

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet (Resources) Panel

Cllr Louise Miles (Chair)
Cllr Ian Brookfield (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Harman Banger
Cllr Peter Bilson
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Linda Leach
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE

Employees

Tim Johnson	Managing Director
Emma Bennett	Director of Children's Services
Tracey Christie	Head of Legal Services
John Denley	Director of Public Health
Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer
Claire Nye	Director of Finance
Meredith Teasdale	Director of Education
David Watts	Director of Adult Services

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
No apologies for absence were received for the meeting.
- 2 **Declarations of interests**
No declarations of interests were made
- 3 **Minutes of the previous meeting - 21 May 2019**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 May 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

5 **Revenue Budget Outturn 2018-2019**

Councillor Louise Miles presented the report on the Council's revenue outturn position for 2018-2019 compared with approved budgets and targets. She said that the recommendations in the report emphasized that the Council took the collection of monies owed very seriously. The Council aimed to achieve a balance of showing consideration to the Council's debtors but also an awareness of the Council's own responsibilities to collect its debts. Referring to recommendations to write off debts, Councillor Miles emphasized that debts are only written off as a last resort when all feasible recovery action had been taken.

Councillor Ian Brookfield commended everyone involved in the work that had gone into achieving a small underspend on the General Fund, particularly in the challenging times local authorities faced.

Resolved:

1. That the net surplus after taxation of £40,000 for Yoo Recruit Limited be retained by the company to enable further business development.
2. That the write off of eight non-domestic rates totalling £74,802.16 as detailed in Appendix 7 to the report be approved.
3. That the write off of four sundry debts totalling £40,878.73 as detailed in Appendix 8 to the report be approved.
4. That the write off of one council tax account totalling £5,634.54 as detailed in Appendix 9 to the report be approved.
5. That the 24 virements totalling £39.8 million, for transfer within directorates, as detailed in Appendix 10 to the report be approved.
6. That it be noted that the revenue outturn position for 2018-2019 for the General Fund; a net underspend of £265,000 (-0.12%) was achieved against the net budget requirement of £229.1 million, after meeting the net cost of redundancy and pension strain, after the use of capital receipt flexibility, and contributions to essential earmarked reserves.
7. That it be noted that whilst the positive General Fund outturn position during 2018-2019, and the resulting adjustments to reserves, will help to support the Council's short term financial position, it does not address the challenging financial position that the Council finds itself in over the medium term; namely identifying further projected budget reductions estimated at £27.3 million in 2020-2021, rising to £40-50 million over the medium term to 2023-2024. Cabinet will be presented with a report in July 2019 detailing the progress towards identifying budget reduction and income generation proposals to address the financial challenge.

8. That it be noted that the General Fund outturn position takes into account a number of proposed transfers to and from reserves and provisions for which approval is sought in the Reserves and Provisions 2018-2019 report to be presented at this meeting.
9. That it be noted that schools which remain under the control of the City of Wolverhampton Council have drawn down a net £1.8 million of their reserves during 2018-2019 after adjusting for the balance attributable to academies, which takes the total accumulated reserves to £5.1 million at 31 March 2019.
10. That it be noted that the Housing Revenue Account revenue outturn position for the year was a surplus before allocations of £20.7 million, compared to a budgeted surplus of £15.2 million.
11. That it be noted that the draft financial statements of Yoo Recruit Limited will be subject to external audit.
12. That it be noted that as a result of recruitment through Yoo Recruit Limited, the Council has been able to avoid fees which would have otherwise been incurred, including approximately £92,000 in relation to the permanent recruitment of individuals who had been previously employed on a temporary basis through the agency.
13. That it be noted that the Collection Fund outturned with a £983,000 surplus during 2018-2019; this resulted in an overall surplus of £841,000 to be carried forward.
14. That it be noted that 67 non-domestic rates accounts totalling £319,386.34 have been approved for write off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
15. That it be noted that 1,354 council tax accounts totalling £445,443.79 have been approved for write off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
16. That it be noted that 48 sundry debt accounts totalling £594,244.46 have been approved for write off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
17. That it be noted that 20 housing benefit debt accounts totalling £16,822.18 have been approved for write off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
18. That it be noted that 5 debts relating to Business Improvement District (BID) totalling £580.79, have been approved for write off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.

