

Attendance

Mayor Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE (Lab)
Deputy Mayor Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Obaida Ahmed	Cllr Val Evans	Cllr Lynne Moran
Cllr Qaiser Azeem	Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal	Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Mary Bateman	Cllr Celia Hibbert	Cllr Phil Page
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE	Cllr Carol Hyatt	Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Dr Paul John Birch J.P.	Cllr Jasbir Jaspal	Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Greg Brackenridge	Cllr Jaspreet Jaspal	Cllr Susan Roberts MBE
Cllr Chris Burden	Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal	Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Craig Collingswood	Cllr Rashpal Kaur	Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Lovinyer Daley	Cllr Linda Leach	Cllr Clare Simm
Cllr Claire Darke	Cllr Asha Mattu	Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar	Cllr Louise Miles	Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Steve Evans	Cllr Beverley Momenabadi	Cllr Gillian Wildman

Conservative

Cllr Paul Appleby	Cllr Andrew Randle
Cllr Simon Bennett	Cllr Mak Singh
Cllr Adam Collinge	Cllr Paul Singh
Cllr Jonathan Crofts	Cllr Udey Singh
Cllr Wendy Dalton	Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Stephanie Haynes	Cllr Ellis Turrell
Cllr Sohail Khan	Cllr Jonathan Yardley
Cllr Andrew McNeil	

Employees

Mark Taylor	Deputy Chief Executive
David Pattison	Chief Operating Officer
Charlotte Johns	Director of Strategy
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration
John Roseblade	Director of Resident Services

The proceedings opened with Prayers

Item No. Title

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from the Leader of the Councillor, Councillor Ian Brookfield, Councillor Paula Brookfield, Councillor Olivia Birch, Councillor Christopher Haynes, Councillor Barbara McGarrity and Councillor Paul Sweet. Apologies for lateness were received for Councillor Adam Collinge and Councillor Wendy Dalton.

2 Declarations of interest

The following interests had been made:

Agenda Item 8 - Wolverhampton Homes Delivery Plan 2023 -2024

Councillor	Interest	Reason
Jonathan Crofts	Other Registrable Interest	Wolverhampton Homes Board Member
Asha Mattu	Other Registrable Interest	Wolverhampton Homes Board Member
Rita Potter	Other Registrable Interest	Wolverhampton Homes Board Member
Zee Russell	Other Registrable Interest	Wolverhampton Homes Board Member

The Monitoring Officer, David Pattison advised the Wolverhampton Homes Board Members to leave the Council Chamber for the duration of item 8.

3 Minutes of previous meeting

The Mayor proposed, the Deputy Mayor seconded, and it was resolved:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 1 March 2023, be agreed as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.

4 Communications

1. International Women’s Day

The Mayor was pleased to report that Wolverhampton had played its part in marking International Women’s Day on 8 March. She reported that she had attended a conference in the City Suite and visited RAF Cosford Museum to speak to young female students on 8 March, and that Access to Business had hosted a female-themed event in the City Suite on 7 March.

2. Armed Forces Covenant

The Mayor reported that she had signed the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the Council on 9 March to re-affirm the Council’s commitment to being a Forces friendly employer and to encourage local communities in supporting the armed forces community.

3. Wolverhampton Neighbourhood Policing Awards

The Mayor announced that she had attended the Wolverhampton Policing Awards on 14 March and that the event had rewarded and acknowledged the brave feats and good work carried out by officers in the city over the past year.

4. Poetry Competition

The Mayor invited poets of all ages to enter a competition to celebrate King Charles III's coronation. She reported that people would have until 5 April to write a poem about the environment, entitled "We Have One Chance".

She reported that finalists would be invited to perform their poems before a panel of judges who would pick the overall winner for each age category, would be invited to a celebratory tea with the Mayor and would receive a copy of the published anthology.

She reported that entries were now open and that details had been sent to all schools and published online and in the wider community.

5. Mayors RockFest

The Mayor announced that the Annual Mayors Charity Rockfest would take place on 8 April in KK's Steel Mill and 9 April in the Gifford Arms and encouraged everyone to attend and enjoy a great night out.

6. Eid al Fitr and Easter

The Mayor wished a happy Eid Mubarak for Eid al-Fitr to all Muslims and a happy Easter to all Christians in the city.

