

Attendance

Mayor Cllr Phil Page (Lab)
Deputy Mayor Cllr Claire Darke (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Obaida Ahmed	Cllr Val Evans	Cllr Beverley Momenabadi
Cllr Ian Angus	Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal	Cllr Lynne Moran
Cllr Harbans Bagri	Cllr Val Gibson	Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Harman Banger	Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre	Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Mary Bateman	Cllr Celia Hibbert	Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE	Cllr Keith Inston	Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Payal Bedi-Chadha	Cllr Jasbir Jaspal	Cllr Susan Roberts MBE
Cllr Peter Bilson	Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal	Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Alan Bolshaw	Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur	Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE
Cllr Greg Brackenridge	Cllr Welcome Koussoukama	Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Ian Brookfield	Cllr Roger Lawrence	Cllr Clare Simm
Cllr Paula Brookfield	Cllr Hazel Malcolm	Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Craig Collingswood	Cllr Asha Mattu	Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar	Cllr Barbara McGarrity	Cllr Martin Waite
Cllr Steve Evans	Cllr Louise Miles	

Conservative

Cllr Simon Bennett	Cllr Udey Singh
Cllr Christopher Haynes	Cllr Jane Stevenson
Cllr Sohail Khan	Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Paul Singh	Cllr Jonathan Yardley

Employees

Kevin O'Keefe	Director of Governance
Tim Johnson	Deputy Managing Director
Tracey Christie	Head of Legal
Alison Shannon	Chief Accountant
Emma Bennett	Director of Children's Services
Meredith Teasdale	Director of Education
David Watts	Director of Adult Services
Ian Fegan	Head of Communications
Laura Phillips	Head of Business Management
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services Manager
Henry Gregory	Graduate Management Trainee

Item No. *Title*

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alan Butt and Arun Photay.

2 Declarations of interest

Tim Johnson declared a pecuniary interest in item 10 and 11 as an employee directly impacted by the recommendations.

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 May 2018, be agreed as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.

4 Communications

1. The Queen's Birthday Honours

The Mayor was delighted to report that three people were recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours. Deputy Chief Officer Michael Rogers was awarded an MBE for Remarkable contribution to the Volunteer Police Force, West Midlands Police Special Constabulary. Dr Opinderjit Takhar was awarded an MBE for her Services to Higher Education and Mrs Jill Parker was awarded the MBE for her Services to the Magistracy & Community of Wolverhampton and South Staffordshire.

The Mayor had written to Michael, Opinderjit and Jill on behalf of the City Council to extend the Council's sincere congratulations.

2. Star Awards

The Mayor reported that approximately 500 employees and partners of the Council attended this year's employee Star Awards at the Grand Theatre on Monday 18 June. The Star Awards were about recognising employees' success and achievements and rewarding those who go the 'extra mile' to serve the City of Wolverhampton. The Mayor congratulated all the award winners, as well as those nominated.

3. Armed Forces Day

The Mayor reported that the City of Wolverhampton marked Armed Forces Week with an action-packed programme for both the day itself and during the lead up to it. The celebrations began with a flag raising ceremony at the flag pole on the piazza.

The Mayor added that the Armed Forces Day Celebration event ended with a parade (led by the Band of the Mercian Regiment) and a flag lowering ceremony. As a City, the Council had a special relationship with our armed forces. Armed Forces Day gave the Council an opportunity to celebrate all that the forces do to defend the nation at home and abroad.

4. Food Festival

The Mayor reported that the City of Wolverhampton's Festival of Food and Drink, was held on 7 and 8 July and saw record attendance over the two days. More than 25,000 people enjoyed the festival in the heart of the city centre. It was estimated the economic benefit to the City over the weekend was around £420,000.

5. Memorial Programme

The Mayor reported that on Tuesday 10 July, the Leader opened the Memorial Programme. This year marked the 23rd anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide and to commemorate this anniversary, the City of Wolverhampton Council held a flag raising vigil with readings and reflections.

6. Opening of new city centre market

The Mayor reported that the City Council relocated the market from its current Market Square base, to Southside. Where it boasts 20 cabins and 48 stalls, fronting Cleveland Street. The Mayor was looking forward to attending the opening event on Saturday 21 July.

7. First WV Living show home

The Mayor reported the first WV Living show home would open on the 19 July 2018 at Danesmore Pastures. A number of customers had already reserved houses on the site. WV Living was the Council's own housing company, and its first phase would deliver more than 1,000 new homes across a number of sites over the next four years.