6 **Reserves Provisions and Balances 2018-2019**

Councillor Louise Miles presented the report on the Council's earmarked reserves, provisions and general balances as at 31 March 2019, taking account of the outturn position for 2018-2019. She drew to the Panel's attention that the Director of Finance considers that the overall level of all reserves, provisions and balances was sufficient to meet the likely level of obligations to be met from reserves, provisions and general balances in the short term.

Resolved:

1. That the transfers (to)/from earmarked reserves, provisions and general balances as detailed in tables 2, 3 and 4 to the report be approved.
2. That expenditure from provisions for their purposes as set out in Appendix 3 and 4 to the report be approved, up to the value held in each provision as at 31 March 2019.
3. That the continuation of delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to allocate funds from the Budget Contingency Reserve, the Regeneration Reserve, the Efficiency Reserve, the Transformation Reserve, the Development Reserve, the Regional Work Reserve, the Enterprise Zone Business Rates Reserve, the Business Rates Equalisation Reserve, the Treasury Management Equalisation Reserve, the Pension Deficit Recovery Reserve, the Budget Strategy Reserve and the Highways Management Reserve be approved.
4. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to allocate funds from the Community Initiatives and Crowdfund Wolves Reserve.
5. That the level of the Council's earmarked reserves, provisions and general balances as at 31 March 2019 and the purposes for which they are being held, as detailed in Appendix 1, 2, 3 and 4 to the report be noted.
6. That it be noted that the relevance and adequacy of earmarked reserves and general balances will be reviewed as required by the Constitution during the 2020-2021 budget setting process.
7. That it be noted that allocation of funding from all earmarked reserves will be reported to Cabinet (Resources) Panel in the scheduled quarterly budget monitoring reports.
8. That it be noted that Our Council Scrutiny Panel will scrutinise the use of reserves as part of the budget setting process as in previous years.
9. That it be noted that the Director of Finance considers that the overall level of all reserves, provisions and balances is sufficient to meet the likely level of obligations to be met from reserves, provisions and general balances in the short term.

10. That it be noted that the positive General Fund outturn position during 2018-2019, and the resulting adjustments to reserves, will help to support the Council's short-term financial position, enabling investment in community initiatives. However, it does not address the challenging financial position that the Council finds itself in over the medium term; namely identifying further projected budget reductions estimated at £27.3 million in 2020-2021, rising to £40-50 million over the medium term to 2023-2024. Cabinet will be presented with a report in July 2019 detailing the progress towards identifying budget reduction and income generation proposals to address the financial challenge.
11. That it be noted that the figures quoted in the report are still subject to statutory audit by Grant Thornton UK LLP as part of the 2018-2019 accounts closedown process.

7

Statutory Food Service Plan

Councillor Steve Evans presented for approval the Council's draft Food Service Plan for 2019. Delegated authority was also sought to approve the final version of the document. He drew to the Panel's attention some of the key achievements of the food team within Environmental Health and Trading Standards Service during 2018, notably a Primary Authority Partnership set up with Marstons PLC; the Trade with Confidence Consultancy service; and the relatively low number of complaints received relating to food and hygiene standards. He also corrected a minor error in the demographics contained in the Plan. The document referred to 259,926 children in poverty when it should read 25.9%.

Resolved:

1. That the draft 2019 Food Service Plan as summarised in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Environment in consultation with the Head of Business Services to approve the final version of the Food Service Plan.
3. That the requirement to prepare a Food Service Plan be noted.
4. That the Service's key achievements in 2018 be noted.

