

### Attendance

**Deputy Mayor** Cllr Phil Page (Lab)

### Labour

Cllr Ian Angus  
Cllr Harbans Bagri  
Cllr Harman Banger  
Cllr Mary Bateman  
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE  
Cllr Peter Bilson  
Cllr Alan Bolshaw  
Cllr Greg Brackenridge  
Cllr Ian Brookfield  
Cllr Paula Brookfield  
Cllr Craig Collingswood  
Cllr Claire Darke  
Cllr Steve Evans  
Cllr Val Evans

Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal  
Cllr Val Gibson  
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre  
Cllr Keith Inston  
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal  
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal  
Cllr Andrew Johnson  
Cllr Welcome Koussoukama  
Cllr Roger Lawrence  
Cllr Linda Leach  
Cllr Hazel Malcolm  
Cllr Louise Miles  
Cllr Anwen Muston  
Cllr Peter O'Neill

Cllr Rita Potter  
Cllr John Reynolds  
Cllr John Rowley  
Cllr Judith Rowley  
Cllr Zee Russell  
Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE  
Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz  
Cllr Mak Singh  
Cllr Tersaim Singh  
Cllr Paul Sweet  
Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman  
Cllr Martin Waite  
Cllr Daniel Warren

### Conservative

Cllr Barry Findlay  
Cllr Christopher Haynes  
Cllr Christine Mills  
Cllr Patricia Patten

Cllr Arun Photay  
Cllr Paul Singh  
Cllr Wendy Thompson  
Cllr Andrew Wynne

### UKIP

Cllr Malcolm Gwinnett

### Employees

Tim Johnson  
Mark Taylor  
Emma Bennett  
Meredith Teasdale  
Laura Phillips  
Tracey Christie  
Ian Fegan  
Colin Parr  
Jaswinder Kaur

Deputy Managing Director/Strategic Director - Place  
Strategic Director – People  
Director of Children's Services  
Director of Education  
Head of Business Management  
Head of Legal  
Head of Communications  
Head of Governance  
Democratic Services Manager

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The proceedings opened with Prayers

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[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

Item No. Title

**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from the Mayor Elias Mattu, Councillors Payal Bedi-Chadha, Ian Claymore, Julie Hodgkiss, Rupinderjit Kaur, Lynne Moran, Steve Simkins, Udey Singh and Jonathan Yardley.

**2 Declarations of interest**

The following Councillors declared the interests detailed below in respect of agenda item 6 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (including 2018 - 2019 budget rents and service charges).

Councillor	Interest	Reason
Rita Potter	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Board member of Wolverhampton Homes
Paul Singh	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Board member of Wolverhampton Homes
Tersaim Singh	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Board member of Wolverhampton Homes
Zee Russell	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Board member of Wolverhampton Homes
Linda Leach	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Leaseholder
Peter O'Neil	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Wolverhampton Homes tenant
Alan Bolshaw	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Leaseholder to Wolverhampton Homes

**3 Minutes of previous meeting**

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

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 13 December 2017, be agreed as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Deputy Mayor.

**4 Communications**

**1. The Queen's New Year's Honours**

The Deputy Mayor extended congratulations to the following individuals who received royal recognition:

- Alan Tuckett was awarded a Knighthood for services to Education,
- Elfyn Pugh was awarded an MBE for Voluntary service to Rugby,
- Kathryn Livingston was awarded an MBE in recognition of her work highlighting Dissociative Identity Disorder,
- Inez May Henriques was awarded an MBE for her work with the West Midlands Caribbean Parents & Friends Association,
- Paul Strothers was awarded an MBE for his Work in the Aerospace Industry,
- Chief Fire Officer Phil Loach was awarded an QFSM for services to the Fire Service and
- Diane Scott Deputy Chief Exec was awarded an QASM for services to the Ambulance Service - services to the Ambulance Service.

The Deputy Mayor had written to all recipients expressing the Council's congratulations on their well-deserved awards.

## **2. Dementia Friendly Community**

The Deputy Mayor was delighted to report that he attended a special event to mark the City being awarded the Dementia Friendly Community status by the Alzheimer's Society in recognition of the efforts being made to improve services for people in Wolverhampton who were living with dementia.

The Deputy Mayor added it has only been possible for Wolverhampton to be recognised as a Dementia Friendly Community thanks to the help and support of a wide range of organisations, including retailers, businesses, health and emergency services, charities, religious groups and education providers, many of whom were members of the Dementia Action Alliance and on behalf of the 3,000 or so people in Wolverhampton who were living with this terrible condition, he thanked everyone for their efforts in making the City as dementia-friendly as possible.

## **3. Management Team**

The Deputy Mayor reported that the Council said farewell to Wolverhampton Homes' Chief Executive and City of Wolverhampton Council's Strategic Director of Housing Lesley Roberts. He thanked Lesley for the significant contribution she had made to improving housing in the city and supporting residents and wished her every success in her future.

## **4. Literature Festival**

The Deputy Mayor reported the City of Wolverhampton Literature Festival saw more than 80 artists and performers in action across three days from Friday 26 January to Sunday 28 January.

The Deputy Mayor added English novelist, journalist, political commentator and television personality, Will Self, headlined the festival, with events taking place across the city at Wolverhampton's 16-strong network of libraries, Art Gallery, Bantock House, Archive, and other venues. The organisers successfully managed to put on a series of events that catered for people of all ages and backgrounds. He hoped the Literature Festival continued to pack venues across the city for many years to come.

