

Meeting of the Council

Minutes - 6 April 2016

Attendance

Mayor Cllr Ian Brookfield (Lab)
Deputy Mayor Cllr Barry Findlay (Con)

Labour

Cllr Ian Angus
Cllr Harman Banger
Cllr Mary Bateman
Cllr Philip Bateman
Cllr Payal Bedi
Cllr Peter Bilson
Cllr Alan Bolshaw
Cllr Greg Brackenridge
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Ian Claymore
Cllr Craig Collingswood
Cllr Claire Darke
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Val Evans

Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Val Gibson
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Julie Hodgkiss
Cllr Keith Inston
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Andrew Johnson
Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur
Cllr Welcome Koussoukama
Cllr Roger Lawrence
Cllr Linda Leach
Cllr Elias Mattu
Cllr Lynne Moran
Cllr Peter O'Neill

Cllr Phil Page
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr John Rowley
Cllr Judith Rowley
Cllr Sandra Samuels
Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz
Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Tersaim Singh
Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Martin Waite
Cllr Daniel Warren

Conservative

Cllr Mark Evans
Cllr Christine Mills
Cllr Patricia Patten
Cllr Arun Photay

Cllr Paul Singh
Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Andrew Wynne
Cllr Jonathan Yardley

Liberal Democrat

Cllr Richard Whitehouse

UKIP

Cllr Malcolm Gwinnett

Employees

Keith Ireland
Kevin O'Keefe
Laura Phillips
Earl Piggott-Smith
Linda Sanders
Mark Taylor

Managing Director
Director of Governance
Business Manager
Scrutiny Officer
Strategic Director - People
Director of Finance

The proceedings opened with Prayers

Item No. Title

1 **Apologies for absence**

No apologies were received.

2 **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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 2 March, be agreed as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.

4 **Communications**

Remembrance

Councillors stood in silent tribute to remember the late Darren Cooper, who was the Leader of Sandwell Council, Mr Joe Davies, who was a D Day veteran and who was very recently awarded the Legion D'Honneur, and the many victims of the recent terror attacks in Brussels, Lahore and Turkey.

Retiring Members of the Council

The Mayor expressed his thanks to the retiring Councillors who were not seeking re-election at the local elections in May, recognising their dedication and many years' service. These included:

- Councillor Bishan Dass - St Peter's ward 1975 to 1983, Heath Town ward 1983 to 1987, Ettingshall ward 2004 to date:
 - *Mayor 1986 - 1987*
 - *Health Scrutiny Panel (Vice Chairman 2015-2016)*
 - *Pensions Committee*
 - *Petitions Committee (Vice Chairman 2012-14)*
 - *Licensing Committee*
 - *Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel (Vice-Chairman 2014-2015)*
 - *Building Schools for the Future Advisory Group*
 - *Schools Joint Consultative Panel*

- Councillor Richard Whitehouse, Springvale ward since 1984
 - *Mayor (1993 – 1994)*
 - *Deputy Mayor (1992 – 1993)*
 - *Cabinet (2001/2002)*
 - *Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel (2015)*
 - *Corporate Parenting Board (2015)*
 - *Developing and Supporting the Organisation MPDP / Scrutiny Panel (2000 to 2005)*

- *Economic Development and Property (1995)*
- *Education (1992/1994/1996/1997/1998/1999)*
- *Environmental Health and Consumer Services (1986/1988/1989/1990/1991/1992/1993/1996/1997/1998)*
- *Finance and General Purposes (1987/1995)*
- *Health and Consumer Services (1992)*
- *Housing Services (1992 to 1994)*
- *Human Resources Appeals Panel (2012/2013)*
- *Leisure Services (1986/1988/1989/1990/1991)*
- *Licensing and Environmental Protection Panel (2000)*
- *Licensing Committee (2005)*
- *Management Services, Municipal Trading (1984/1985)*
- *Personnel (1999)*
- *Planning and Transportation (1987)*
- *Policy and Resources (1987 / 1990/1991/1992/1999)*
- *Race Relations and Equal Opportunities (1991)*
- *Safer Communities Scrutiny Panel (2011)*
- *Scrutiny Board – 2003 to 2008 (Chair – 2009 to 2011)*
- *Social Services (1991)*
- *Special Advisory Group (2007/2009/2010)*
- *Standards Committee (2000 to 2009)*
- *Superannuation (1991)*
- *Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel (2009/2010/2012)*
- *Vibrant Safe and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel (2013)*

