

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Stephen Simkins (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)
Cllr Chris Burden
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal

Employees

Mark Taylor	Deputy Chief Executive
Ian Fegan	Director of Communications and Visitor Experience
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration
David Pattison	Chief Operating Officer
Laura Phillips	Deputy Director of People and Change
John Roseblade	Director of Resident Services
Andrew Wolverson	Deputy Director of Commissioning and Transformation of Children's Services
Alison Shannon	Chief Accountant
Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer
Jacob Stokes	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Obaida Ahmed, Ian Brookfield, Paula Brookfield, Linda Leach and Beverley Momenabadi.
- 2 Declaration of interests**
No declarations of interests were made.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 February 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 4 Pay Policy Statement 2023-2024**
Councillor Stephen Simkins presented the Council's Pay Policy Statement 2023-2024 for recommendation to Full Council for approval and publication in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. The Pay Policy Statement included data confirming the relationship between the pay of the Council's chief officers and

employees who are not chief officers. The pay ratio between the Council's highest paid officers and its lowest had reduced from 9.28:1 to 8.5:1 since the publication of the 2022-2023 Pay Policy Statement. This maintained the Council's pledge to have a pay ratio below 10:1.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to approve:

1. The Pay Policy Statement for 2023-2024.
2. The publication of the Pay Policy Statement in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

That Council be recommended to note:

1. That the national pay award for 2023-2024 has not been agreed, at the time of writing the Pay Policy Statement.

5 **Wolverhampton Homes Delivery Plan 2023-2024**

Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal presented the report on Wolverhampton Homes Annual Delivery Plan 2023-2024 and its monitoring arrangements for recommendation to Full Council for approval. He delivered an overview of the achievements and work carried out by Wolverhampton Homes in its housing management and support to tenants during 2022-2023 and how this would continue throughout the coming year. Some of the highlights were the work of the Money Smart Team providing tenants with advice around budgeting and income maximisation, supporting them to access financial support available; the See It Report It scheme which enables staff and contractors to raise concerns about any customer in the homes Wolverhampton Homes manage, identifying safeguarding and support needs at the earliest opportunity; supporting the Council's priority to address youth unemployment in the city with their Early Careers Strategy; and the work of the Home Improvement Agency who had installed over 1100 disabled adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grants works into homes across the city.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to approve:

1. The Wolverhampton Homes Delivery Plan 2023-2024.
2. The arrangements for monitoring the delivery of the Wolverhampton Homes Delivery Plan.

6 **Gender Pay Gap Report - 2022**

Councillor Stephen Simkins presented the Gender Pay Gap Report - 2022 which met a statutory requirement on public sector employers to produce and publish a snapshot of various figures to demonstrate how large the gender pay gap is between their male and female employees. Since 2015 when the Council first began to analyse data on its gender pay gap and well before the legal requirement which started in 2017, the Council had reduced its mean gender pay gap from 9.43% to 4.00% in 2022 and the medium gender pay gap from 6.27% to 1.18%, with interventions having a positive impact.

Resolved:

1. That it be noted that the content of the report on the Gender Pay Gap is as of the snapshot date of 31 March 2022.
2. That it be noted that the median Gender Pay Gap for 31 March 2022 is 1.18% and the mean is 4.00%.
3. That the difference in comparison to March 2021 data – the median Gender Pay Gap was 0.64% and the mean was 4.04% be noted.
4. That the proportion of men and women in each quartile in our pay structure as of 31 March 2022 be noted.
5. That the actions the Council continues to take to improve equality, diversity and inclusion within the workplace (pages 14 – 17 within the appendix to the report) be noted.
6. That it be noted that the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) regulations 2017 only require organisations to report on the gender pay gap. In addition to this, the Council would report on the ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation pay gaps. These reports are currently in development.

7

Performance and Budget Monitoring 2022-2023

Councillor Stephen Simkins presented the report on an integrated finance and performance update against the Our City: Our Plan priorities. Amongst the salient points highlighted were, of the current 56 key performance indicators (KPIs) in the Our City: Our Plan performance framework, 35 had shown improvement or seen similar performance, 11 had seen a decrease in performance and 11 were yet to be updated. On the financial performance against the budget, the General Fund was projected to be within budget for 2022-2023. Due to the favourable forecast outturn position on Adult Services, there was an opportunity to contribute £585,000 into Adults Social Care Reserve for Growth and Demand to support demand pressures going forward. In line with the Budget Strategy approved by Full Council on 1 March 2023, it was also proposed to contribute £2.5 million into the Future Budget Strategy Reserve to support the delivery of the efficiency targets held in 2023-2024.

