

Meeting of the Council

Minutes - 19 September 2018

Attendance

Mayor Cllr Phil Page (Lab)
Deputy Mayor Cllr Claire Darke (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Obaida Ahmed	Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal	Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Ian Angus	Cllr Val Gibson	Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Harman Banger	Cllr Celia Hibbert	Cllr Susan Roberts MBE
Cllr Mary Bateman	Cllr Keith Inston	Cllr John Rowley
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE	Cllr Jasbir Jaspal	Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Peter Bilson	Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal	Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE
Cllr Alan Bolshaw	Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur	Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz
Cllr Greg Brackenridge	Cllr Roger Lawrence	Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Ian Brookfield	Cllr Linda Leach	Cllr Clare Simm
Cllr Paula Brookfield	Cllr Hazel Malcolm	Cllr Mak Singh
Cllr Alan Butt	Cllr Asha Mattu	Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Craig Collingswood	Cllr Barbara McGarrity	Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar	Cllr Beverley Momenabadi	Cllr Martin Waite
Cllr Steve Evans	Cllr Lynne Moran	
Cllr Val Evans	Cllr Anwen Muston	

Conservative

Cllr Simon Bennett	Cllr Udey Singh
Cllr Christopher Haynes	Cllr Jane Stevenson
Cllr Sohail Khan	Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Arun Photay	Cllr Jonathan Yardley
Cllr Paul Singh	

Employees

Tim Johnson	Managing Director
Kevin O'Keefe	Director of Governance
Mark Taylor	Strategic Director - People
Claire Nye	Director of Finance
Meredith Teasdale	Director of Education
David Watts	Director of Adult Services
Emma Bennett	Director of Children's Services
Ian Fegan	Head of Communications
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services Manager

The proceedings opened with Prayers

Item No. *Title*

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, Harbans Singh Bagri, Payal Bedi-Chadha, Mike Hardacre, Louise Miles and John Reynolds.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

3 Minutes of previous meeting

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

That the minutes of the previous extraordinary and ordinary meeting, held on 18 July 2018, be agreed as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.

4 Communications

1. WW1 Commemorative Paving Stones

The Mayor reported that the paving stone and service was part of a UK Government First World War Centenary campaign, to commemorate recipients of the Victoria Cross during World War One and that the paving stones were laid in the local authority of their birth.

The first of two services took place on Wednesday 22 August, where the Mayor and Mayoress attended Oxford Street Memorial in Bilston for the dedication of Victoria Cross Paving Stone for Lance Corporal George Onions VC who served in the Devonshire Regiment.

The second service, for Corporal Roland E Elcock, would take place at the Cenotaph at the family's request on Monday 15 October at 11am, followed by a reception in the City Suite.

2. Former Mayor and Councillor Mike Heap

The Mayor was saddened to report that former Mayor and Councillor Mike Heap, had recently undergone a serious operation and was in Russell's Hall Hospital recovering.

The Mayor had sent a card to Mike on behalf of the City Council and was sure all would join in wishing him well.

3. Wolverhampton City Half Marathon

The Mayor was delighted to report that the 21st Carver Wolverhampton City Half Marathon was held on Sunday 2 September. There were 5 events;

- Half marathon
- Banks's 10k run

- Cousins 10k/20k cycle
- The Paycare children's mini marathon and
- Callprint walk in the park

Since 1998 Carver Marathon events had raised over £400,000 to help local charities. The Planning Committee would present the proceeds of this year's event on 10 December to the following charities: -

- Give us a Break Wolverhampton
- Compton Care
- Wolverhampton & Bilston Athletic Club and
- The Mayor's chosen charities

The Mayor congratulated the organising committee, the sponsors, the many volunteers, the participants, spectators and everyone concerned in staging a very successful event.

4. Remembrance Sunday

The Mayor reported that Councillors would shortly receive an invitation to this year's Remembrance Sunday service which would take place on 11 November.

5. BEM Investiture

The Mayor reported that, on Wednesday 12 September, he and the Mayoress had attended an Investiture at the Council House in Birmingham.

Ms Katheryn Angela Maria Ann Livingstone was awarded the BEM for services to People with Dissociative Identity Disorder. Ms Livingstone's honour was part of the Queen's New Year's Honours list, 2018.

5 Annual Scrutiny Report

Councillor Steve Simkins presented the Annual Scrutiny Review. He introduced the video presentation played which detailed the work undertaken in relation to the scrutiny function. He advised that scrutiny would continue to focus on the issues facing the community of Wolverhampton whilst also looking at broader issues facing the region.

Councillor Steve Simkins proposed the recommendation and Councillor Arun Photay seconded the recommendation. Both paid tribute to members on the Scrutiny Board and various Panels and the Scrutiny Team.

Resolved:

1. That the Annual Scrutiny Report be received.
2. That the video presentation detailing the work being carried out in relation to the scrutiny function be noted.

6 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 2017-2018

Councillor Craig Collingswood presented the Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report 2017 – 2018. He outlined the main areas of work undertaken by the

Committee during the year. He also placed on record his thanks to the Committee members and Audit Team for their contributions.

Councillor Craig Collingswood proposed the recommendation and Councillor Sohail Khan seconded the recommendation.

Resolved:

That the contents of the 2017-2018 Audit and Risk Committee Annual Report be approved.

7 Executive Business

Councillor Paul Singh asked the following question in relation to the item on the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2018 - 2022.

Could the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing advice on the number of homelessness cases and rough sleepers.

Councillor Peter Bilson responded that he would ensure that Councillor Paul Singh received a written response to the question raised. He added as an estimate there was approximately 20 rough sleepers however, the situation remained fluid.