**5 State of the City Address**

The Leader of the Council, delivered his state of the city address. He highlighted the achievements of the City, actions taken, future challenges and opportunities to come.

Councillor Wendy Thompson provided the principle speech in response to the State of the City Address.

**6 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (including 2018 - 2019 budget rents and service charges)**

Councillor Peter Bilson presented a report on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan. The report also provided, as an integral part of that business plan, a proposed HRA budget for 2018 -2019, including proposed rents and service charges to take effect from 2 April 2018, and a proposed HRA capital programme for the period 2018 - 2019 to 2021 - 2022. He provided an overview of the revenue account and business plan.

Councillor Peter Bilson proposed and Councillor Andrew Johnson seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the 1% reduction in social housing rents be implemented in accordance with the Welfare Reform and Work Act and give 28 days' notice be given to all secure and introductory tenants of the rent reduction from 2 April 2018.
2. That the business plan be adopted as set out at Appendix A (to the Cabinet (Resources) Panel report) as the approved Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan including;
  - a. The revenue budget for 2018-2019 at Appendix A3.
  - b. The capital programme for 2018-2019 to 2022-2023 at Appendix A4 including provision for retrofitting of sprinklers in high-rise blocks and building of new council housing.
  - c. The increase in the management allowance for Wolverhampton Homes for the transfer of Homelessness and Housing Options services.
3. That the rates for garage rents and service charges be agreed as set out in appendices B1-B3 and tenants be formally notified.
4. That it be agreed, the Council positions itself to take advantage of any flexibility in HRA borrowing by gearing up to develop more council housing on suitable sites.

**7 Civic Halls Improvements and Full Restoration**

Councillor John Reynolds presented a report on the Civic Halls Improvements and full restoration. He advised that the recommendations were made in the context of a revised business case and address significant building fabric, structural and building management issues that had been identified following detailed technical surveys and reviews undertaken in 2017 quarter three.

Councillor John Reynolds highlighted the economic benefits of Civic Halls and provided an overview on the scope of the work required. He added that an independent Project Health Check had assessed the scope, cost and delivery of the proposed restoration scheme. He went on to outline the detailed costings of the full restoration.

The report was debated by Council.

Councillor John Reynolds proposed and Councillor Peter Bilson seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the scope of construction and associated works for the comprehensive restoration of both Wulfrun and Civic Halls (appendix 1 to the report) be approved.
2. That the additional capital budget and resources of £23.7 million required to deliver the Civic Halls project (as detailed in section 9 of the report) be approved.
3. That the development of a ticket levy to support the proposed scheme be approved, and authority be delegated to the Cabinet Members for City Economy and Resources, in consultation with the Strategic Director for Place and Director of Finance, to approve the scheme detail.
4. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Economy, in consultation with the Strategic Director for Place, to agree the contract variation with Shaylor Group when the negotiation process was complete.

## 8 **Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel**

Councillor Milkinder Jaspal presented the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on a review of Councillor's Allowances.

Councillor Milkinder Jaspal proposed and Councillor Andrew Wynne seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel be approved;

**Recommendation 1:** That for the municipal years 2018/19 – 2021/22 the Basic Allowance be increased each year by any percentage increase in pay agreed for local government employees.

**Recommendation 2:** That no change should be made to the current Special Responsibility Allowances.

**Recommendation 3:** That no change should be made to the current Dependant Carers' Allowance.

**Recommendation 4:** That no change should be made to the current Travelling and Subsistence Allowances.

**Recommendation 5:** That no change be made to the current Co-optees Allowances.

2. That the section on Membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme be removed from the Councillor Allowances scheme.
3. That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to amend the Scheme of Councillor Allowances according to the decisions taken by Council for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

## 9 Questions to Cabinet Members

The Deputy Mayor advised the written question on Civic Halls had been formally withdrawn.

Councillor Paul Singh asked the Cabinet Member for Resources the following question:

*How many of the affected businesses fall eligible to pay business rates as they were over a £12,000 rateable value threshold?*

*From this number how many had appealed for the duration of the works from June 2017 to December 2017 to the Valuation Office Agency and had successfully had a reduction? And. what was the approximate timescale e.g. quarter 2 or 3 in 2018, for when small businesses would receive any hardship fund if successful with the West Midlands Combined Authority?*

Councillor Andrew Johnson responded that there were 53 businesses situated on or immediately adjacent to Bilston Road and of these 13 were below the threshold and were not eligible for small business rate relief.

He added that data was not available on the number of businesses who had appealed to the Valuation Office. However, no reductions in rateable value have been notified to the Council.

He then went on to add that the Council had written to businesses and a number of responses had been received. He had met with Council employees to discuss how assistance can be provided to businesses. After further work had been undertaken a cross party meeting would be held with the West Midlands Combined Authority to seek assistance for the businesses.

Councillor Barry Findlay asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment the following question:

*Has an enquiry been instituted into the doubling of the cost for the Market relocation, and when would the findings of the enquiry be made public?*

Councillor Steve Evans responded that a lessons learnt review had been commissioned and that Councillor Wendy Thompson had been briefed. The findings of the review would be shared spring this year. He added that only one contactor was available to complete the work programme in time.

Councillor Christine Mills asked the Cabinet Member for City Economy the following question:

*Has an enquiry been instituted into the considerable increase in the cost for the Wolverhampton Interchange, and when would the findings of the enquiry be made public?*

Councillor John Reynolds responded that the Managing Director had commissioned a lessons learnt review. He added the Leader of the Opposition had been briefed and the Terms of Reference for the review had been shared and that the findings of the review would be shared in the spring.