Resolved:

1. That the establishment of supplementary expenditure budgets for 2022-2023 as detailed in section 7.0 of the report be approved.
2. That the use of £108,682 from the HRA Homelessness Reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.6 of the report and the establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.
3. That the use of £35,000 from the Building Control Service Reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.7 of the report and the establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.
4. That the use of £254,650.36 from the Our City Our Plan Reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.8 of the report and the establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.

5. That the contribution of £750,000 to the Licencing Reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.9 of the report and the establishment of associated budgets be approved.
6. That the use of £193,350 from the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) Reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.10 of the report and the establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.
7. That the use of £120,000 from the Budget Contingency reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.11 of the report and the establishment of supplementary budgets be approved.
8. That the write-off of five Sundry debts totalling £88,681.99 as detailed in Appendix 8 to the report be approved.
9. That the write-off of one Council Tax debt totalling £6,144.95 as detailed in Appendix 9 to the report be approved.
10. That the write-off of one Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) debt totalling £6,571.51 as detailed in Appendix 10 to the report be approved.
11. That 47 virements totalling £45.9 million, for transfers within directorates, as detailed in Appendix 11 to the report be approved.
12. That the Strategic Risk Register which is shown at Appendix. 3 to the report be approved.
13. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City in consultation with the Director of Finance to approve any necessary virements required to support the pay award, the allocation of the Efficiency target and Vacancy factor and any recharges required for 2022-2023.
14. That it be noted that the General Fund projected spend for 2022-2023 is currently forecast to be within budget.
15. That it be noted that the forecast outturn position for the year for the HRA shows a pressure against the approved budget of £1.2 million, as shown at Table 3 and in detail at Appendix 5 to the report.
16. That it be noted that it is anticipated that the cost of redundancies can be met from reserves.
17. That it be noted that 548 Council Tax accounts totalling £296,894.99, as detailed in Appendix 7 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
18. That it be noted that 22 Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) debts totalling £543,505.01, as detailed in Appendix 7 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

19. That it be noted that 23 housing benefit overpayments totalling £7,009.42 as detailed in Appendix 7 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
20. That it be noted that 135 sundry debt account totalling £122,897.49, as detailed in Appendix 7 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
21. That the performance against the key indicators as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted.

8 **Customer Experience Strategy**

Councillor Stephen Simkins presented for approval a new City of Wolverhampton Council Customer Experience Strategy and Customer Promise. The strategy placed customers and residents at the heart of all the Council does and aligned to the Council's Our City: Our Plan, the Council's strategic framework for levelling up. The new strategy set out the key priorities for the Council to provide a seamless customer journey; design customer centre services; unlock the power of data and digital; deliver value for money; and provide inclusive and accessible services for all.

Resolved:

1. That the new City of Wolverhampton Council Customer Experience Strategy, setting out how we would work as one council to deliver first class customer services to our communities be approved.
2. That the new City of Wolverhampton Council Customer Promise, included on page 7 of the strategy which defines how we would work with all customers, whether they are residents, businesses, partners or suppliers be approved.
3. That it be noted that the Customer Experience Strategy and Customer Promise priorities have been developed following consultation with over 770 people and pre-decision scrutiny.

9 **Black Country Coroner collaboration agreement**

Councillor Steve Evans presented the report on a renewal of an existing collaboration agreement between the four Black Country Councils for the provision of coronial services across the region. The existing agreement was due to expire on 31 March 2023. No significant amendments were proposed as the existing arrangement had worked well over the last eight years. The cost of providing digital autopsy, toxicology, pathology and histology, previously paid separately by each council outside the collaboration agreement, would now be included in the agreement to deliver further efficiencies, providing sufficient certainty and robustness to manage the service but with enough flexibility for the Councils to work effectively with the Coroner in response to changes in legislation.

Resolved:

1. That it be agreed to enter into a new five-year agreement with other Black Country Councils to provide a regional Coronial service.
2. That it be agreed that Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council should continue to act as lead council.

10

Wolverhampton Investment Prospectus – First Phase Delivery Plan

Councillor Stephen Simkins presented the report on a first phase delivery plan that built on the new Investment Prospectus for Wolverhampton approved by Cabinet on 22 February 2023. The plan concentrated on three significant projects in the city referenced as key investment and development opportunities within the Investment Prospectus and forming an integral part of ongoing discussions with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Homes England. The projects were City Centre West (formerly referred to as Westside); St. Georges (the site of the former Sainsbury's) and Accelerated sites programme - a call for sites from the Department that demonstrate opportunities to accelerate delivery including hotel delivery subject to HMT Strategic Outline Cases. The detail on each of the schemes along with full business cases would be reported back to Cabinet for necessary approvals.