8. VJ Day 2018

The Mayor informed Councillors that the Central Branch of the City of Wolverhampton Royal British Legion and the Ex-Service Council would hold a service of remembrance on Wednesday 15 August, at the Cenotaph, St Peter's Square, commencing at 11:30am.

5 Capital budget outturn 2017-2018 including quarter one capital budget monitoring 2018-2019

Councillor Louise Miles presented the report on Capital budget outturn 2017-2018 including quarter one capital budget monitoring 2018-2019 for approval. The report provided an update on the outturn position for 2017-2018 and on the 2018-2019 financial performance of the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programmes. The report also set out a revised forecast for 2018-2019 to 2022-2023 as at quarter one of 2018-2019. Revisions to the current approved General Fund capital programmes covering the period 2018-2019 to 2022-2023 were also recommended.

Councillor Louise Miles proposed the recommendations and Councillor Peter Bilson seconded the recommendations.

The report was debated by Council.

Resolved:

1. That the revised medium term General Fund capital programme of £385.9 million, an increase of £11.0 million from the previously approved programme, reflecting the latest projected expenditure for the medium term be approved.

2. That the revised medium-term Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme of £328.8 million, a decrease of £1.0 million from the previously approved programme, reflecting the latest projected expenditure for the medium term be approved.
3. That the net additional General Fund resources of £11.0 million be approved for;
 - a. 12 new projects totalling £18.3 million (as detailed at paragraph 4.1 of the Cabinet report);
 - b. 58 existing projects net decrease totalling £7.3 million (as detailed at paragraph 3.38 of the Cabinet report).

6 Treasury Management – Annual Report 2017-2018 and Activity Monitoring Quarter One 2018-2019

Councillor Louise Miles presented the report on Treasury Management – Annual Report 2017-2018 and Activity Monitoring Quarter One 2018-2019 for approval. The report set out the results of treasury management activities carried out in 2017-2018, together with performance against the Prudential Indicators previously approved by Council. Monitoring and progress on treasury management activity for the first quarter of 2018-2019 was also detailed, in line with the Prudential Indicators approved by Council in March 2018.

Councillor Louise Miles proposed the recommendations and Councillor Peter Bilson seconded the recommendations.

The report was debated by Council.

Resolved:

1. That it be noted, 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 2017-2018.
2. That it be noted, revenue underspends of £1.6 million for the General Fund and £731,000 for the Housing Revenue Account were generated from treasury management activities in 2017-2018.
3. That it be noted, there was a revenue underspend of £1.2 million for the General Fund and an overspend of £263,000 for the Housing Revenue Account were forecast from treasury management activities in 2018-2019, subject to the impact of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) review.
4. That it be noted, the detailed guidance notes for the new Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the Prudential Code were still to be published by CIPFA and therefore the Treasury Management Statements for 2018-2019 were still based on the Council's interpretation of these Codes.
5. That it be noted, the revised guidance on Local Government Investments and Minimum Revenue Provision was under review by the Director of Finance and updates would be provided to Councillors in due course.

7 West Midlands Second Devolution Agreement

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Roger Lawrence presented the report on West Midlands Second Devolution Agreement for approval. The report detailed the contents of the Second Devolution Deal, its implications for Wolverhampton and outlined the implementation plan to support delivery of the agreement. The Second Devolution Deal contained a range of initiatives and commitments with the overall objective to address productivity barriers and support the delivery of a local industrial strategy.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Roger Lawrence proposed the recommendations and Councillor Peter Bilson seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the Second Devolution Deal following the conclusion of negotiations between the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Government be endorsed.
2. That the action plan for the implementation of the Second Devolution Agreement be approved and that further discussions with Government be agreed.
3. That further reports be received at the appropriate time resulting from detailed requirements of the devolution deal.

8 Corporate Parenting Strategy

Councillor Paul Sweet presented the report on Corporate Parenting Strategy for approval. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 required local authorities to evidence how they met the seven Corporate Parenting Principles in relation to looked after children and care leavers. The refreshed strategy provided a framework for both the City of Wolverhampton Council and its partners to ensure that services provided effective support for children and young people in or leaving care.

Councillor Paul Sweet proposed the recommendations and Councillor Val Gibson seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the Corporate Parenting Strategy be approved for three years from April 2018 to March 2021.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, in consultation with the Director of Children's Services, to make any final amendments before publication.

