

Meeting of the Council

Minutes - 21 September 2016

Attendance

Mayor Cllr Barry Findlay (Con)
Deputy Mayor Cllr Elias Mattu (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Ian Angus	Cllr Val Evans	Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Harbans Bagri	Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal	Cllr Phil Page
Cllr Harman Banger	Cllr Val Gibson	Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Mary Bateman	Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre	Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Philip Bateman	Cllr Julie Hodgkiss	Cllr John Rowley
Cllr Payal Bedi-Chadha	Cllr Keith Inston	Cllr Judith Rowley
Cllr Peter Bilson	Cllr Jasbir Jaspal	Cllr Sandra Samuels
Cllr Alan Bolshaw	Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal	Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz
Cllr Greg Brackenridge	Cllr Andrew Johnson	Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Ian Brookfield	Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur	Cllr Mak Singh
Cllr Paula Brookfield	Cllr Welcome Koussoukama	Cllr Tersaim Singh
Cllr Ian Claymore	Cllr Roger Lawrence	Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Craig Collingswood	Cllr Hazel Malcolm	Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Claire Darke	Cllr Lynne Moran	Cllr Martin Waite
Cllr Steve Evans	Cllr Anwen Muston	Cllr Daniel Warren

Conservative

Cllr Christopher Haynes
Cllr Christine Mills
Cllr Patricia Patten
Cllr Paul Singh

UKIP

Cllr Malcolm Gwinnett

Employees

Keith Ireland	Managing Director
Mark Taylor	Director of Finance
Kevin O'Keefe	Director of Governance
Colin Parr	Head of Governance
Lesley Roberts	Strategic Director – Housing
Laura Phillips	Strategic Business Manager
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Service Manager
Julia Cleary	Scrutiny and Systems Manager

The proceedings opened with Prayers

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

Item No. *Title*

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Arun Photay.

2 Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of previous meetings - 20 July 2016

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

- (1) That the minutes of the extraordinary meeting, held on 20 July 2016, be agreed as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.
- (2) That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 20 July 2016, be agreed as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.

4 Communications

The Mayor stated that it was with great sadness that we had learned of the death of former Councillor and Mayor, Gwen Stafford-Good on 18th August and former Councillor and MP, Ken Purchase on 28 August, a minutes silence was held in their memory.

The Mayor also reminded Councillors that the Remembrance Sunday service would take place on 13 November. The Drumhead Service would begin at 10.58am, followed by a second service in St. Peter's Church at approximately 11.25am.

5 Treasury management - annual report 2015/16 and activity monitoring quarter one 2016/17

Cllr Johnson introduced the Treasury Management Annual Report 2015/16 and Activity Monitoring Quarter One 2016/17. Cllr Johnson stated that the report was excellent news and would be making a big difference to the services that the Council was providing to Wolverhampton.

Cllr Thompson stated that it was good to see savings however she would also like to see figures relating to any debts in the future as well. It agreed that this was possible as these figures were a matter of public record.

The recommendations were moved by Cllr Johnson and seconded by Cllr Bilson.

Resolved:

1. That the amendment to paragraph 1.4 of the Annual Investment Strategy by lowering the minimum sovereign rating from AA+ to AA with regard to the Council's investment lending list be agreed.

That the Council note:

2. That the Council operated within the approved Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators, and also within the requirements set out in the Council's approved Treasury Management Policy Statement during 2015/16.
3. The revenue savings of £7.6 million for the General Fund (including a special dividend from Birmingham Airport of £3.6 million) and £1.5 million for the Housing Revenue Account were generated from treasury management activities in 2015/16.
4. The revenue savings of £886,000 for the General Fund and £254,000 for the Housing Revenue Account are forecast from treasury management activities in 2016/17.

6 Adoption of the Wolverhampton City Centre area action plan

Cllr Reynolds moved that the Wolverhampton City Centre Action Plan be adopted. The Plan had been through three rounds of consultation and provided a basis for determining planning applications up until 2026.

Cllr Thompson stated that she welcomed the Plan but that it had taken too long to develop and would require a site of considerable building work to start to raise the confidence of residents.

Cllr Bilson stated that a lot of work was already underway and that the Council was also looking at the skills base of residents to encourage those with low skills or poor health onto a 6 weeks course with the armed forces to help them back into work.