Resolved:

1. That the proposed approach towards development and implementation of three schemes: City Centre West, St George's and the Accelerated Sites Programme, as part of the first phase of the Investment Prospectus Delivery Plan as detailed in the body of the report be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy and the Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City, in consultation with Director of Regeneration, Director of Finance and Chief Operating Officer to:
 - a. Declare sites as surplus to requirements (where necessary) to enable them to be brought forward for development.
 - b. Submit HMT Strategic Outline Cases (SOCs) for the Accelerated Sites Programme in accordance with specific requests received from Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and in consultation with Homes England.
 - c. Progress outline business cases with prospective development partners that are subject to existing Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) agreements to enable the presentation of Full Business Cases to Cabinet for approval and delegations.
 - d. Approve and progress alternative marketing, disposal and delivery routes available, in the event that business cases with preferred development partners are unable to satisfy pre-requisite Local Government criteria and value-for-money tests.
3. That it be noted that the Wolverhampton Investment Prospectus has been prepared to highlight key regeneration and investment opportunities and has resulted in a strong market interest for key Council owned sites. This report focusses upon detailing preferred delivery routes for several of the key proposals contained within the Prospectus.
4. That it be noted that the schemes detailed in the body of the report as part of the 'Accelerated Sites Programme' follows the call for sites from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

5. That it be noted that further reports to Cabinet would present and seek approval for the full business cases for each project including details of any delivery mechanism and transaction with assurances on how Best Consideration has been achieved.
6. That it be noted that the sites referenced would be brought forward in line with the planning policy framework for the city centre and any site-specific guidance.
7. That it be noted that for each of the schemes detailed, the Council would undertake and assess a review of any existing legal agreements that are in place as part of continued due diligence that support delivery.
8. That it be noted that the existing delegated authority would be utilised to create supplementary budgets for development work. This would be funded through grant contributions and /or reserves where appropriate.

11

New Procurement Strategy

Councillor Stephen Simkins presented the report on a refreshed Procurement Strategy which had been updated to reflect latest legislation and Council priorities and strategic aims, most importantly the Wolverhampton Pound.

Resolved:

1. That the Procurement Strategy as detailed at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City in consultation with the Director of Finance to annually refresh the Procurement Strategy and Procurement workplan in line with the annual refreshes of Our City: Our Plan. Any significant changes will be reported to Cabinet for approval.

12

Investing in the School Estate

Councillor Chris Burden presented the report on investments in the school estate. It was proposed to replace temporary classrooms at Westacre Infant School and Christ Church CE Infant School and Nursery. The schemes would ensure that the pupils are taught in accommodation that is a suitable environment that is of a high standard. Expansion of Resource Base provision at Aldersley High School, and provision of additional school places at Penn Hall school were also proposed. These schemes would help ensure sufficiency of provision and enhance the local educational offer for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND). Approval of the capital funding to support the schemes was requested.

Resolved:

1. That the allocation of £150,000 from the approved capital budget High Needs Capital Programme – Future Schemes to the Aldersley High School Resource Base project be approved.
2. That the allocation of £300,000 from the approved capital budget High Needs Capital Programme – Future Schemes to the Penn Hall School project be approved.

3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Work and Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City, in consultation with the Executive Director of Families and the Director of Finance, to approve any future allocations and adjustments to existing budgets from the High Needs Capital Programme – Future Schemes to enable future schemes to be progressed in a timely manner.
4. That the allocation of £350,000 from the approved capital budget Primary School Expansion Programme to the Westacre Infant School project be approved.
5. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Education, Work and Skills in consultation with the Executive Director of Families to approve the details of all agreements authorised under recommendation 6 of the report.
6. That the Council be authorised to enter into all legal agreements in relation to the schemes.

13

Young Opportunities (YO!) - Our vision for young people and families

Councillor Chris Burden delivered an overview of the outcomes of the #YES (Youth Engagement Strategy) which had made a huge difference to young people and their families across the city. Some of the highlights were 10,000 young people in the city had taken part in Make Your Mark; young people had become front and centre in decision making and were involved in awarding £2.5 million of grants; launch of a new co-production hub providing a focal point for young people to come together. It was proposed that the outcomes be embedded into business as usual in the Council. The YO! (Young Opportunities) brand would also be developed to incorporate support for the whole family under five pillars of YO! Health, YO! Voice, YO! Learn, YO! Plus and YO! Connect.

Resolved:

1. That that the outcomes of the Youth Engagement Strategy (2020-2023 #YES) be embedded into business as usual.
2. That the principles for development of the Young Opportunities (YO!) brand which would support our vision for children, young people and their families to have access to a range of opportunities that build aspiration and resilience be approved.

