor's surgery for Brockworth, and asked that a list that included all infrastructure identified in the JCS be circulated.** The Head of Development Services said she would look at providing a list of the infrastructure for the JCS'.

CL.53 ITEMS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

53.1 There were no items from members of the public.

CL.54 MEMBER QUESTIONS PROPERLY SUBMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

54.1 The following questions were received from Councillor Bocking to the Lead Member for Built Environment, Councillor Gore. The answers were given by the Lead Member for Built Environment, Councillor Gore, but were taken as read without discussion.

At Council in June 2021, as a result of a petition, I proposed the following motion which was unanimously passed by this Council

The identification of strategic site allocations will be informed by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, prepared as part of the review of the Joint Core Strategy and officers are requested to

- a. ensure that the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment includes a detailed pluvial and fluvial flood risk assessment, to include cumulative impacts, climate change, other influencing factors and all development completed, planned or projected (including major infrastructure projects) since 2014 and that it is commissioned prior to allocating any new sites
- b. consult relevant agencies and Parish Councils to give them an opportunity to present their local evidence for consideration as part of the work carried out in respect of the Flood Risk Assessment referred to in a. above
- c. consider what mechanisms are available to enable flood mitigation requirements to be imposed during the construction phase of development.

Question:

Can you please let me know how far has this work progressed over the last 7 months?

Answer:

As set out in the report in response to the petition, any new strategic development sites will be allocated as part of the JCS review. The JCS review timetable is currently being developed and will be presented to Members in February/March 2022.

- a. Officers have been working in partnership with the Lead Flood Authority, Gloucestershire County Council, to scope the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which will be required to inform the review of the Joint Core Strategy. This work has not yet been concluded and the study envisaged has not yet been commissioned.
- b. When the Council consults on the JCS, Parish Councils will be able to submit local evidence for the Council to consider.
- c. Officers are working with the Local Lead Flood Authority to determine what mechanisms are available to enable flood mitigation requirements to be imposed during the construction phase of development. This work will be concluded by the time new sites have been allocated.

Question:

Can you provide me with the scope/remit/instructions/terms of reference laid out for the flood risk assessment and projected timescales for its commencement and completion?

Answer:

As set out above, this work has yet to be completed. Once the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has been concluded, it will be made available to Members and the public. The SFRA will have to conform with the process for undertaking Strategic Flood Risk Assessments set out in government guidance entitled, 'How to prepare a strategic flood risk assessment', updated September 2020.

54.2 The Mayor invited supplementary questions and the Member asked the following which the Lead Member for Built Environment advised would be answered in writing:

Question 1:

We know our JCS partner authorities may be reluctant to do more than the bare minimum for flooding as the majority of the strategic sites that provide their housing numbers are in areas of Tewkesbury Borough at risk of flooding, so we passed a motion to offer increased protection. The answers given here show the intention to overturn parts of the unanimously approved full Council motion of 22 June 2021.

My belief was that only full Council could overturn a full Council motion and that it stays in place until then. If this is correct when is our original unanimous full Council motion due back before this Council?

Question 2:

In our Council report from 22 June 2021, it states "the JCS Councils will be required to appoint a suitably qualified specialist in this area of work who will assess all available relevant information before reaching any conclusions in a report", how do Parish Councils make their information available to the suitably qualified specialist?

CL.55 MEMBER ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2022/23

55.1 The report of the Head of Democratic Services, circulated at Pages No. 12-25, asked Members to determine a Scheme of Allowances to take effect on 1 April 2022 until 31 March 2023 having regard to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel as set out in its report at Appendix 1.

55.2 The Mayor invited the Chair of the Panel to address the Council. The Chair thanked the Council for inviting the Panel to introduce its report. He explained that, over the years, the Panel (with one new member having joined in the 2019) had met with a large number of Councillors and in October 2021 had interviewed a further four Members to help inform the current recommendations. He felt this was an extremely important way for the Panel to understand the role of Councillors and put on record the hard work undertaken. The Panel's job was to undertake a thorough review looking at data nationally to see how allowances compared as well as taking into account local factors. Having carried out this exercise, on this occasion the Panel was unable to recommend an increase in the Basic Allowance. It had also examined the level of Special Responsibility Allowances and, again, there was no data to suggest any increases were required; however, the Dependent Carers Allowance had not been reviewed for a number of years and it was recommended that the hourly rate be increased by £2.00 to £9.50 per hour.

55.3 The Leader of the Council thanked the Panel for its hard work and proposed the recommendations as set out in the Panel's report at Appendix 1 to the report. The recommendation was seconded.

