

Meeting of the Council

Minutes - 27 January 2016

Attendance

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

Labour

Cllr Harbans Bagri
Cllr Harman Banger
Cllr Mary Bateman
Cllr Philip Bateman
Cllr Peter Bilson
Cllr Alan Bolshaw
Cllr Greg Brackenridge
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Ian Claymore
Cllr Craig Collingswood
Cllr Claire Darke
Cllr Bishan Dass
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 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

Liberal Democrat

Cllr Richard Whitehouse

UKIP

Cllr Malcolm Gwinnett

Employees

Ian Fegan
Keith Ireland
Tim Johnson
Julien Kramer
Laura Phillips
Linda Sanders
Martyn Sargeant
Abby Vella

Head of Communications
Managing Director
Strategic Director - Place
Director of Education
Business Manager
Strategic Director - People
Group Manager - Corporate Administration
Graduate Management Trainee

The proceedings opened with Prayers

Item No. Title

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Yardley, Mattu, Angus, Bedi and Haynes, and from Kevin O’Keefe, Director of Governance.

2 Declarations of interest

The following Councillors declared the interests detailed below in respect of agenda item seven “Housing Revenue Account Business Plan”

Councillor	Interest	Reason
Payal Bedi	Disclosable pecuniary	Landlord who lets a property to Wolverhampton Homes
Alan Bolshaw	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Member of the board of Wolverhampton Homes
Ian Claymore	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Council tenant
Dr Michael Hardacre	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Member of the board of Wolverhampton Homes
Linda Leach	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Leaseholder
Lorna McGregor	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Leaseholder
Peter O’Neill	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Council tenant
Rita Potter	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Member of the board of Wolverhampton Homes
Paul Singh	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Member of the board of Wolverhampton Homes
Tersaim Singh	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Member of the board of Wolverhampton Homes

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 16 December 2016, be agreed as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.

4 **Communications**

Queen's New Year's Honours list

The Mayor extended congratulations to three residents of the City who received royal recognition, namely, Councillor Sandra Samuels, for political service and services to local government and foster carers Clifford Alan Bennett and Jacqueline Bennett for services to children and families. Congratulatory messages on behalf of the Council had been sent.

Holocaust Memorial Day

The Mayor thanked all those who attended the Holocaust Memorial service at the Cenotaph that morning, including Interfaith Wolverhampton, Councillors, employees and members of the public.

5 **State of the City Address 2015/16**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Roger Lawrence, delivered his State of the City Address which had been timed to coincide with the launch of the City Vision 2030.

He highlighted the following issues:

- Challenges facing the Council
- Railway and interchange development work
- Investment sites and regeneration in the City
- Housing development improvements
- Role of independent enterprises
- Local employment and training opportunities
- Devolution deal

The Leader of the Opposition group, Councillor Wendy Thompson (Conservative Group), responded to Councillor Roger Lawrence's state of the city address.

6 **Review of Statement of Gambling Policy**

Council received a report on the reviewed Statement of Gambling Policy, which was outlined by Councillor Bolshaw, Chair of the Licensing Committee.

It was moved by Councillor Bolshaw and seconded by Councillor Dass.

Resolved:

To adopt the proposed Statement of Gambling Policy for implementation with effect from 31 January 2016.

7 **Housing Revenue Account Business Plan**

Council received a report on the Housing Revenue Account business plan. Councillor Bilson presented an overview of the recommendations and recommendations for noting. He responded to a question from Councillor Thompson regarding the building programme and timespan for dealing with voids.

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

Resolved:

1. That the implementation of the 1% reduction in social housing rents in accordance with the Welfare Reform and Work Bill and the proposed 28 days' notice to all secure and introductory tenants of the rent reduction from 4 April 2016 be approved.
2. That the business plan as set out at appendix A to the Cabinet report be adopted as the approved Housing Revenue Account business plan.
3. That the increases to garage rents and service charges as set out in appendices B1-B3 of the Cabinet report and the formal notification of tenants be agreed.
4. That the Cabinet Member, City Assets, circulate details of the average turnaround for voids to the Leader of the Opposition.
5. To note:
 - (a) That all Council dwelling rents will reduce by 1% in line with the proposals contained in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill.
 - (b) The consultation responses as outlined at appendix C of the cabinet report.
 - (c) Proposals to meet the requirements of the Heat Network regulations 2014 for the district heating schemes at Heath Town and New Park Village.
 - (d) The potential impact of the current Housing and Planning Bill on the HRA business plan.

8 **Executive Business**

Council received a summary of executive business in relation to:

- Violence against women strategy
- Playing pitch strategy and assessment report
- Active travel strategy

9 **Question to Council**

Councillor Thompson asked the following question:

'Could the Cabinet Member advise Council of progress with the steps being taken by the authority to match local people with jobs over the last two years, in terms of the numbers of local people successfully placed in permanent jobs in or near to Wolverhampton?'

Councillor Reynolds reported that unemployment had fallen in the City and highlighted the Council's role in achieving this through:

- Employee support such as the Amazon warehouse development
- City jobs fair, which was attended by approximately 8500 job seekers and 120 employers
- Support for young people through 1,811 work experience placements with 458 local companies
- Bespoke training and tailored employment opportunities
- Development of employment programmes with partners such as the university, college and voluntary and community sector
- Development of skills for work through the adult education service
- Work to secure external funding to support future employment.

Councillor Thompson thanked Councillor Reynolds for his response and asked about his awareness of the gender gap of secondary school educational achievement rates in the City.

Councillor Reynolds responded by explaining that the gender gap was a national trend which was not solely attributable to the City of Wolverhampton. He advised that this was an education rather than local economy issue and suggested that the Cabinet Member for Education might be able to provide a more detailed local analysis.