

Attendance

Deputy Mayor Cllr Phil Page (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Ian Angus
Cllr Harbans Bagri
Cllr Harman Banger
Cllr Mary Bateman
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE
Cllr Peter Bilson
Cllr Alan Bolshaw
Cllr Greg Brackenridge
Cllr Ian Brookfield
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Craig Collingswood
Cllr Claire Darke
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Val Evans

Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Val Gibson
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Keith Inston
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Andrew Johnson
Cllr Welcome Koussoukama
Cllr Roger Lawrence
Cllr Linda Leach
Cllr Hazel Malcolm
Cllr Louise Miles
Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Peter O'Neill

Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr John Rowley
Cllr Judith Rowley
Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE
Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz
Cllr Mak Singh
Cllr Tersaim Singh
Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Martin Waite
Cllr Daniel Warren

Conservative

Cllr Barry Findlay
Cllr Christopher Haynes
Cllr Christine Mills
Cllr Patricia Patten

Cllr Arun Photay
Cllr Paul Singh
Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Andrew Wynne

UKIP

Cllr Malcolm Gwinnett

Employees

Tim Johnson
Mark Taylor
Emma Bennett
Meredith Teasdale
Laura Phillips
Tracey Christie
Ian Fegan
Colin Parr
Jaswinder Kaur

Deputy Managing Director/Strategic Director - Place
Strategic Director – People
Director of Children's Services
Director of Education
Head of Business Management
Head of Legal
Head of Communications
Head of Governance
Democratic Services Manager

The proceedings opened with Prayers

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

Item No. Title

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from the Mayor Elias Mattu, Councillors Payal Bedi-Chadha, Ian Claymore, Julie Hodgkiss, Rupinderjit Kaur, Lynne Moran, Steve Simkins, Udey Singh and Jonathan Yardley.

2 Declarations of interest

The following Councillors declared the interests detailed below in respect of agenda item 6 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (including 2018 - 2019 budget rents and service charges).

Councillor	Interest	Reason
Rita Potter	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Board member of Wolverhampton Homes
Paul Singh	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Board member of Wolverhampton Homes
Tersaim Singh	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Board member of Wolverhampton Homes
Zee Russell	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Board member of Wolverhampton Homes
Linda Leach	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Leaseholder
Peter O'Neil	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Wolverhampton Homes tenant
Alan Bolshaw	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Leaseholder to Wolverhampton Homes

3 Minutes of previous meeting

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

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 13 December 2017, be agreed as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Deputy Mayor.

4 Communications

1. The Queen's New Year's Honours

The Deputy Mayor extended congratulations to the following individuals who received royal recognition:

- Alan Tuckett was awarded a Knighthood for services to Education,
- Elfyn Pugh was awarded an MBE for Voluntary service to Rugby,
- Kathryn Livingston was awarded an MBE in recognition of her work highlighting Dissociative Identity Disorder,
- Inez May Henriques was awarded an MBE for her work with the West Midlands Caribbean Parents & Friends Association,
- Paul Strothers was awarded an MBE for his Work in the Aerospace Industry,
- Chief Fire Officer Phil Loach was awarded an QFSM for services to the Fire Service and
- Diane Scott Deputy Chief Exec was awarded an QASM for services to the Ambulance Service - services to the Ambulance Service.

The Deputy Mayor had written to all recipients expressing the Council's congratulations on their well-deserved awards.

2. Dementia Friendly Community

The Deputy Mayor was delighted to report that he attended a special event to mark the City being awarded the Dementia Friendly Community status by the Alzheimer's Society in recognition of the efforts being made to improve services for people in Wolverhampton who were living with dementia.

The Deputy Mayor added it has only been possible for Wolverhampton to be recognised as a Dementia Friendly Community thanks to the help and support of a wide range of organisations, including retailers, businesses, health and emergency services, charities, religious groups and education providers, many of whom were members of the Dementia Action Alliance and on behalf of the 3,000 or so people in Wolverhampton who were living with this terrible condition, he thanked everyone for their efforts in making the City as dementia-friendly as possible.

3. Management Team

The Deputy Mayor reported that the Council said farewell to Wolverhampton Homes' Chief Executive and City of Wolverhampton Council's Strategic Director of Housing Lesley Roberts. He thanked Lesley for the significant contribution she had made to improving housing in the city and supporting residents and wished her every success in her future.

4. Literature Festival

The Deputy Mayor reported the City of Wolverhampton Literature Festival saw more than 80 artists and performers in action across three days from Friday 26 January to Sunday 28 January.

The Deputy Mayor added English novelist, journalist, political commentator and television personality, Will Self, headlined the festival, with events taking place across the city at Wolverhampton's 16-strong network of libraries, Art Gallery, Bantock House, Archive, and other venues. The organisers successfully managed to put on a series of events that catered for people of all ages and backgrounds. He hoped the Literature Festival continued to pack venues across the city for many years to come.

5 State of the City Address

The Leader of the Council, delivered his state of the city address. He highlighted the achievements of the City, actions taken, future challenges and opportunities to come.

Councillor Wendy Thompson provided the principle speech in response to the State of the City Address.