9 Youth Justice Plan 2018 - 2019

Councillor Paul Sweet presented the report on Youth Justice Plan 2018 – 2019 for approval. The Plan referred to the work of the Youth Offending Team (YOT) partnership under the oversight of the YOT Management Board and the Safer Wolverhampton Partnership. The local priorities that had been identified for Wolverhampton responded to local areas of need and also represented an alignment with the strategic priorities identified by the Youth Justice Board.

Councillor Paul Sweet proposed the recommendations and Councillor Val Gibson seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

That the Youth Justice Plan 2018-2019 be adopted.

10 Appointment of Managing Director (Head of Paid Service)

Tim Johnson, Deputy Managing Director/ Strategic Director of Place, left the room at this point and took no part in the consideration of this item.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Roger Lawrence presented the report on the Appointment of Managing Director (Head of Paid Service). The Special Appointments Committee had met on the 17 July and had recommended that Tim Johnson be appointed on the Council's Senior Management terms and conditions.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Roger Lawrence proposed the recommendation and Councillor Wendy Thompson seconded the recommendation. Both added that Tim's vision, ambition, dynamism and passion for the City greatly impressed the cross-party interview panel.

Resolved:

That the recommendation of Special Appointments Committee that Tim Johnson be appointed as Managing Director (Head of Paid Service) on the Council's Senior Management terms and conditions be approved.

11 **Appointment of Electoral Registration Officer and Local Returning Officer**

Councillor Val Gibson presented the report on Appointment of Electoral Registration Officer and Local Returning Officer for approval. Following the departure of the previous Managing Director the Council needed to make appointments to the required statutory posts of Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) and Returning Officer (RO) for the City of Wolverhampton.

Councillor Val Gibson proposed the recommendations and Councillor Peter Bilson seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the new Managing Director, Tim Johnson be appointed, as the statutory Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer (for local elections) with effect from the date on which he assumes office.
2. That the Managing Director be appointed, with effect from the same date as the Returning or Counting Officer for all other elections and referenda that arise, including, but not limited to, Police and Crime Commissioner, Mayoral and European polls, but excepting parliamentary elections.
3. That it be agreed that no fees should be paid for the oversight of local elections or the local registration function, such duties to be considered part of the role of Managing Director and therefore covered by the associated salary.
4. That it be agreed, that the Council should maintain insurance to indemnify the Returning Officer against any claims arising from the management of local, regional or national elections or referenda, and underwrite any policy excess required by an insurer.
5. That it be noted, the Electoral Registration Officer would be the Acting Returning Officer for any parliamentary elections called.
6. That it be noted, that such fees dispersed by government or other bodies (e.g. the West Midlands Combined Authority) for Returning or Counting Officer roles were payable to the individual concerned.

12 **Recruitment of Strategic Director of Place**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Roger Lawrence presented the report on Recruitment of Strategic Director of Place for approval. Following the promotion of the current post holder the report sought approval for all aspects of the recruitment and selection process.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Roger Lawrence proposed the recommendations and Councillor Peter Bilson seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

That authority be delegated authority to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Managing Director (Head of Paid Service) to:

1. Approve that the post of Strategic Director of Place be advertised in such a way as to bring it to the attention of persons qualified to apply for it, subject to the approval of promotion of the current post holder.
2. Approve the creation and composition of a Special Appointments Committee to appoint the Strategic Director of Place, on a politically balanced basis, in accordance with the Constitution
3. To make any necessary Interim arrangements, as required, whilst the recruitment and selection process for the permanent appointment is undertaken.

13 **Executive Business**

The Council received a summary of executive business relating to:

- Delivery of Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Management
- Implementation of the Devolution Agreement for the Adult Education Budget
- Public Health Annual Report
- Principal Social Worker Annual Report

Resolved:

That the Executive Business be noted.

14 **Questions to Cabinet Members**

a. **LGA conference**

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the Leader of the Council: -

Could the Council Leader detail the costs and explain the economic benefits for Council taxpayers for himself, the Deputy Leader and a Director staying for three nights at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Birmingham for the recent LGA conference, a hotel only thirteen miles away from Wolverhampton.

The Leader, Councillor Roger Lawrence, responded that the LGA Conference was the most important local government event of the year and provided a key opportunity to engage with partners for the benefit of everyone who lives and works in our City. The conference moves between different locations in the UK and, given its significance, was budgeted for every year.

