

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Stephen Simkins (Chair)
Cllr Obaida Ahmed
Cllr Chris Burden
Cllr Craig Collingswood
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Louise Miles

Employees

Tim Johnson	Chief Executive
Mark Taylor	Deputy Chief Executive
Emma Bennett	Executive Director of Families
Ian Fegan	Director of Communications and Visitor Experience
Charlotte Johns	Director of Strategy
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration
David Pattison	Chief Operating Officer
John Roseblade	Director of Resident Services
Alison Shannon	Chief Accountant
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services and Systems Manager
Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

1 **Councillor Ian Brookfield**

Councillor Stephen Simkins was saddened to announce the death of the Leader of the City of Wolverhampton Council, Councillor Ian Brookfield who passed away on Sunday 2 July 2023 after a fearless battle with cancer. Councillor Simkins added that Ian was a former Mayor of the City of Wolverhampton Council and became Leader of the Council in 2019. He was an incredible human being with a passion for helping people, especially those who needed help most. He would be remembered for his very proactive and visible leadership during the pandemic. Immediately setting up the Wolverhampton Food Distribution Hub in the early days to support locked-down vulnerable residents and volunteering to do shifts as a delivery driver. He firmly believed that young people are the future of this city and he invested in them, setting up the Yo! programme that had supported thousands of city youngsters with activities, opportunities and meals. He also launched the Wolves at Work 18 to 24 job support programme which helped get over 600 unemployed young people into work.

Cabinet stood in silent tribute to the late Councillor Ian Brookfield.

2 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Paula Brookfield.

3 **Declaration of interests**

No declarations of interests were made.

4 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 May 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

5 **Bilston Asset Transformation Programme - Bilston Health and Wellbeing Facility**

Councillor Stephen Simkins presented the report on a proposal to provide a new fit for purpose building to meet future proofed Council services, healthcare and community needs and asset improvements to the existing Bert Williams Leisure Centre and associated public realm. The project formed part of the wider Bilston Asset Transformation Programme and was in accord with the Council's Strategic Asset Plan to optimise, rationalise and consolidate council assets to release brownfield sites for the provision of housing and community facilities. Approval was also requested to the required budgets for the additional Bilston Market redevelopment project funding and Bilston Public Realm Improvement scheme. These projects were presented to the Cabinet (Resources) Panel on 14 December 2022 in the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 Bids Update report.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to approve:

1. The Bilston Health and Wellbeing Facility project and appropriate capital budgets funded through grant and prudential borrowing as detailed within the report.

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the development by the Council of a modern health and wellbeing facility at the proposed site on Council owned land, carryout improvements to the Bert Williams Leisure Centre and public realm works.
2. Delegates authority to the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Governance and Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer and Director of Finance to agree and enter into the required construction contracts, leases, funding agreements and other ancillary agreements, for the respective project.
3. Authorises the Chief Operating Officer to negotiate, execute, seal and complete all necessary documents to give effect to the above recommendations.
4. Approves supplementary capital budgets, funded by grant, for the Bilston Market redevelopment and Bilston Public Realm improvement scheme.

That Cabinet notes:

1. The letter of support from the Black Country Integrated Care Board for the proposed scheme.

6

Capital Budget Outturn 2022-2023 including Quarter One Capital Budget Monitoring 2023-2024

Councillor Obaida Ahmed presented the update report on the outturn position for 2022-2023 and on the 2023-2024 financial performance of both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programmes, including a revised forecast for 2023-2024 to 2027-2028 as at quarter one 2023-2024. The report also set out revisions to the current approved capital programmes covering the periods 2023-2024 to 2027-2028 for recommendation to Full Council. Cabinet was asked to approve virements for new/existing projects for the General Fund and HRA capital programmes and to continue with an existing delegation to approve virements from the provision for future projects budgets within the Corporate Asset Management capital programme to individual schemes in order that corporate priorities can be addressed in an agile and timely manner.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to approve:

1. The revised, medium term General Fund capital programme of £405.7 million, an increase of £10.8 million from the previously approved programme, and the change in associated resources.
2. The revised, medium term Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme of £601.1 million, a net increase of £1.2 million from the previously approved programme, and the change in associated resources.

The Cabinet approves:

1. The virements for the General Fund capital programme detailed at Appendix 4 to the report for:
 - i. existing projects totalling £6.4 million;
 - ii. new projects totalling £210,000.
2. The virements for the HRA capital programme detailed at Appendix 4 to the report for:
 - i existing projects totalling £4.5 million.
3. Delegated authority to the Deputy Director of Assets to approve virements from the provision for future projects budget held within the Corporate Asset Management capital programme to individual schemes in order that corporate priorities can be addressed in an agile and timely manner.