6 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (including 2018 - 2019 budget rents and service charges)

Councillor Peter Bilson presented a report on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan. The report also provided, as an integral part of that business plan, a proposed HRA budget for 2018 -2019, including proposed rents and service charges to take effect from 2 April 2018, and a proposed HRA capital programme for the period 2018 - 2019 to 2021 - 2022. He provided an overview of the revenue account and business plan.

Councillor Peter Bilson proposed and Councillor Andrew Johnson seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the 1% reduction in social housing rents be implemented in accordance with the Welfare Reform and Work Act and give 28 days' notice be given to all secure and introductory tenants of the rent reduction from 2 April 2018.
2. That the business plan be adopted as set out at Appendix A (to the Cabinet (Resources) Panel report) as the approved Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan including;
 - a. The revenue budget for 2018-2019 at Appendix A3.
 - b. The capital programme for 2018-2019 to 2022-2023 at Appendix A4 including provision for retrofitting of sprinklers in high-rise blocks and building of new council housing.
 - c. The increase in the management allowance for Wolverhampton Homes for the transfer of Homelessness and Housing Options services.
3. That the rates for garage rents and service charges be agreed as set out in appendices B1-B3 and tenants be formally notified.
4. That it be agreed, the Council positions itself to take advantage of any flexibility in HRA borrowing by gearing up to develop more council housing on suitable sites.

7 Civic Halls Improvements and Full Restoration

Councillor John Reynolds presented a report on the Civic Halls Improvements and full restoration. He advised that the recommendations were made in the context of a revised business case and address significant building fabric, structural and building management issues that had been identified following detailed technical surveys and reviews undertaken in 2017 quarter three.

Councillor John Reynolds highlighted the economic benefits of Civic Halls and provided an overview on the scope of the work required. He added that an independent Project Health Check had assessed the scope, cost and delivery of the

proposed restoration scheme. He went on to outline the detailed costings of the full restoration.

The report was debated by Council.

Councillor John Reynolds proposed and Councillor Peter Bilson seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the scope of construction and associated works for the comprehensive restoration of both Wulfrun and Civic Halls (appendix 1 to the report) be approved.
2. That the additional capital budget and resources of £23.7 million required to deliver the Civic Halls project (as detailed in section 9 of the report) be approved.
3. That the development of a ticket levy to support the proposed scheme be approved, and authority be delegated to the Cabinet Members for City Economy and Resources, in consultation with the Strategic Director for Place and Director of Finance, to approve the scheme detail.
4. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Economy, in consultation with the Strategic Director for Place, to agree the contract variation with Shaylor Group when the negotiation process was complete.

8 **Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel**

Councillor Milkinder Jaspal presented the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on a review of Councillor's Allowances.

Councillor Milkinder Jaspal proposed and Councillor Andrew Wynne seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel be approved;

Recommendation 1: That for the municipal years 2018/19 – 2021/22 the Basic Allowance be increased each year by any percentage increase in pay agreed for local government employees.

Recommendation 2: That no change should be made to the current Special Responsibility Allowances.

Recommendation 3: That no change should be made to the current Dependant Carers' Allowance.

Recommendation 4: That no change should be made to the current Travelling and Subsistence Allowances.

Recommendation 5: That no change be made to the current Co-optees Allowances.

2. That the section on Membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme be removed from the Councillor Allowances scheme.
3. That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to amend the Scheme of Councillor Allowances according to the decisions taken by Council for inclusion in the Council's Constitution.

9 Questions to Cabinet Members

The Deputy Mayor advised the written question on Civic Halls had been formally withdrawn.

Councillor Paul Singh asked the Cabinet Member for Resources the following question:

How many of the affected businesses fall eligible to pay business rates as they were over a £12,000 rateable value threshold?

From this number how many had appealed for the duration of the works from June 2017 to December 2017 to the Valuation Office Agency and had successfully had a reduction? And, what was the approximate timescale e.g. quarter 2 or 3 in 2018, for when small businesses would receive any hardship fund if successful with the West Midlands Combined Authority?

Councillor Andrew Johnson responded that there were 53 businesses situated on or immediately adjacent to Bilston Road and of these 13 were below the threshold and were not eligible for small business rate relief.

He added that data was not available on the number of businesses who had appealed to the Valuation Office. However, no reductions in rateable value have been notified to the Council.

He then went on to add that the Council had written to businesses and a number of responses had been received. He had met with Council employees to discuss how assistance can be provided to businesses. After further work had been undertaken a cross party meeting would be held with the West Midlands Combined Authority to seek assistance for the businesses.

Councillor Barry Findlay asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment the following question:

Has an enquiry been instituted into the doubling of the cost for the Market relocation, and when would the findings of the enquiry be made public?

Councillor Steve Evans responded that a lessons learnt review had been commissioned and that Councillor Wendy Thompson had been briefed. The findings of the review would be shared spring this year. He added that only one contactor was available to complete the work programme in time.

Councillor Christine Mills asked the Cabinet Member for City Economy the following question:

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

Has an enquiry been instituted into the considerable increase in the cost for the Wolverhampton Interchange, and when would the findings of the enquiry be made public?

Councillor John Reynolds responded that the Managing Director had commissioned a lessons learnt review. He added the Leader of the Opposition had been briefed and the Terms of Reference for the review had been shared and that the findings of the review would be shared in the spring.