14

Investing in our Well-Connected Communities Transport Capital Programme 2023-2024

Councillor Steve Evans presented for approval the report on a programme of capital projects to develop and maintain both the Wolverhampton transportation network and the wider Black Country transportation network where relevant for the financial year 2023-2024 and future years, subject to available resources and annual review. He informed Cabinet of £48.3 million expenditure and progress made in delivering extensive investment in the city's network between the financial years 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. From the list of notable schemes already delivered he highlighted the Black Country Transport Team and Urban Traffic Control hosted by City of Wolverhampton Council; the LED street lighting replacement programme, commenced in 2019 which had resulted in a 30% reduction in energy consumption and contributed to the Council's Carbon Neutral aims saving 2000 tonnes of carbon; Active Travel schemes; and City Centre Public Realm schemes. He also reported

that he looked forward to seeing other projects being delivered across the city in the coming year, including but not exclusively carriageway resurfacing schemes; upgraded crossing and cycle link schemes; road safety improvement and congestion management schemes; localised road safety improvement schemes; improved Ring Road and city centre signage and continued roll out of mesh communication network.

Resolved:

1. That the list of projects for development and implementation as part of the Transportation Capital Programme 2023-2024 and future years, as set out in Appendices 3, 4, and 5 to the report be approved.
2. That the Head of Network Management and Head of Strategic Transport be authorised to proceed with development work for each project detailed in Appendices 3, 4, and 5 to the report including surveying, site investigation, options appraisal. Feasibility analysis, traffic modelling, detailed design, statutory advertising and public consultation, as appropriate.
3. That capital budgets for 2023-2024 for the projects marked 'Approve' in the 'Decision' column of Appendices 3 and 4 to the report be approved for implementation, subject to the confirmation of funding.
4. That a supplementary revenue budget of £400,000 in 2023-2024 be approved to support scheme development and management of the Black Country Transport Capital Programme fully funded from the £2.0 million Capacity Funding allocated in 2021-2022.
5. That the virement of existing approved budgets for 2023-2024 totalling £121,000 within the Transport Capital Programme to other projects as per table 3.4 of the report be authorised.
6. That the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance be authorised to approve the implementation of any development and delivery works on projects in appendices 3, 4 and 5 to the report, subject to the satisfactory outcome of public consultation, budget approval and any other relevant considerations.
7. That the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change and Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance be authorised to approve appropriate virements between existing approved budgets within the transport capital programme, maximising use of resources.
8. That the Chief Operating Officer be authorised to serve all necessary notices in respect of the projects listed in Appendices 3 and 4 to the report and, subject to there being no unresolved objections, make traffic regulation orders as required.
9. That the Black Country Director of Transport be authorised to enter into funding agreements with Black Country Authorities to passport Black Country Transport scheme funding in accordance with the approved collaboration agreement.

10. That the expenditure and progress made in delivering £48.3 million worth of projects in the Transportation Capital programme during 2020-2021, 2021-2022 and forecast in 2022-2023 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be noted.
11. That the Council's continuing success in bidding for additional funding and delivering new projects through the West Midlands Combined Authority, Active Travel Funding, City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, Future High Street Fund and Towns Fund, and Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) be noted.
12. That it be noted that the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change and Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services, Director of Finance and Chief Operating Officer would approve any new supplementary capital and revenue budgets for any projects from Appendix 3, 4 and 5 to the report, fully funded through either external resources or reserves, in accordance with supplementary budget procedures.
13. That the inclusion of revenue funding as part of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Development Funding package, Capacity Funding and the Local Authority Capability Fund to support the development of the programme and the wider Black Country Transport Programme be noted.
14. That it be noted that the Head of Network Management, Head of Strategic Transport and Black Country Director of Transport would make applications and bids for additional external funding noting that agreement ahead of submission would be obtained from the Director of Finance and appropriate governance would be followed to amend budgets on receipt of such funding.
15. That it be noted that the Director of Finance would approve the Council entering into funding agreements with the various funding bodies to receive both capital and revenue grant funding in respect of the delivery of projects included in this report including the development of schemes and management of the Black Country Transport Programme.

15

Black Country Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement

Councillor Stephen Simkins presented the report on an update to the existing legal agreement underpinning the Black Country ways of working, the Black Country Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement. The update set in place arrangements agreed by the four Black Country Local Authorities required to retain and continue the successful administration of legacy funding in the Black Country following the abolition of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership with effect from 31 March 2023.

Resolved:

1. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Chief Operating Officer, to make any final amendments and authorise the sealing by the Council of the Collaboration Agreement.

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Chief Operating Officer, to negotiate, approve and sign the Memorandum of Understanding for Enterprise Zones.
3. That the draft revised Collaboration Agreement detailed at Appendix 1 to the report be noted.