The recommendations were seconded by Cllr Bilson.

Resolved:

That Council approve and adopt the Wolverhampton City Centre Area Action Plan.

7 Human Resources

Cllr Lawrence moved a report to seek approval for the appointment of a Service Director – Adults.

On 7 September 2016, a Special Appointment Committee had been convened to interview for the post of Service Director – Adults. The committee's recommendation was to appoint David Watts.

The recommendation was seconded by Cllr Samuels.

Resolved:

That Council approve the recommendation of a Special Appointments Committee that David Watts be appointed as Service Director – Adults on the Council's senior management terms and conditions.

8 **WV Living detailed business plan phase one**

Cllr Bilson introduced a report recommending that Council approve the recommendation from Cabinet regarding the WV Living detailed business plan phase 1.

The report considered an increase to the Council's Capital Programme for loans to WV Living to be repaid to the Council at commercial rates in accordance with the provisions of the Business Plan.

The development of new homes by WV Living would support a number of the City's strategic objectives:

- Pump prime the new build housing market in the City
- Accelerate the development of much needed new homes
- Provide additional council housing for the Housing Revenue Account
- Provides new market rented homes for families (who cannot afford deposit towards purchase) – not currently available in the City
- Opportunity to support regeneration programmes
- Bring sites into use that might otherwise not be developed
- Provides local jobs and training including work and opportunities for private sector builders and professional services, including sustaining jobs at the Council and Wolverhampton Homes by purchasing services

The WV Living Business Plan demonstrated a positive financial outcome for the Council which would support the provision of other activities and services.

Cllr Johnson seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

That the Council agree to provide an increase to the Council's Capital Programme by up to a maximum of £40 million to enable loans to be made to WV Living to be repaid to the Council at commercial rates in accordance with the provisions of the Business Plan.

9 **Questions to Cabinet Members**

1. In response to Cllr Councillor Udey Singh's question in relation to the cost of translation services Cllr Johnson stated that we did not separately analyse translation and interpreter services and were only able to provide a combined spend figure. We were only able to access spend data from 1st April 2014 (Agresso Implementation). The figures were as follows:

2014/15

The cost of Translation and Interpretation Services for 2014/15 was in total £193,090.88.

2015/16

The cost of Translation and Interpretation Services for 2015/16 was in total £320,890.87.

2016/17

The cost of Translation and Interpretation Services for 2016/17 is currently £117,044.80.

The Council had a Contract in place for Translation and Interpretation Services with a company called, "The Big Word". Where the contracted provider was unable to fulfil the requirements of the customer then staff had engaged with other accredited suppliers. The service provided was fully managed and therefore the Council did not employ any staff to deliver this Service.

The Councils Contract with The Big Word" expired on 31st October 2016; a procurement exercise was currently being undertaken to seek the most advantageous company to deliver the Councils; Translation, Face to Face Interpretation, Telephone and BSL (British Sign Language) Service.

Cllr Singh asked a supplementary question:

'How is the City assisting new movers to the area with integration when funding is being spent on translation services?'

Cllr Johnson stated that the key was to understand the legislative requirements linked with translation services. In areas such as child protection, domestic violence and homicide reviews interpreters were required to be present.

2. In response to Cllr Thompsons question regarding Residents' Parking Schemes, Cllr Evans stated that there were no plans to introduce further residents parking schemes in Wolverhampton until the New Cross parking scheme was live and any lessons learnt had been considered. It was expected that it would be at least six months after going live before we would be in a position to consider any further schemes.

Cllr Thompson asked a supplementary question:

'What was the percentage response to the consultation?'

Cllr Evans stated that he would provide the answer in writing.

3. In response to Cllr Thompson's question regarding a response to the DCLG request for compliance, Cllr Lawrence confirmed that he had replied to the Minister on 1st August and that there had been no evidence to support the anecdotal reports that a handful of Council Tax Demands had been delivered during the first few days of the Purdah period.

The Monitoring Officer had investigated the matter and confirmed that there had been no breach of the regulations surrounding the Purdah period and the Section 151 Officer was satisfied that all the facts and figures were in order.

Cllr Thompson asked a supplementary question:

'Were you aware that the original question had been based on a complaint from a local resident?'

Cllr Lawrence stated that he was aware of some complaints but that no evidence had been received.