

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Stephen Simkins (Chair)
Cllr Steve Evans (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Chris Burden
Cllr Craig Collingswood
Cllr Jacqui Coogan
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Louise Miles

Employees

Tim Johnson	Chief Executive
Ian Fegan	Director of City Economy and Partnerships
Alison Hinds	Director of Children's Services
James Howse	Director of Finance
Charlotte Johns	Executive Director of Economy
Richard Lawrence	Director of City Development
David Pattison	Chief Operating Officer
John Roseblade	Director of Resident Services
Andrew Wolverson	Director of Adult Social Care (DASS)
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services and Systems Manager
Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Obaida Ahmed. |
| 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 21 February 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. |

4 **Pay Policy Statement 2024 - 2025**

Councillor Paula Brookfield presented the Council's Pay Policy Statement 2024-2025 for recommendation to Full Council for approval and publication in line with requirements of the Localism Act 2011. The Pay Policy Statement included data confirming the relationship between the remuneration of the Council's chief officers and the remuneration of employees who are not chief officers. The Council's pay ratio in 2023-2024 was 8:1, down from 8.5:1 in 2022-2023 and from 9.35:1 in 2018-2019. This compared favourably with the Council's neighbouring authorities. Councillor Brookfield also reported that having delivered senior management budget reductions of £2.8 million in the last 10 years, and following a review of the Council's strategic capacity to ensure that it had sufficient resources to deliver current services to residents as well as to deliver future ambitions, goals set out in the Vision 2030 and the Council's Our City: Our Plan, four additional deputy director posts had been included in the Pay Policy Statement for approval by Full Council.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to approve:

1. The Pay Policy Statement for 2024-2025.
2. The publication of the Pay Policy Statement in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.
3. The additional Deputy Director posts detailed within the report and listed in Appendix 4 to the report.

That Council be recommended to note:

1. That the national pay award for 2024-2025 had not been agreed, at the time of writing the Pay Policy Statement.

That Cabinet approve:

1. The virement of £127,000 from non pay budgets held in Public Health Business Management to fund the Deputy Director of Public Health post.

5 **Gender Pay Gap Report 2023**

Councillor Paula Brookfield asked Cabinet to note the Gender Pay Gap Report 2023. The Report 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. Councillor Brookfield highlighted that the Council's mean gender pay gap for 31 March 2023 was 2.99% down from 4% on 31 March 2022. Demographic changes in each quartile had made a difference to the Council's medium pay gap, where female employees from certain levels had left the employment of the Council and men were appointed into the vacant roles. Cabinet was also asked to note the actions taken by the Council to improve equality, diversity and inclusion within the workplace.

Resolved:

1. That it be noted that the content of the Gender Pay Gap is as of the snapshot date of 31 March 2023.
2. That it be noted that the median gender pay gap for 31 March 2023 is 6.51% and the mean gender pay gap is 2.99%.

3. That it be noted that the difference in comparison to March 2022 data – the median gender pay gap was 1.18% and the mean gender pay gap was 4.00%.
4. That the proportion of men and women in each quartile in our pay structure as of 31 March 2023 be noted.
5. That the actions the Council continues to take to improve equality, diversity and inclusion within the workplace (pages 16-20 of Appendix 1 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.

6 **Performance and Budget Monitoring 2023-2024**

Councillor Louise Miles reported on the salient points from the Performance and Budget Monitoring 2023-2024 report. In doing so she was pleased to report that both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account projected outturn for 2023-2024 are forecast to be within budget. This reflected the careful management of the Council's finances. Cabinet was asked to approve the recommendations for decision contained within the report. These concerned: the use of reserves for various earmarked purposes; virements for transfers within directorates; write-off of debts in accordance with Council policy; and the Strategic Risk Register, which showed the Council's careful and proactive management of risk.

Resolved:

1. That it be noted that the General Fund projected outturn for 2023-2024 is currently forecast to be within budget.
2. That it be noted that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2023-2024 Housing Revenue Account is currently forecast to be within budget.
3. That it be noted that the interim Director of Finance has approved write-off of debts against the expected credit loss provision as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report.
4. That it be noted that it is anticipated that the cost of redundancies can be met from reserves.
5. That the Strategic Risk Register shown at Appendix 6 to the report be approved.
6. That the use of £40,070 from the Elections Reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.6 of the report and establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.
7. That the use of £300,000 from the Insurance Fund Reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.7 of the report and establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.

8. That the use of £20,000 from the Sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Reserve to fund feasibility study and specialist external advice to explore the opportunities available for using Aldersley Leisure Centre for major events as detailed in paragraph 8.8 of the report and establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.
9. That the use of £100,000 from the Building Control reserve to mitigate reduction in income within City Planning as detailed in paragraph 8.9 of the report be approved.
10. That 14 virements totalling £2.8 million on the General Fund, for transfers within directorates, as detailed in Appendix 8 to the report be approved.
11. That the delegation to the Interim Director of Finance to approve essential virements in relation to recharges and year end process, as detailed in section 10 of the report be approved.
12. That the write-off of debts against the expected credit loss provision as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report be approved.
13. That the General Fund Budget Risks 2023-2024 register as detailed in Appendix 7 to the report be approved.
14. That the establishment of supplementary budgets within 2023-2024 as detailed in Section 7 of the report be approved.

7 **Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027**

Councillor Jacqui Coogan presented a refreshed Wolverhampton SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027 for endorsement. The Strategy enables the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory duties to secure a continuum of provision and support with partners for pupils aged 0-25 with SEND and those with potential unmet SEND or social educational needs. It is based on a shared understanding that supporting the needs of children, young people and young adults regarding SEND and inclusion is everyone's business. A wider focus around inclusion had been incorporated into the Strategy enabling children and young people to have their needs met at the earliest point and where possible within local settings.