7. Retiring Councillors

The Mayor expressed thanks to Councillors Beverley Momenabadi, Claire Simm, Jonathan Yardley, Olivia Birch, Paul Birch, Phil Page, Rupinderjit Kaur and Lynne Moran who would be retiring from the Council in May.

She reported that she too would also be standing down following the elections and expressed thanks.

5 **Report of Leader of the Council**

There was no report presented.

6 **One Public Estate - Asset Transformation Programme**

The Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal, presented the report on One Public Estate - Asset Transformation Programme for approval.

The report detailed the proposals for a programme of works focussing on asset transformation by rationalisation and relocation of services to a single more suitable location, freeing up brownfield land to then provide over 200 new homes. The Council holds freehold ownership of the three sites proposed to form part of the

programme of works, which include the Hickman Avenue Depot, the former Loxdale Primary School and the former Day Training Centre Stowheath site.

The Council sought to attract grant funding to help reduce the requirement for any additional prudential borrowing. The report sought approval to progress the capital project but not until obtaining outline planning consent, securing grant funding, achieving cost certainty from market tenders and securing a development agreement.

A corresponding private report detailing confidential financial matters was also submitted for consideration.

The Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal, proposed the recommendation and the Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy, Councillor Stephen Simkins seconded the recommendation.

The report was debated by Council. Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal replied to the debate.

Resolved:

That the creation of a capital project budget for the One Public Estate - Asset Transformation Programme, funded through grants and prudential borrowing as detailed within the report, subject to confirmation of successful grant bids be approved.

7 **Pay Policy Statement 2023-2024**

The Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy, Councillor Stephen Simkins presented the report on Pay Policy Statement 2023-2024 for approval.

The report detailed the remuneration of its chief officers, the remuneration of its lowest-paid employees, and the relationship between: the remuneration of its chief officers, and the remuneration of its employees who are not chief officers. This report had been compiled to comply with the requirements of section 38 (1) of the Localism Act 2011.

The Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy, Councillor Stephen Simkins proposed the recommendations and Councillor Milkinder Jaspal seconded the recommendations.

The report was debated by Council. Councillor Stephen Simkins replied to the debate.

Resolved:

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

3. That it be noted, the national pay award for 2023 – 2024 had not been agreed, at the time of writing the Pay Policy Statement.

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

Having declared an other registrable interest, Councillor Jonathan Crofts, Councillor Asha Mattu, Councillor Rita Potter and Councillor Zee Russell left the Council Chamber for the consideration of this item.

The Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal, presented the report on Wolverhampton Homes Delivery Plan 2023 -2024 for approval.

The annual Delivery Plan as detailed Appendix 1 to this report, sets out how strategic priorities would be operationalised over the coming year. The key performance indicators were detailed in Appendix 2 to this report.

The Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal, proposed the recommendations and the Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy, Councillor Stephen Simkins seconded the recommendations.

The report was debated by Council. Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal replied to the debate.

Resolved:

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

Councillor Jonathan Crofts, Councillor Asha Mattu, Councillor Rita Potter and Councillor Zee Russell re-entered the Council Chamber at the conclusion of this item.

9 **Municipal Calendar of Meetings 2023-2024**

The Chair of Governance and Ethics Committee, Councillor John Reynolds presented the report on Municipal Calendar of Meetings 2023-2024 for approval. The report sought approval for the calendar of meetings for the next municipal year

The Chair of Governance and Ethics Committee, Councillor John Reynolds proposed the recommendation and the Vice Chair Councillor Jonathan Crofts seconded the recommendation.

Resolved:

That the City of Wolverhampton Council Municipal Calendar of Meetings for 2023-2024 be approved.

10 **Annual Scrutiny Report May 2021 - May 2022**

Councillor Phillip Bateman presented the report on Annual Scrutiny Report May 2021 - May 2022 for approval.

The Annual Report highlighted some of the key achievements of the Scrutiny function over the 2021-2022 municipal year including details of the progress and outcomes from a selection of Panel meetings.

The report detailed Scrutiny was a vital component of good governance, and the work carried out by Councillors through scrutiny had been invaluable in influencing policy and ensuring the executive was held to account.