Resolved:

That the Executive Business be noted.

8 Written Questions

Councillor Simon Bennett asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment:

“To ask the Cabinet Member for City Environment, what the Council is doing to support permanent market traders in light of concerns about markets on Dudley Street affecting their sales”.

Councillor Steve Evans responded the new market was a success story for the City. After significant investment the new city centre market had opened in July this year. The permanent traders had been supported during the transition period with a 33% reduction of fees.

He added the Council had a contractual agreement with LSD to run the themed market and that £10,000 from the contractual agreement was spent to support the permanent traders. Occupancy on a Wednesday had increased from 20% to 80%- which was an increase of 20 traders.

He highlighted there was also a variety of traders at the market, the themed markets organised by LSD increased the footfall into the city, for three consecutive years rates had been frozen to support the permanent traders. The market only trades four days a week, and more start up investment was required to attract more people in the city.

He added a chocolate and prosecco event was coming up which again would increase footfall. He was proud market was on the up.

Councillor Simon Bennett asked the following supplementary question:

Permanent traders had contacted him regarding the negative impact the themed markets had would the Cabinet Member agree that the Council had blown the tax payers money on the market.

Councillor Steve Evans responded that he had not been provided with any complaints of negative feedback from the traders, if Councillor Simon Bennett can provide these details he would be more than willing to have a joint meeting with Councillor Simon Bennett and the traders to address their concerns/issues.

He added the Council had invested in the market and by doing so supported the traders. This had led to increased growth of the market. The number of traders was also on the increase.

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing:

What employment support the Council has made available to employees at the Civic Hall during the continuing restoration works.

Councillor Peter Bilson responded that since the restoration works commenced, the salaried staff who were part of the Civic Halls team prior to the establishment of the Visitor Economy team had been working across the service to support the other areas of the service. These include the Art Gallery, Bilston Craft Gallery, Bantock House, The Slade Rooms, Northcote Farm, Archives and large outdoor events like Vaisakhi.

He added in recent years, the casual front-line staff had been predominantly supplied by Yoo Recruit. Since the start of this year, the level of work had not been available and so, these staff have either gone on to find other work or been deployed elsewhere in the Visitor Economy service when demand requires it. The Council continue to employ local people across the cultural estate in this way whenever demand requires it.

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the following supplementary:

Can the Cabinet Member confirm how much longer the situation would last before employees were engaged with Civic Halls work?

Councillor Peter Bilson responded that Councillor Wendy Thompson was a member of the Capital Projects Member Reference Group and was aware the refurbishment work was underway and would take two years to complete. Therefore, the Council would continue to support these employees via the cultural estate, however, if employees sought alternate employment the Council was not able to prevent such decisions.

He added the future looked positive for Wolverhampton and the Council had made the right decision to invest in the future of Wolverhampton by investing in Civic Halls and other programmes which would regenerate the city centre economy.

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing:

Why hasn't the Council undertaken a Compulsory Purchase Order of the former Eye Infirmary site on Compton Road.

Councillor Peter Bilson responded that a compulsory purchase order only normally occurs when a planning application had been approved for a development proposal. To date the Council had not received a planning application since the Eye Infirmary was closed by the Royal Wolverhampton Trust in 2007.

He added given the complexities surrounding the site, the remediation required and limited developer interest in an end use, a CPO and the above requirements had not been pursued to date. It was also usually the case that acquisition by agreement with the owner was first pursued, as had been the case here.

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the following

Considering the site had been vacant more than 10 years, the Council has had more than enough time to purchase the site considering it had pursued other sites, more effort should have been made to purchase this site.

Councillor Peter Bilson responded that conversations had taken place with the Royal Wolverhampton Trust whom have gross expectations on the value of the land which was unachievable. The Council was working hard to find a solution.

He added the Leader was hoping there was a solution before the end of the calendar year and he work tirelessly to ensure issue was resolved. The site had potential residential value and he would welcome support from the opposition group to jointly progress further and get a solution at the earliest possible date.

Councillor Jonathan Yardley to ask:

Given the unacceptable situation at Holme Bank Residential Home, can the Cabinet Member confirm that all residents have now been put into local accommodation that is appropriate for their needs?

Councillor Sandra Samuels responded that all the ward councillors had been briefed, the situation was a difficult one and one which required a degree of sensitivity.

She added at the previous inspection carried out by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Holme Bank had been rated as good. However, since then a number of concerns had been raised which resulted in an unannounced visit by the CQC and an action plan being put in place. This then led to an announced inspection.

She added in consultation with the Care Quality Commission, that had the regulatory responsibility for registered care homes, the difficult decision was made on Monday 10 September that the situation was no longer tenable at Holme Bank.

She added all individuals that were resident or in respite care at Holme Bank, including people that fund their own care and individuals funded by other local authorities, had been supported to move on to suitable alternative accommodation.

She added the people and their families were involved as much as possible in choosing the new placements. Officers would continue to monitor and follow up the moves to ensure that people have settled in their new homes. Five people were funded by the Council, seven people were self-funded, and three people were funded by other local authorities.

Councillor Jonathan Yardley asked the following supplementary question:

The situation at Holme Bank deteriorated very quickly what mechanism was the Council going to put in place to ensure standards were maintained?

Councillor Sandra Samuels responded that as of the 13 September all individuals had been transferred and that the Quality Assurance Team carried out inspections every 12 months. Holme Bank had been judged good back in 2016, however due to change in management and lack of co-ordinated care the situation had deteriorated. The Quality Assurance the team had tried to fully support Holme bank. She added regular inspection was the way forward and hoped the situation did not arise again.