8

Transport Capital Programme 2019 - 2020 and Future Years

Councillor Steve Evans requested approval to a programme of capital projects to develop and maintain the City's transportation network for the financial year 2019-2020 and future years, subject to available resources and annual review. Over the last three financial years £33 million had been spent on the City's network. This had been funded by a variety of sources including money the Council had raised through grants, the Local Growth Fund, Department for Transport and the West Midlands Combined Authority. Amongst some of the notable schemes for 2018-2019 included the continued City North Gateway Phase 1 (Stafford Road) project.

Resolved:

1. That the list of projects for development and implementation as part of the Transportation Capital Programme 2019-2020 and future years, as set out in appendices 3, 4, 5 and 6 to the report be approved.

2. That the Head of City Transport be authorised to proceed with development work for each project on the list including surveying, site investigation, options appraisal, feasibility analysis, traffic modelling, detailed design, statutory advertising and public consultation, as appropriate.
3. That the projects marked 'Approve' in the 'Approval' column of appendix 3 and 4 to the report be approved for implementation, subject to the availability of funding.
4. That the Cabinet Member for City Environment, in consultation with the Director for City Environment be authorised to approve, through an Individual Executive Decision Notice, implementation of the projects on the list marked 'IEDN' in the 'Approval' column of appendix 3 and 4, to the report subject to the satisfactory outcome of public consultation, availability of funding and any other relevant considerations.
5. That the Cabinet Member for City Environment, in consultation with the Director for City Environment be authorised to approve, through an Individual Executive Decision Notice, the bringing forward of projects from appendix 5 to appendix 3 or 4 to the report and thereafter to approve them for implementation during 2019-2020 subject to the satisfactory outcome of public consultation, availability of funding and any other relevant considerations.
6. That further reports be presented at the appropriate time in order to obtain the necessary authority to implement the projects marked 'Cabinet' in the 'Approval' column of appendix 3 and 4 to the report.
7. That the Chief Legal Officer be authorised to serve all necessary notices in respect of the projects listed in appendix 3 and 4 to the report and, subject to there being no unresolved objections, make traffic regulation orders as required.
8. That the Head of City Transport be authorised to make applications and bids for additional external funding noting that final agreement to receive funding is dependent on Director of Finance approval.
9. That the Director of Finance be authorised to enter into funding agreements with the various funding bodies to receive grant funding in respect of the projects included in the report.
10. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Environment and the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of City Environment / Deputy Managing Director and Director of Finance to approve capital budgets for transport projects upon receipt of a grant offer letter.
11. That the expenditure and progress made in delivering £33 million worth of projects in the Transportation Capital Programme during 2016-2017, 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be noted.

12. That the Council's continuing success in bidding for additional funding and delivering new projects through the Local Growth Fund, Access to Growth, and the West Midlands Combined Authority be noted.

9 **Acquisition of Privately Owned Empty Property by Agreement or Compulsory Purchase: 91 Prestwood Road West, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton**

Councillor Peter Bilson presented the report on a proposal to authorise the acquisition of 91 Prestwood Road West, Wolverhampton by negotiation or through the making of a compulsory purchase, with a view to it being reoccupied after refurbishment. The proposal supported the Council's Empty Properties Strategy which aimed to bring long term empty properties back into use.

Resolved:

1. That the Director of City Housing be authorised to negotiate terms for the acquisition of the property 91 Prestwood Road West, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, WV11 1HT, and, in default of that acquisition, to give authority for a compulsory purchase order (CPO) to be made under Part II Section 17 Housing Act 1985 in respect of the property.
2. That expenditure for the potential acquisition of the property, with subsequent capital receipts being recycled within the Empty Property Strategy programme be approved.
3. That in the event that the property is improved and re-occupied to the satisfaction of the Director of City Housing, the withdrawal of the property from the CPO be authorised.
4. That following any acquisition, the Director of City Housing be authorised to dispose of the property on the open market on condition that the property is refurbished and re-occupied within six or 12 months (as appropriate to the scale of the works).
5. That the Chief Legal Officer be authorised to:
 - a. Take all reasonable steps as soon as it is reasonably practical to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the CPO including the publication and service of all Notices and the presentation of the Council's case at any Public Inquiry.
 - b. Approve agreements with the owners of the property setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the CPO, and/or making arrangements for re-housing or relocation of any occupiers.
 - c. Approve the making of a General Vesting Declaration (the property is brought into Council ownership via this process).
 - d. Approve the disposal of the whole and/ or parts of the property by auction, tender or private treaty.