Resolved:

1. That the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027 and strategic priorities as set out in the report and in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Education, in consultation with the Director of Children's Services, to review and amend the strategic priorities as required during the period of the Strategy.

8 **Major Investment in Our City's Strategic Transport Infrastructure**

Councillor Craig Collingswood presented the report that outlined ambitious long term plans to invest in Wolverhampton's transport offer to residents, businesses and visitors. The report identified planned work over the 2024-2025 financial year to develop and deliver over £145 million of potential improvements for the city to be delivered across the next ten years. The extensive programme of development and

delivery for 2024-2025 would be resource entirely from secured external funds. The report also included approvals to continue design work, consult on plans, advertise relevant Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and to enter into delivery, where appropriate. As host authority for Black Country Transport, City of Wolverhampton Council was also enabling effective, efficient and collaborative working across transport for the four Black Country authorities. The report detailed the financial position to support those activities.

Resolved:

1. That the list of projects for Wolverhampton Strategic Transport and Black Country Transport development and implementation as part of the Transportation Capital Programme 2024-2025 and future years, as set out in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report be approved.
2. That the Head of Strategic Transport be authorised to proceed with development work for each project detailed in Appendices 2 and 3 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 and revenue budgets for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 as set out in section 6.2 of the report be approved subject to the confirmation of funding. Approve entering into grant agreements for those named projects for approval.
4. That revenue development schemes in section 6.5 of the report to be funded as part of the approved revenue budgets for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 and transfer the relevant grant to Walsall Council for development work they have undertaken be approved.
5. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance to approve the implementation of any development and delivery works on projects in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report subject to the satisfactory outcome of public consultation, budget approval and any other relevant considerations.
6. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance to approve appropriate virements between existing approved budgets within the transport capital programme, maximising use of resources.
7. That the Chief Operating Officer be authorised to serve all necessary notices in respect of the projects listed in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report and, subject to there being no unresolved objections, to make traffic regulation orders as required.
8. 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.

9. That it be noted that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and Cabinet Member for Resources, 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 Appendices 2 and 3 to the report, fully funded through either external resources or reserves, in accordance with supplementary budget procedures.
10. That the inclusion of revenue funding as part of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) Development Funding package, Capacity Funding and Capability and Ambition Fund (CAF) to support the development of the programme and the wider Black Country Transport Programme be noted. The projected revenue outturn for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 and that this would be subject to ongoing review be noted.
11. That it be noted that the Head of Strategic Transport and Black Country Director of Transport would make applications and bids for additional external funding and 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.
12. 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 the report including the development of schemes and management of the Black Country Transport Programme.
13. That it be noted that the Black Country Transport and Wolverhampton Major Transport Investment Programme is complementary and aligns with the work of the Highways Capital Programme Report that it also scheduled to be considered by Cabinet on 20 March 2024. The inclusion of £100,000 of Advanced Design budget in the Highways Report for the development of schemes included in this programme also be noted.

9

Investing to Improve Our City's Roads in 2024-2025

Councillor Craig Collingswood presented, for approval, the report on a programme of capital projects to develop and maintain the City of Wolverhampton highway network for the financial year 2024-2025, subject to available resources and annual review. Referring to the general condition of roads, Councillor Collingswood reported that the issue of potholes was not unique to Wolverhampton, it is a nationwide problem. However, in the last year over 13.8 kilometres of carriageway benefited from surface treatment in Wolverhampton and 4.5 kilometres of carriageway was fully resurfaced. Councillor Collingswood went on to highlight other notable schemes delivered during 2023-2024 including: six Road Safety and Safer Routes to School projects; the continued upgrade of street lights to LED; piloting smart photocells installed on streetlights to support remote lighting level control; expansion of the Wolverhampton CCTV network; further rollouts of electronic driver information signs which support the introduction of a new car park guidance system for Civic quarter car parks; and the trialling of other technologies through the Local Network Improvement Plan.

Resolved:

1. That the list of projects for development and implementation as part of the Highway Capital Programme 2024-2025, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report be approved.

2. That the Head of Network Management be authorised to proceed with development work for each project detailed in Appendix 3 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 2024-2025 for the projects marked 'Approve' in the 'Decision' column of Appendix 3 to the report be approved for implementation, subject to the confirmation of funding.
4. That the virement of existing approved budgets for 2024-2025 totalling £105,000 within the Highway Capital Programme to other projects as per table 3.4 in the report be approved.
5. That the Cabinet Member for 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 work on projects detailed in Appendix 3 to the report subject to the satisfactory outcome of public consultation, budget approval and any other relevant considerations.
6. That the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance be authorised to approve the implementation of any delivery works not exceeding £1.0 million on projects covered in Appendix 3 to the report subject to the satisfactory outcome of public consultation, budget approval and any other relevant considerations.
7. That the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance be authorised to approve appropriate virements between existing approved budgets within the highway 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 Appendix 3 to the report and, subject to there being no unresolved objections, make traffic regulation orders as required.
9. That the expenditure and progress made in delivering £30.9 million worth of projects in the Transportation Capital programme during 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023 and forecast in 2023-24 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be noted.
10. That the Council's continuing success in bidding for additional funding and delivering new projects through the West Midlands Combined Authority be noted.

11. That it be noted that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and Cabinet Member for Resources, 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 to the report, fully funded through either external resources or reserves, in accordance with supplementary budget procedures.
12. That it be noted that the Head of Network Management 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.
13. 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 the report.
14. That it be noted that this Highways Capital Programme Report is complementary and aligns with the work of the Black Country Transport and Wolverhampton Major Transport Investment Programme that it also seeking approval at the 20 March 2024 Cabinet meeting.