- Councillor Lorna McGregor, Oxley ward since 2012
 - *Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel (2012 to 2014)*
 - *Confident, Capable Council Scrutiny Panel (2015)*
 - *Human Resources Appeals Panel (2013)*
 - *Investment Advisory Sub-Committee (2014, Vice Chair 2015)*
 - *Pensions Committee (2012 to 2014, Vice Chair 2015)*
 - *Scrutiny Board (2014/2015)*

- Councillor Jas Dehar, Bushbury North ward since 2012
 - *Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel (2012 to date)*
 - *Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel (2014 to date)*
 - *Confident Capable Council Scrutiny Panel (2013/14)*
 - *Corporate Parenting Panel (2014 to date)*
 - *Equalities Advisory Group (2014)*
 - *Performance, Governance & Support Services Scrutiny Panel (2012)*
 - *Representative on the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority*

VE Day 2016

Councillors were advised the Central Branch of the City of Wolverhampton Royal British Legion and the Ex-Service Council would be holding a service of remembrance at the Cenotaph, St Peter's Square, on 6 May starting at 11am.

5 **Municipal Calendar**

Resolved:

That the Municipal Calendar for 2016/17 be approved.

6 **Executive Business**

Council received a summary of executive business in relation to:

- Full Joint Inspection of Youth Offending Team
- City of Wolverhampton Open Space Strategy and Action Plan Update
- Black Country Core Strategy Review
- City Of Wolverhampton Procurement Charter

7 **Purchase of a city centre regeneration site.**

Council received a report on the purchase of a city centre regeneration site, located at St George's Parade. Councillors were appraised of the benefits that the purchase would bring to city and the necessity to ensure that the site was purchased by the Council for development rather than the possibility of it being 'land banked' and remaining derelict if bought by a developer.

The Cabinet Member for Resources, Cllr Andrew Johnson, outlined the financial implications detailed in the report and further explained that negotiations were ongoing with Sainsbury's and the Church Commissioners.

In response to questions raised, Council were reassured that the matter would be carefully monitored.

It was moved by Councillor Johnson and seconded by Councillor Lawrence.

Resolved:

1. The purchase of the freehold of the former Sainsbury's site at St George's Parade for a sum of £13.1 million be approved.
2. The Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance, be given delegated authority to approve the resulting changes to:
 - (a) Capital budgets
 - (b) Revenue budgets
 - (c) Treasury management indicators and borrowing limits and prudential indicators

8 **Questions to Cabinet Members**

The One Nation Approach to Government

Councillor Moran asked the Cabinet Member for Resources:

Would the Cabinet Member for Resources agree with me that the joint impact of Government austerity cuts, and welfare benefit reforms has had a disproportionately damaging impact upon Wolverhampton Council, the City

economy, and therefore Wolverhampton people, than will be the case for Oxfordshire Councils, which of course includes the Prime Minister's Witney constituency?

Councillor Johnson responded by explaining that he agreed about the disproportionate impact on the city. Councillors were advised that Wolverhampton was the 17th most deprived local authority area by average indicator of multiple deprivation score out of 327 as compared to West Oxfordshire within which the Witney consistency was 315th, the Vale of White Horse 311th, South Oxfordshire 309th and Oxford City 166th.

Moreover, local government settlement tables provided by the Department for Communities and Local Government were able to show that between 2010 – 11 and 2016 – 17 Wolverhampton sustained a cash cut of £323.63 per head whereas the cash cut in Oxfordshire was just £107.48.

Further, that it was announced in January that Oxfordshire would receive £9.2 million in a so called transition grant to cushion the impact of the cuts. In comparison Wolverhampton had faced cuts three times greater than Oxfordshire's and had not received such a grant.

Moving forward, by 2017/18, based on the current year's financial settlement and DCLG tables Wolverhampton would suffer a further 5.2% cuts in core spending per dwelling in comparison to Oxfordshire's 1.8%.

Councillor Allowances

Councillor Whitehouse asked the Leader of the Council:

Would the Leader consider making alterations to the members allowance scheme to include a meeting attendance element?

The Leader of the Council responded that Councillors allowances were recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel and ratified at Council. Further, that paying allowances based on attendance would be overly complex and would become an administrative burden.

Councillor Whitehouse asked the following supplementary question.

Notwithstanding the answer just given by the Leader; is he aware that the average backbencher, in addition to Full Council meetings, serves on two scrutiny panels and is expected to serve on at least one scrutiny review each year along with the annual misnamed scrutiny 'away day'? This amounts to approximately 38 scrutiny meetings over two years and yet one member present has only attended two such meetings! A non-attendance rate of 95%. Since I know the Leader highly values the scrutiny function of the Council, does he not think that this should be rectified?

The Leader of the Council responded that Councillors were elected by their ward residents and the issue about meeting attendance was a matter for them.