That Cabinet notes:

1. That there are new projects requiring internal resources included in this report, but which are subject to Council's approval on 19 July 2023. The inclusion of these projects is for budget approval purpose and is on the assumption that the approval to progress with the projects is given. As the progression is dependent on this decision, if the projects are not approved, the capital programme will be reduced accordingly. The reports which are subject to approval are:
 - i11 – Investing in the City's Workspace Offer. This report was considered by Cabinet (Resources) Panel on 26 April 2023 and to be presented to Full Council on 19 July 2023.
 - Bilston Asset Transformation Programme – Bilston Health & Wellbeing Facility. This report is being considered by Cabinet on this same agenda.

7 **Treasury Management - Annual Report 2022-2023 and Activity Monitoring Quarter One 2023-2024**

Councillor Obaida Ahmed presented the Treasury Management report for recommendation to Full Council for noting. The report set out the results of treasury management activities carried out in 2022-2023 together with performance against the Prudential Indicators previously approved by Council. It also provided an update on treasury management activity for the first quarter of 2023-2024, in line with the Prudential Indicators approved by Council in March 2023.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to note:

1. That the Council operated within the overall approved Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators, and also within the requirements set out in the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement during 2022-2023.
2. That a revenue underspend of £3.6 million for the General Fund and a revenue overspend of £699,000 for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) were generated from treasury management activities in 2022-2023.
3. That the General Fund and HRA treasury management activities for 2023-2024 are currently forecast to be within budget. This would continue to be monitored and updates provided in future reports.

That Cabinet notes:

1. The financial information included in the report is based on the 'Capital Budget Outturn 2022-2023 including Quarter One Capital Budget Monitoring 2023-2024' report also on the agenda for this meeting. The capital report is subject to two reports being separately approved as follows:
 - Bilston Asset Transformation Programme – Bilston Health & Wellbeing Facility by Cabinet on 12 July 2023
 - i11 – Investing in the City's Workspace Offer by Council on 19 July 2023

Therefore, if these approvals are not obtained, the treasury management forecasts and indicators will be amended to reflect this.

2. The Council's external borrowing decreased by £10.2 million during 2022-2023 due to repayment of three loans and no new loans were taken out during the financial year. So far during quarter one of 2023-2024, two loans totalling £7.1 million have been repaid.

8 **Wolverhampton's Youth Justice Plan 2023-2024**

Councillor Chris Burden presented Wolverhampton's Youth Justice Plan 2023-2024 for recommendation to Full Council for approval. The Plan set out the work of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) partnership under the oversight of the YOT Management Board. Of the key points, it was noted that whilst local data on the first time entrant rate in the Criminal Justice System for Wolverhampton in 2022-2023 had shown a slight increase (3.7%) in the number of offences committed by young people compared to in the previous year. The numbers remained lower than the three years prior to this. There had also been a significant reduction over the past five years with 57% fewer first time entrants when compared to 2018-2019.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to:

1. Approve the adoption of the Youth Justice Plan 2023-2024.

That Cabinet notes:

1. The specific achievement of the Youth Offending Team during 2022-2023 including an increased prevention offer aimed at preventing young people entering the criminal justice system, a reduction in re-offending rates and a continued low number of young people receiving a custodial sentence.

9 **Reserves and Provisions 2022-2023**

Councillor Obaida Ahmed presented the update report on the Council's resources currently held as reserves and provisions as at 31 March 2023 taking account of the outturn position for 2022-2023. Approval was requested to transfers to/ from general balances and provisions, contributions to/from earmarked reserves and expenditure from provisions for their specific purposes as set out in the report.

Resolved:

That Cabinet approves:

1. The transfers to/from general balances and provisions as detailed in Tables 2, and 5.
2. The contributions to/from earmarked reserves as detailed in paragraphs 5.11 to 5.22 and paragraphs 6.8 to 6.13.
3. Expenditure from provisions for their purposes as set out in Appendix 2 and 3, up to the value held in each provision as at 31 March 2023.
4. Delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital and the relevant Cabinet Member, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the relevant Director/Deputy Director to allocate funds from reserves as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

That Cabinet notes:

1. The level of the Council's reserves and provisions as at 31 March 2023 and the purposes for which they are being held, as detailed in Appendix 1, 2, and 3 to the report.
2. That the recommendations detailed in the report are in line with the Reserves Strategy approved by Council on 1 March 2023.
3. That relevance and adequacy of reserves would be reviewed as required by the Constitution during the 2024-2025 budget setting process.
4. That allocation of funding from all earmarked reserves would be reported to Councillors in future reports.
5. That the Resources and Equality Scrutiny Panel would scrutinise the use of reserves as part of the budget setting process as in previous years.
6. That the Director of Finance considers that the overall level of all reserves and provisions are sufficient to meet the likely level of obligations to be met from reserves and provisions in the short term.