He added that this year, due to the busy agenda of formal engagements, one-to-one meetings during the conference and the exhibition area, it was deemed appropriate to have accommodation for three delegates for a total of nine nights at £130 per person per night – for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of transparency that was the Leader, the Deputy Leader and the Council's Strategic Director of People.

He added this small investment was important because, not only were there delegates from Councils up and down the land, but also key national players and influencers who the Council needed to engage with. Anyone who was familiar with the conference would know that during the three days, it was non-stop speakers, briefings, meetings and networking opportunities from very early in the morning until late into the evening. Key engagements included meetings with the Key Cities group (two), Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), SIGOMA and the Combined Authority. The Deputy Leader also spoke at the Localis event during the conference.

He added the City of Wolverhampton Council was in a competitive market place seeking to raise the Councils profile and attract jobs and investment and of course so was everybody else. The Deputy Leader and he felt that the Council needed to be in the thick of the action, battling for the City of Wolverhampton at every occasion that presented itself. As such, the Council delegates needed the flexibility of being close to the conference venue to maximise time spent pursuing opportunities and networking with key contacts."

No supplementary question was asked.

b. School repairs

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the Leader of the Council: -

Could the Council Leader explain why a Wolverhampton secondary school which had a major refurbishment costing millions of pounds under the Building Schools for the Future programme only six years ago now has a headteacher appearing on television complaining of over three hundred repairs being required.

The Leader, Councillor Roger Lawrence, responded that the item referred to was a piece of journalism based on the financial pressures that schools across the country were faced with.

He added it was with interest that he read the findings of the recent report produced by the Institute for Fiscal Studies that clearly showed that there had been an 8% reduction in per pupil funding between 2009-2010 and 2017-2018. It was also recognised that devolved capital funding from central government to schools was reduced a number of years ago which had further compounded the financial issues that schools were faced with.

He added, the school in question was voluntary aided, under the Lichfield Diocese and as such the buildings were the responsibility of the Diocese. Any issues with building defects had been compounded by the school's poor relationship with Carillion, the appointed contractor for the refurbishment of the school. Despite ongoing attempts to rectify any building defects there has been no resolution or agreement around the building issues at this school, with the school and Diocese regularly failing to allow access to Carillion staff to allow for works to take place.

He added the Council with the agreement of the school and Diocese had given instruction for an independent building specialist to review the situation at the school and to make clear recommendations as to what should be done in order to remedy the situation. Initial visits had taken place with the findings due to be brought forward in due course.

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the following supplementary question:

She was informed that costs would be in the region of 5 Million to repair the school, would all the building work be completed and whether the Leader had visited the school to evaluate the condition.

The Leader, Councillor Roger Lawrence, responded that the prioritisation of the project specification had not been undertaken wisely previously. He added the Council was currently in productive dialogue with the School and Lichfield Diocese. The initial costs were speculative and once the report had been received from the independent building specialist, the Council could then determine which issues needed addressing. Councillor Lynne Moran would also be involved in the process

c. City centre economy

Councillor Simon Bennett asked the Cabinet Member for City Economy: -

Following concerns raised in the local press from a resident, who shares the feelings of many local residents, on the subjects of unaffordable parking and confusing bus lanes, what is the council's plan to tackle the city centre economy.

Councillor John Reynolds responded the City of Wolverhampton Council was heavily committed to supporting and nurturing the City Centre Economy. It was an effective approach with a potential £1 billion of investment underway or planned. In order to understand the scale of this support he requested colleagues take time to read the "Enabling a vibrant city centre" report that was considered at the Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel on 26 June 2018. The report sets out the many activities and mechanisms of support including work programmes to encourage additional footfall in the City Centre. To give a recent example the Food and Drink Event attracted 25,000 visitors to the City, 7,000 more than last year.

He added it was recognised that traditional retail models were in decline nationally and it was vital to the vibrancy of our centres that the Council ensure they offer what people would find attractive.

He added the question of parking was included in the above-mentioned report with a focus on improvements to the whole journey, considering parking in a joined-up way including traffic management, strategic planning and economic development. The Council was responsible for c.25% of the city centre's car parks and was currently working on improving the parking experience including exploring 'Smart Parking' that utilises technology to provide seamless parking. Significant investment was underway in public transport, cycling and walking access, including the £150 million Interchange project, improved bike sharing facilities, accessible vehicle charging points and improved Vehicle Messaging Systems coming forward. These would improve the access in and around our city and provide smoothing traffic flows through key junctions.

