

MINUTES

Minutes of a meeting of the **POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE** held in the Guildhall, Mill Street, Ludlow on **MONDAY 11th APRIL 2016** at **7.00PM**

PF/116 PRESENT

Chairman: Councillor Newbold

Councillors: Clarke, Draper, Gill, Ginger, Parry, Kemp, Sheward,
Smithers

Officers: Gina Wilding, Town Clerk
Lucy Jones, Senior Finance Officer

PF/117 HEALTH & SAFETY

The Chairman informed Councillors and members of the public of the fire exits, fire assembly point and asked that everyone sign the attendance log.

PF/118 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cobley, Jones and Lyle.

PF/119 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None Declared

Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

None Declared

Declarations of Personal Interest

<u>Member</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
P. Draper	8f	Mayor's Charity
P. Kemp	10	Employee of Shropshire Council
V. Parry	9f	Member of the French Twinning Association
	8	Ludlow in Bloom
C. Sheward	10	Member of the Shropshire County Pension Fund

PF/120 PUBLIC OPEN SESSION (15 minutes)

There were three members of the public present.

Linda Senior, New Street, Ludlow (Ludlow Save our NHS) updated Members on recent developments in relation to the NHS in Shropshire and "Future Fit". The update is attached to these minutes.

She stated that following a meeting in Ludlow of Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group there would be between £3 and £5 million pounds of cuts to community hospital beds in Shropshire which would undermine the viability of community hospital.

She added that only this week a child had had to be taken to hospital in a fire engine because there were no ambulance available, Shewsbury A&E was on black alert with patients waiting on trollies. And it had been stated that Shropshire could not sustain two A&Es.

Pamela Cussack, Corve Street, Ludlow asked that the Council do all that they can to keep the pressure on and support the local hospital and NHS, she added that there were two major meeting tomorrow.

PF/121 UNITARY COUNCILLORS SESSION

Unitary Councillor Parry, Ludlow South stated that she had attended a SALC meeting which had been attended by a Shropshire Council officer who had set out their budgetary plans for the future. She stated that parish and town councils had 22weeks (until September) to decide if they wished to take over responsibility/subsidise the provision of some local services. In Ludlow this included library services, transport, play areas, verge maintenance, museum services, arts service, tourism and the leisure centre. She added that the Town Council did not have to take over these services but if they didn't the services would come to an end (this applies to all parishes). She went on to say that Shrewsbury Town Council had estimated they would need to increase their precept by 150% to cover the cost of the funding withdrawn by Shropshire Council .

Unitary Councillor Parry added that SALC had advised that they have a legal system available to parish and town councils for simple matters at a reduced rate compared to external solicitors that may be of benefit to Ludlow Town Council.

Councillor Ginger said that the Town Council should publicly state that last year Shropshire Council withdrew £34,594 from the Town Council's annual funding. These current cuts represented a loss to the town of approximately £800,000 a year. He said that the Council needed to publicise that almost all of residents' council tax is paid to Shropshire Council but the town's services are being cut by Shropshire Council. The Town Council is in the difficult position of picking up the pieces by September 2016 – a timescale set by Shropshire Council

Councillor Parry stated that an article in the Shropshire Star today quoting the Leader of Shropshire Council, Malcolm Pate said that services could be saved by parish councils, putting all the responsibility and backlash on those councils. She added that Shropshire Council would be in a far better position to continue

funding these services if they hadn't frozen council tax for the last 9 years for their own publicity.

Councillor Sheward said that in withdrawing such services Shropshire Council was defeating their own argument for going unitary in the first place.

Councillor Gill stated that local town councils needed the MP's support in relation to Shropshire Council's cuts and NHS cuts. He said that a statement from the MP would be far reaching and influential.

PF/122 MINUTES

RESOLVED (Unanimous) GG/TG

That the open and closed session minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 29th February 2016, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PF/123 ITEMS TO ACTION

RESOLVED (Unanimous) JS/TG

That the Items to Action be noted.

PF/124 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

RESOLVED (Unanimous) PD/VP

That the Payments Report for February 2016, be received.

PF/125 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

RESOLVED (Unanimous) PD/VP

That the Income Report for February 2016, be received.