10 **Schedule of Individual Executive Decision Notices**

Resolved:

That the summary of open and exempt individual executive decisions approved by the appropriate Cabinet Members following consultation with the relevant employees be noted.

11 **Exclusion of 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 following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Part 2 - exempt items, closed to press and public

12 **Procurement - Award of Contracts for Works, Goods and Services**

The Panel considered proposals for the award of contracts for works, good and services.

Resolved:

1. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Director of City Housing, to approve the award of a contract for Reedham Gardens Development when the evaluation process is complete.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Director of City Housing, to approve the award of a contract for Facilities Management Lightning Protection Repairs and Maintenance and when the evaluation process is complete.
3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Director of City Housing, to approve the award of a contract for Facilities Management Electrical Repairs and Maintenance when the evaluation process is complete.
4. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Director of City Housing, to approve the award of a contract for Facilities Management Mechanical Repairs and Maintenance when the evaluation process is complete.
5. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Director of City Housing, to approve the award of a contract for Facilities Management Building Repairs and Maintenance when the evaluation process is complete.
6. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Director of City Housing, to approve the award of a contract for Facilities Management Water Testing when the evaluation process is complete.

7. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Director of City Housing, to approve the award of a contract for Property Management Partner when the evaluation process is complete.
8. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Director of City Housing, to approve the award of a contract for Lift Inspections, Testing and Maintenance when the evaluation process is complete.
9. That the extension of the current contracts for Supported Living for a period of one month from 1 August 2019 to 31 August 2019 be approved.
10. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Adults, in consultation with the Director of Adult Services, to approve the award of a contract for Supported Living Framework for Adults with Disabilities when the evaluation process is complete.
11. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People in consultation with the Director of Children's Services to approve the award of a contract for Young Persons' Supported Accommodation and Outreach Service and Young Families Supported Accommodation and Outreach Service when the evaluation process is complete.
12. That the Chief Legal Officer and staff with appropriate delegated authority be authorised to execute contracts in respect of the above as required.

13

Land and Property Transactions – Corporate Landlord

Councillor Peter Bilson presented the report on a proposal to declare the Beldray Building surplus to the Council's requirements and to approve the disposal strategy for the asset. The proposal would generate both capital and revenue efficiencies for the Council.

Resolved:

1. That following asset be declared surplus to the Council's requirements:
 - Beldray Building
2. That disposal of the asset via either informal tender or auction upon terms and conditions to be agreed, be approved.

14

Boscobel Estate Residential Repairs - Leaseholder Options

Councillor Peter Bilson presented the report on a proposal to introduce a scheme to assist leaseholds on the Boscobel Estate which was undergoing substantial investment. The scheme was similar to the one that had been applied to leaseholders facing significant financial charges due to regeneration works on the Heath Town estate.

Resolved:

1. That the options for Boscobel leaseholders as set out at section 3 of the report be approved.

2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member of City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Director of City Housing to agree the buy-back of individual properties that meet the criteria as set out at section 3 of this report.
3. That it be noted that there is an existing capital budget as approved at Cabinet in January 2019, for the purchase of additional social housing units using Right to Buy receipts to fund 30% of the costs. This budget will be used to purchase any leasehold properties in the Boscobel Estate that meet the criteria as detailed in this report.
4. That it be noted that a further report will be presented to Cabinet (Resources) Panel in due course to consider and agree a set of principles regarding leasehold properties on other flatted estates that will be subject to further extensive refurbishment works and leaseholder charges.