He added journey time reliability was an important aspect to the uptake of public transport and the presence of effective and free flowing bus lanes was clearly an important element. Some of the high numbers of improper use of bus lanes is evidence of the need to enforce against their abuse.

He added the City of Wolverhampton Council would continue to ensure that its bus lanes were effective and clearly and legally signed. Additionally, the Council would ensure parking charges and enforcement activities were proportionate and most of all transparent.

He added the Council needed to be constantly challenging the strategy for the City Centre, he was pleased to announce the Council would be launching a new City Centre Commission which the council would facilitate but would involve experts across all the key areas that were critical to the future of the City Centre. This commission would in simple terms help to ensure that our strategy was appropriate, robust and dynamic enough to address ongoing change".

Councillor Steven Bennett asked the following supplementary question:

Due to the closure of Civic Halls, what action was the Council undertaking to combat the negative impact on businesses.

The Cabinet Member clarified the supplementary question must be in relation to initial supplementary question asked.

The Cabinet Member responded that the Council was proactive with its investment programme in the City and that young people and businesses also had confidence with the City. He added this was demonstrated by the recent purchase of telecom house.

d. Bus shelter

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment: -

What were reasons for the bus shelter in School Road Tettenhall Wood which was demolished at the beginning of December 2017 not being repaired despite requests from local Councillors.

Councillor Steve Evans, responded the primary reason for the delay in reinstating the School Road Tettenhall Wood bus shelter was due to the question of ownership. The council had still not been able to verify the ownership of the structure, however given the importance of the shelter to the local community the council would now take responsibility for the structure and reinstatement works.

He added it was believed that the shelter was built in the 1930's/40's and the council have also been trying to source the original drawings/information to ensure the brick work would replicate the original design. He confirmed that the works required to reinstate the bus shelter back to its original state would start on site on the 2 August and would take approximately 3-4 days.

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the following supplementary question:

Why hadn't the Council pursued a claim against the driver of the vehicle whom demolished the wall of the shelter.

The Cabinet Member responded that Council employees would pursue the insurance company of the responsible driver to recover costs.

e. Green spaces

Councillor Jane Stevenson to ask the Cabinet Member for City Economy: -

Did the Council agree that we have a responsibility to preserve our green spaces for future generations of Wulfrunians?

Councillor John Reynolds responded, the Council was committed to protecting and improving valuable green spaces across the City, for the long-term benefit of residents and visitors. A well-managed network of open spaces makes a vital contribution to the quality of life and health of people across Wolverhampton and supports regeneration and investment. The Council owns and manages much of the open space in the City, providing a range of opportunities for sport, exercise, play and contact with nature.

He added the Wolverhampton Local Plan includes policies protecting open spaces across the City from development which would reduce their value. On 11 July, Cabinet adopted an update to the Council's Open Space Strategy and Action Plan, which sets quantity, accessibility and quality standards for different types of open space. Having an up-to-date Open Space Strategy and Action Plan was vital for the Council to make the best decisions about investment in open spaces across the City. The document highlights where there were gaps in quantity, quality and access to different types of open space across the City, and how these could be addressed.

He added the Report highlights the success of the Council and its partners in securing and spending millions of pounds on a range of open space improvement projects across the City over the past two years. The update refreshes the list of priority projects in the Action Plan, to help focus funding, land disposal and policy decisions over the next two years. The Plan in the Report shows the strong relationship between priority open space projects and regeneration schemes across the City.

He added in some parts of the City there was a large quantity of open space, but some was of low value. There may be opportunities in such areas to dispose of small pockets of poor quality open space and compensate for this loss by providing new open space or investing in and raising the value of other open spaces nearby, to benefit local residents. Such disposals were limited in number and only take place following comprehensive community consultation and agreement of a suitable mitigation package. The Open Space Strategy and Local Plan (including the Black Country Core Strategy) policies provide a robust framework for making such decisions.

Councillor Jane Stevenson asked the following supplementary question:

Can the Cabinet Member guarantee to the residents of Finchfield that every penny from the capital receipt from Wolverhampton Environment Centre would be spent on the nature reserve?

The Cabinet Member advised that during the 1980's – 1990's a competitive tendering process had taken place, which resulted in the centre being taken on board by the CVO and since then the centre had closed. He added that 90% of the centre was open space and 10% was built on. He added that it was for Cabinet to determine the expenditure from the capital receipt.