

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Stephen Simkins (Chair)
Cllr Steve Evans (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Obaida Ahmed
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Chris Burden
Cllr Craig Collingswood
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Louise Miles

Employees

Ian Fegan	Director of Communications and Visitor Experience
Alison Hinds	Director of Children's Services
James Howse	Director of Finance
Charlotte Johns	Director of Strategy
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration
David Pattison	Chief Operating Officer
Laura Phillips	Deputy Director of People and Change
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services and Systems Manager
Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Jacqui Coogan. |
| 2 | Declaration of interests
No declarations of interests were made. |
| 3 | Minutes of the previous meeting
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 November 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. |

4 **Removal of Mandatory Unpaid Leave**

Councillor Paula Brookfield presented the report on a proposal to end Mandatory Unpaid Leave (MUL) from 2024-2025, subject to the outcome of consultations with the Trade Unions. MUL was introduced in 2019 alongside the closure of Council offices during the Christmas period. All employees were required to purchase three days additional annual leave which equated to a deduction of 1.15% from salaries and to book the three days off during the Christmas closure period. Ending MUL would ensure fairness and equity for Council's employees as not all employees could access Mandatory Unpaid Leave. It would also support the Council's employees with the cost of living – effectively a 1.15% increase in pay; responds to a request from Unison for a removal of MUL; and supports the Council's 'employee offer' for recruitment and retention purposes by removing the mandatory deduction applied as part of employee terms and conditions.

Resolved:

1. That the proposal to end Mandatory Unpaid Leave (MUL) from April 2024 and for the Council to enter formal consultation with Trade Unions in this regard be approved.
2. That if agreement is reached after consultation with Trade Unions, employees would utilise their annual leave allowance for the three day Christmas closure period (Friday 27, Monday 30 and Tuesday 31 December 2024) and annually thereafter as per the current collective agreement.
3. That it be noted that if agreed the Christmas closure period for the majority of Council services remains unchanged.
4. That it be noted that employees would continue to have the option to purchase annual leave, as detailed in the Buying Annual Leave Scheme guidance, as a substitute for Mandatory Unpaid Leave.
5. That it be noted that there would be an impact on People Services (HR), Agresso and the Payroll team due to the initial work required to make the amendments (communication, engagement, consultation, changes to terms and conditions, policies and guides) and subsequently a potential increase in purchasing of annual leave, monthly deductions and lost pension buy back related work. At this stage this is not quantifiable and would change on an annual basis so this would need to be carefully monitored to review priorities/put work on hold or bring in additional resource if required.
6. That it be noted that the current arrangements for services not subject to Christmas closure remain the same in that they would still be required to operate as an essential or emergency service. Employees in these services can continue to choose when they book their annual leave using their entitlement or additional purchased leave.

5 **Families First for Children Pathfinder Implementation**

Councillor Chris Burden presented the report on progress made with the Council's participation of Children's Services in the Stable Homes, Built On Love, Families First for Children Pathfinder Programme (FFCP). The Pathfinder, led by the Department for Education (DfE), had been structured in delivery phases. Phase 1 was the test and learn phase. This involved implementing a locally agreed, co-designed model to address reform areas in family help, child protection, family networks and

safeguarding partners. Councillor Burden delivered a summary of the co-designed local response against the four reform areas. Cabinet was asked to endorse the high level Wolverhampton FFCP Implementation Plan and authorise the use of the FFCP budget to support the delivery of the plan.

Resolved:

That the high-level Wolverhampton Families First for Children Pathfinder Implementation Plan be approved.

6

Investment Prospectus First Phase Delivery Plan - St Georges

Councillor Stephen Simkins presented the report on an overview on the strategy and route to bring forward regeneration on the five acre St Georges (formerly Sainsbury's) site. Approval was requested to delegate authority to enter into a pre-development agreement with Capital&Centric to work up a detailed vision as to how the strategic site could become a destination district for Wolverhampton. Early ideas for the site included: homes; community spaces; green streets; a grade two listed church being repurposed as a community centrepiece; shops, workspaces and cafe bars. The culmination of all these things would create a vibrant new quarter to Wolverhampton's City Centre with links to the £61 million City Learning Quarter, which is set to open in 2025.

Resolved:

1. That authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of City Development, the Section 151 Officer and Chief Operating Officer to:
 - i. Approve the appointment of Capital&Centric through a direct award via the Pagabo Developer Led Framework (LOT 3c – West Midlands).
 - ii. Enter into a Pre-Development Agreement to progress the development of feasibility studies to inform an HMT Outline Business Case (OBC) identifying the preferred option for the site.
2. That the allocation of £358,000 from the Regeneration Reserve to support the cost of the pre-development agreement be approved.
3. That it be noted that a further report would be brought to Cabinet in the near future to approve the allocation of funds from the regeneration reserve to support the procurement of extra capacity within the Council and city investment directorate that is required in order to deliver St Georges and other priorities.