The Councillor Phillip Bateman, proposed the recommendation and the Vice Chair of Scrutiny Board, Councillor Ellis Turrell seconded the recommendation.

The report was debated by Council. Councillor Philip Bateman replied to the debate.

Resolved:

That the Scrutiny Annual Report, May 2021 – May 2022 be endorsed.

11 **Written Questions by Councillors**

The Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy, Councillor Stephen Simkins responded to a question put to him by Councillor Gillian Wildman on Levelling Up in Bilston. He also responded to a supplementary question on the same subject matter.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Beverley Momenabadi responded to a question put to her by Councillor Lovinyer Daley on WV Active Leisure Centres.

The Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy, Councillor Stephen Simkins responded to questions put to him by Councillor Simon Bennett on Light House and Councillor Jonathan Crofts on Green Belt Land. He also responded to supplementary questions on the same subject matters.

The Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change, Councillor Steve Evans responded to a question put to him by Councillor Adam Collinge on WV Active. He also responded to a supplementary question on the same subject matter.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Work, Councillor Chris Burden responded to a question put to him by Councillor Stephanie Haynes on Educational Attainment. He also responded to a supplementary question on the same subject matter.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Jasbir Jaspal responded to a question put to her by Councillor Andy Randle on Wednesfield Police Base. She also responded to a supplementary question on the same subject matter.

The Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy, Councillor Stephen Simkins responded to questions put to him by Councillor Sohail Khan on RSM Review and Councillor Wendy Dalton on Bilston Health and Wellbeing Hub. He also responded to supplementary questions on the same subject matters.

Resolved:

That responses to written questions be noted.

12

Motions on Notice

Councillor Stephen Simkins moved the motion on Green Innovation Zones:

“In the Spring Budget, the Chancellor announced plans to launch 12 “investment zones” across the UK over the next five years. These “investment zones” are a scaled-back version of an initiative briefly launched by the government of Liz Truss last autumn. Four zones are planned in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the rest in the Midlands or north of England.

This Council believes that our ambitious Green Innovation Corridor plan meets the criteria for these proposed “investment zones” and demonstrates strong partnership between the local authority and academic institutions. Indeed, our Levelling Up Fund Round 2 feedback was that our Green Innovation Corridor bid was strong.

As the Government starts discussions on these Investment Zones, this Council calls on them to work closely with us and the West Midlands Combined Authority, to designate the Green Innovation Corridor as the Investment Zone for the region.”

Councillor Stephen Simkins outlined the rationale for the motion. Councillor Jaspreet Jaspal seconded the motion and outlined the rationale for supporting the motion.

Councillor Ellis Turrell moved a Conservative Group amendment to Green Innovation Zones motion:

After paragraph 2, delete paragraph 3 and insert:

“While it is recognised that the Green Innovation Corridor is a strong contender to be one of the 12 national investment zones, it is an even better candidate to be one of the levelling up zones secured by West Midlands Andy Street in the Devolution Deal for the West Midlands, agreed with Government. This therefore allows the Council to be more ambitious in its proposals for an investment zone, which this Council believes should cover as large an area of Wolverhampton as possible, benefitting more communities.

Notwithstanding flexible resource and capital spending, we note the guidance from Government that tax incentives across investment zones can cover up to 600ha across up to 3 sites.

Council therefore agrees to refer to a cross-party and politically balanced committee of councillors to decide whether the Council’s proposal for an investment zone should be

- (a) the Green Innovation Corridor, or*
- (b) the Conservative Group’s proposal of spreading the benefits of an investment zone to more parts of the city.”*

Councillor Ellis Turrell outlined the rationale for the amendment to the motion. Councillor Adam Collinge seconded the amendment to the motion and outlined the rationale for supporting the motion.

The Conservative Group Amendment to Green Innovation Zones was debated by Council.