55.4 During the discussion which ensued, a Member expressed the view that the allowances were low in terms of the time put into the role of Councillor. He questioned whether rising inflation had been taken into account and whether there were any budgetary issues which had influenced the Panel when making its

recommendation. In response, the Panel Chair reassured the Council that the Panel was truly independent and, as such, it did not have regard to the Council's budget when making its recommendations. The Panel found itself constrained when it looked at Basic Allowances across the country as, nationally, Tewkesbury Borough Council's remained among the highest making it difficult for the Panel to recommend an increase. The Member indicated that inflation was already at 3-4% so, in real terms, allowances were already being eroded and there was a risk they would get to a point where people would be put off from standing for election. In response, the Panel Chair advised that inflation was increasing for everyone and the Panel had felt it would be hard to justify increases to the electorate who were also worried about rising costs in their everyday lives. Another Member indicated that she had undertaken a little research from financial institutions in terms of inflation and found that the Basic Allowance in 2011 of £7,200 was now the equivalent of £5,722 when inflation was taken into account; she was concerned about this given the hard work that Councillors put in. She advised that she was also a resident in the Borough and felt Members should be appropriately paid for what they did. She indicated that she would reluctantly agree to the recommendation from the Panel but she felt it was time to have an in-depth review of allowances going forward. The Chair of the Panel confirmed that he had noted the points made. He also indicated that, when the Panel had recommended the previous increase in allowances, there had been many Members who had felt it was not appropriate to approve so it was a difficult balance. It was suggested by Members that there were areas which the Panel could look at within its next review, including the possibility of different Lead Member Portfolios attracting different payments depending on their workload – although it was understood this may be difficult to determine; whether the allowance for Committee Chairs should be different depending on the amount of meetings and work involved; there were some Committees that met every month and some that only met twice a year but currently the allowance was the same for all and the possibility of introducing attendance allowances.

55.5 A Member thanked the Panel for its recommendation to increase the Dependent Carers Allowance and felt it would really help those with families or carer responsibilities who wished to consider standing for election. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED

1. That the Basic Allowance and Special Responsibility Allowance remain unchanged for 2022/23.
2. That the Dependent Carers Allowance be increased from £7.50 to £9.50 per hour.
3. That all other parts of the Member Allowance Scheme, as set out at Annex A to the report, remain unchanged.
4. That the Scheme run for a period of one year commencing on 1 April 2022.

CL.56 APPOINTMENT OF CIVIC HEADS FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**Mayor**

56.1 Upon being proposed and seconded, it was

RESOLVED That Councillor John Murphy, be appointed Mayor for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Deputy Mayor

56.2 Upon being proposed and seconded, it was

RESOLVED That Councillor Andrew Reece be appointed as Deputy Mayor for the ensuing Municipal Year.

CL.57 RECOMMENDATION FROM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**Treasury and Capital Management**

57.1 At its meeting on 5 January 2022 the Executive Committee had considered a suite of treasury and capital management documents and recommended to Council that the following be adopted: Capital Strategy 2022/23; Investment Strategy 2022/23; Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2022/23; and Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23.

57.2 The report which was considered by the Executive Committee had been circulated with the Agenda for the current meeting at Pages No. 26-59.

57.3 The Chair of the Executive Committee proposed the recommendation and the Vice-Chair seconded it.

57.4 In response to a query, the Head of Finance and Asset Management advised that each strategy included information on risk but he highlighted a number of key risks to the Council including holding commercial properties and ensuring they remained leased with tenants paying rents and attracting new tenants to any voids; however, there would be a risk to the Council's budget of not having those properties given the significant income generated by them. In terms of the Treasury Strategy, the usual risks were included within the report along with how the strategy sought to mitigate those

57.5 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED That the following strategies and statements be **ADOPTED**:

- The Capital Strategy 2022/23.
- The Investment Strategy 2022/23.
- The Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2022/23.
- The Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23.

CL.58 RECOMMENDATION FROM AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**Appointment of External Auditor**

58.1 At its meeting on 15 December 2021 the Audit and Governance Committee had considered the appointment of external auditors and recommended to Council that the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) invitation to 'opt-in' to the sector led national scheme for the appointment of external auditors for the five financial years commencing 1 April 2023 be accepted.

58.2 The report which was considered by the Audit and Governance Committee had been circulated with the Agenda for the current meeting at Pages No. 60-66.

58.3 The Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee proposed the recommendation and the Vice-Chair seconded it.

58.4 Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED That the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) invitation to 'opt-in' to the sector led national scheme for the appointment of external auditors for the five financial years commencing 1 April 2023 be accepted.

CL.59 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

59.1 The report of the Head of Democratic Services, circulated at Pages No. 67-69, set out the proposed Schedule of Meetings for 2022/23. Members were asked to adopt the Schedule as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

59.2 The Leader of the Council proposed that the Schedule be adopted. Upon being seconded, it was

RESOLVED That the Schedule of Meetings for 2022/23, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be **ADOPTED**

The meeting closed at 6:50 pm