PF/126 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

RESOLVED (Unanimous) PD/JS

That the Bank Reconciliation for February 2016, be received.

PF/127 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

RESOLVED (Unanimous) MC/PD

That the Barclaycard Statement for February 2016, be received.

PF/128 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

RESOLVED (Unanimous) PD/TG

That the Paypal Payments and Income Report and Bank Reconciliation for February 2016, be received.

PF/129 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

RESOLVED (Unanimous) PK/PD

That the Mayor's Charity Payments and Income Report and Bank Reconciliation for February 2016, be received.

PF/130 POLICIES

a) Data Protection Policy

The Town Clerk stated that this policy built on the principals of the Freedom of Information Policy to ensure that the Town Council had clear guidance in place and confirmed staff training would be undertaken.

RECOMMENDED (Unanimous) PD/GG

That the Data Protection Policy be adopted.

PF/131 b) Recruitment and Selection Policy

The Town Clerk informed Members that the policy had been reviewed by Ellis Whittam in line with current legislation and no changes were necessary.

RECOMMENDED (Unanimous) PD/JS

That the Recruitment and Selection Policy be readopted.

PF/132 c) Vehicle Replacement and Machinery Maintenance Policy

Councillor Ginger suggested that a 5 year replacement policy should be reduced to a 3 year replacement policy. Councillor Clarke added that most equipment has a 3 year guarantee and would therefore suit a 3 year review.

Councillor Parry suggested that equipment could be obtain through lease hire as the inclusive maintenance/repair and renewal period may better suit the high usage/workload of the Council particularly if further maintenance responsibilities are transferred from Shropshire Council in the future.

The Town Clerk stated that one of the Council's vehicles was currently on lease hire and options on replacing a second vehicle through lease hire would be coming to Members shortly and currently all equipment was purchased through capital expenditure.

RECOMMENDED (Unanimous) GG/JS

That the Vehicle Replacement and Machinery Maintenance Policy, subject to the amendment of the review period to 3 years and inclusion of lease hire as an option for vehicles and machinery, be readopted.

PF/133 d) Member Officer Protocol

RECOMMENDED (8:0:1) PD/TG

That the Member Officer Protocol be readopted.

PF/134 e) Whistle Blowing Policy

The Town Clerk advised Members that the policy had been reviewed by Ellis Whittam who had suggested the marked changes to bring the policy in line with current legislation.

RECOMMENDED (Unanimous) PD/JS

That the Whistle Blowing Policy, as amended, be readopted.

PF/135 f) Twinning Protocol

RECOMMENDED (Unanimous) PD/MC

That:-

- a) the Twinning Protocol, as amended, be readopted.
- b) the Twinning Associations be informed of the increased funding available from April 2016.

PF/136 PENSION SCHEME

RESOLVED (Unanimous) GG/JS

That the Pensions Contributions Bandings update be noted.

PF/137 RESOLVED (Unanimous) JS/PD

That the Pensions Regulator letter regarding Ludlow Town Council's staging date be noted.

PF/138 PAPERLESS AGENDAS

Councillor Ginger stated that in light of the large savings possible in moving to paperless agendas and the associated costs to staff time the move to paperless agendas should be implemented now.

The Town Clerk advised that in order to implement the policy the Council required wireless access in the Council Chamber and a web platform which would be linked to the new website, both of which were in process. Staff training would also be required.

Councillor Parry advised that though Shropshire Council provided tablets to its Councillors and used paperless agendas for most meeting they still had paper agendas for full Council meetings, she ask if there was legislative reason for this that may affect the Town Council.

RECOMMENDATION (Unanimous) GG/TG

That:-

- a) the Council's progress and cost savings due to digital communication be noted.
- b) the Council is committed to fully paperless agendas.
- c) a report on implementation be brought back to Policy and Finance Committee for adoption

PF/139 POST 16 EDUCATIONTRANSPORT ASSISTANCE CONSULTATION

The disclaimer in the letter that the scheme may not be the most cost effective was noted.

RESOLVED (Unanimous) GG/MC

That the information from Shropshire Council be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm

Chairman

Date

N.B. No Closed Session Minutes will be issued.