Upon being put to the meeting, and a division having been demanded and taken voting thereon was as follows:

Conservative Group amendment to Green Innovation Zones motion (Amendment)	
Councillor Sandra Samuels OBE	Against
Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre	Against
Councillor Obaida Ahmed	Against
Councillor Paul Appleby	For
Councillor Qaiser Azeem	Against
Councillor Mary Bateman	Against
Councillor Philip Bateman MBE	Against
Councillor Simon Bennett	For
Councillor Dr Paul John Birch J.P.	Against
Councillor Greg Brackenridge	Against
Councillor Chris Burden	Against
Councillor Adam Collinge	For
Councillor Craig Collingswood	Against
Councillor Jonathan Crofts	For
Councillor Lovinyer Daley	Against
Councillor Wendy Dalton	For
Councillor Claire Darke	Against
Councillor Jasbinder Dehar	Against
Councillor Steve Evans	Against
Councillor Valerie Evans	Against
Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal	Against
Councillor Stephanie Haynes	For
Councillor Celia (CeeCee) Hibbert	Against
Councillor Carol Hyatt	Against
Councillor Jasbir Jaspal	Against
Councillor Jaspreet Jaspal	Against
Councillor Milkinderpal Jaspal	Against
Councillor Rashpal Kaur	Against
Councillor Sohail Khan	For
Councillor Linda Leach	Against
Councillor Asha Mattu	Against
Councillor Andrew McNeil	For
Councillor Louise Miles	Against
Councillor Beverley Momenabadi	Against
Councillor Lynne Moran	Against
Councillor Anwen Muston	Against
Councillor Rita Potter	Against
Councillor Andrew Randle	For

Councillor John C Reynolds	Against
Councillor Susan Roberts MBE	Against
Councillor Zee Russell	Against
Councillor Stephen Simkins	Against
Councillor Clare Simm	Against
Councillor Gurmukh (Mak) Singh	For
Councillor Paul Singh	For
Councillor Udey Singh	For
Councillor Jacqueline Sweetman	Against
Councillor Wendy Thompson	For
Councillor Ellis Turrell	For
Councillor Gillian (Jill) Wildman	Against
Councillor Jonathan Yardley	For
Rejected	

The amended motion was LOST by 36 votes.

The substantive motion was debated by Council. The substantive motion was put to the meeting:

Resolved:

1. That the substantive motion on Green Innovation Zones be agreed.

Councillor Ellis Turrell moved the motion on Deeper Devolution Deal:

“This Council welcomes the Deeper Devolution Deal negotiated between the West Midlands Mayor Andy Street and the Government, as announced in the Spring Budget on 15 March 2023. This new deal secures wide-ranging powers and a budget windfall in excess of £1.5 billion to level up Wolverhampton and the wider region.

In particular, this Council welcomes the following measures included in the Deeper Devolution Deal:

1. *A Wolverhampton Innovation Corridor, one of six new locally designed Levelling Up Zones, with 25-year business rates retention to drive further investment, innovation and economic growth.*
2. *A landmark housing deal worth up to £500 million, offering greater flexibility to drive brownfield regeneration.*
3. *100% retention of business rates for the next 10 years, worth £450 million.*
4. *A new departmental-style budget arrangement with a single pot of funding.*
5. *Greater local responsibility for developing and delivering careers advice and a partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions to target employment support.*

The Deeper Devolution Deal comes on top of more than £1 billion in direct Government investment into Wolverhampton over the last 3 years, through schemes such as the Levelling Up Fund and Towns Fund, and the package of measures contained in the Budget on 15 March 2023 which will make a real difference to people’s lives in our city. This Council therefore agrees to:

1. *Thank the West Midlands Mayor Andy Street for securing this milestone new Devolution Deal for Wolverhampton and the West Midlands region; and*
2. *Work closely with the West Midlands Mayor and the combined authority on delivering the measures contained within the Devolution Deal.”*

Councillor Ellis Turrell outlined the rationale for the motion. Councillor Simon Bennett seconded the motion and outlined the rationale for supporting the motion.

The motion was debated by Council.

Resolved:

1. That the motion on Deeper Devolution Deal be lost.

13 **Exclusion of press and public**

Resolved: That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

14 **One Public Estate - Asset Transformation Programme**

The Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal, presented the report on One Public Estate - Asset Transformation Programme for approval. The report was exempt as it contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal, proposed the recommendation and the Deputy Leader: Inclusive City, Councillor Stephen Simkins seconded the recommendation.

Resolved:

That the creation of a capital project budget for the One Public Estate - Asset Transformation Programme, funded through grants and prudential borrowing as detailed within the report, subject to confirmation of successful grant bids be approved.