7. That the figures quoted in the report are still subject to statutory audit by Grant Thornton as part of the 2022-2023 accounts closedown process.

10

Performance and Budget Outturn 2022-2023

Councillor Obaida Ahmed presented the report on the Council's outturn position for 2022-2023 compared with approved budgets and targets and performance against the Our City: Our Plan priorities. Approval was requested to debt write offs in relation to Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefits and Sundry Debts. Debts would only be written off as a last resort, when all feasible recovery action had been exhausted. If the situation surrounding an individual case changed in the future, steps would be taken to pursue the debt, despite the debt having been written off. Councillor Obaida Ahmed also highlighted that out of the 49 performance indicators that were updated during the year, 40 were showing either improved or sustained performance.

Resolved:

That Cabinet notes:

1. The Council has once again managed its money well and delivered within budget - despite hugely challenging circumstances. Overall, the revenue position for 2022-2023 is within budget, after meeting the net costs of redundancy and pension strain and contributions to essential earmarked reserves.
2. That the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue outturn for the year was in a balanced position at the end of the year after making provision for debt redemption and capital financing of £15.4 million in line with the budget and transferring £247,000 to the HRA reserve.
3. The Reserves and Provisions report on this same agenda provides an update on the reserves and provision held by the Council as at 31 March 2023.
4. That, during Quarter 4, 803 council tax accounts totalling £312,615.59, as detailed in Appendix 5 of the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
5. That, during Quarter 4, 37 Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) debts totalling £103,890.47, as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
6. That, during Quarter 4, 16 housing benefit overpayments totalling £11,021.45 as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
7. That, during Quarter 4, 1030 sundry debt accounts totalling £222,444.37, as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

8. The performance against the key indicators as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

That Cabinet approves:

1. The Strategic Risk Register as detailed in Appendix 10 to the report.
2. The write-off of seven Sundry Debts totalling £192,157.41 as detailed in Appendix 6 to the report.
3. The write-off of four Council Tax Debts totalling £30,303.52 as detailed in Appendix 7 to the report.
4. The write-off of five Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) Debts totalling £50,897.90 as detailed in Appendix 8 to the report.
5. The write-off of one Housing Benefit Debts totalling £15,076.60 as detailed in Appendix 9 to the report.

- 11 **Wolverhampton Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023- 2028**
Councillor Jasbir Jaspal presented the Wolverhampton Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-2028 which set the strategic direction for the Health and Wellbeing Board over the next five years. Public consultation had helped shape and define the priority areas in the new strategy. These are starting and growing well; reducing addiction harm; and getting Wolverhampton moving.

Resolved:

That the Wolverhampton Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023 – 2028 be noted.

- 12 **Exclusion of the 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 item of business as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Part 2 - exempt items. closed to press and public

- 13 **Bilston Asset Transformation Programme - Bilston Health and Wellbeing Facility**

Councillor Stephen Simkins presented for approval an exempt version to the Bilston Asset Transformation Programme - Bilston Health and Wellbeing Facility report discussed at item 5 above. The report included information on the financial implications of the scheme that was omitted from the public version due to it containing commercially sensitive information.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to approve:

1. The Bilston Health and Wellbeing Facility project and appropriate capital budgets funded through grant and prudential borrowing as detailed within the report.

That Cabinet:

1. Approves the development by the Council of a modern health and wellbeing facility at the proposed site on Council owned land, carryout improvements to the Bert Williams Leisure Centre and public realm works.
2. Delegates authority to the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Governance and Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive, Chief Operating Officer and Director of Finance to agree and enter into the required construction contracts, leases, funding agreements and other ancillary agreements, for the respective project.
3. Authorises the Chief Operating Officer to negotiate, execute, seal and complete all necessary documents to give effect to the above recommendations.
4. Approves supplementary capital budgets, funded by grant, for the Bilston Market redevelopment and Bilston Public Realm improvement scheme.

That Cabinet notes:

1. The letter of support from the Black Country Integrated Care Board for the proposed scheme.