

Attendance

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

Labour

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

Conservative

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

Employees

Tim Johnson	Managing Director
Mark Taylor	Strategic Director – People
Kevin O’Keefe	Director of Governance
Claire Nye	Director of Finance
Jennifer Brake	Service Director of Strategy and Change
Ross Cook	Service Director - City Environment
Tracey Christie	Head of Legal Services
Ian Fegan	Head of Communications
Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer
Philippa Salmon	Democratic Services Officer

The proceedings opened with Prayers

1 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Welcome Koussoukama and Zee Russell.

2 **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest submitted.

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

4 **Communications**

1. Dutch War Graves

The Mayor reported that Wolverhampton would pay its respects to the brigade of Dutch soldiers who were stationed at Wrottesley Park during the Second World War. The Mayor would lay a wreath at the annual Dutch War Graves Service of Remembrance at Jeffcock Road Cemetery on Saturday 10 November 2018. The poignant service, organised by the City of Wolverhampton Central Branch of the Royal British Legion, would remember the 23 soldiers from the Princess Irene Brigade who were buried at the cemetery. The Remembrance service would take place at 10am and would be preceded by a short parade which would form up at 9.40am. The Mayor encouraged as many Councillors as possible to attend.

2. Remembrance Sunday

The Mayor reported that the Remembrance Sunday service this year would also commemorate 100 years since the end of the First World War in the City of Wolverhampton and remember those who died and fought in World War One. The Outdoor Drumhead Service would begin at 10.58am, followed by a second service in St. Peter's Church at approximately 11.25am. The Mayor encouraged as many Councillors as possible to attend.

3. Wednesfield in Bloom 2018

The Mayor was delighted to congratulate all those who were involved in the 2018 Wednesfield in Bloom entry in the Britain in Bloom contest. Wednesfield had been awarded a gold award for the 'urban community category' and also a judges' discretionary award for 'community achievement'. The Discretionary Community Achievement award was very rare and was the result of lots of hard work by an army of dedicated volunteers ages ranging from 4 to 84.

The Mayor added a number of people led by 'Hands on Wednesfield', helped to win a Gold award for the second year running including a number of schools and nurseries, St Thomas's Church, the Staffordshire Regimental Association, The Local Scout groups (that built a Viking Longboat in Bentley Bridge), local business's, Council Departments and Public Services along with Wednesfield Councillors, helped to raise almost £3,000.

4. Carols in the City/Victorian Christmas Market

The Mayor was also delighted to report that the three-day Victorian Christmas Market was set to return for a second year and would be the largest festive market the City had held. The three-day market would take place on Friday, 14 December (11am-9pm), Saturday 15 December (10am-9pm) and Sunday 16 December (10am-5pm) in Wolverhampton City Centre at Queen Square, Dudley Street and Lichfield Street.

The Market would be joined by the City of Wolverhampton Carols in the City event hosted by the Mayor and Mayoress who would formally open the Victorian Market on Friday 14 December at 4pm. The Carols in the City were due to take place from 5pm with choirs from local schools and the City choir. This would be located on the main stage area at Queen Square.

5.Touchstone Awards

The Mayor was delighted to introduce Noel Hunter OBE, the Chair of the British Hallmarking Council to present the prestigious annual Touchstone award to Councillor Steve Evans, Cabinet Member for City Environment, and the Council's Trading Standards team. The team had won the award in recognition of its outstanding information and educational activity to prevent fraud in relation to gold, silver and other precious metals. The project that led to the award was a cutting-edge campaign to educate Wolverhampton residents and businesses about hallmarking and how to spot un-hallmarked jewellery, reinvigorating enforcement in one of the oldest consumer protection regimes in the world.

The Mayor added the team had issued educational resource packs to jewellers across the City to raise standards for all. To educate consumers, the team developed hallmarking activity packs which had been distributed to schools, public libraries and places of worship. Multi lingual officers engaged with 'often overlooked communities' where many were not native English speakers. Within these groups there could also be a different cultural approach to buying jewellery, and an ignorance of hallmarking requirements leaving consumers vulnerable to being cheated. Posters in English, Gujarati, Urdu, Hindi and Punjabi were widely distributed, and the campaign also targeted younger residents with children's activity packs.

Noel Hunter OBE presented the award to Paul Dosanjh, Service Lead for Trading Standards. Councillor Steve Evans, Cabinet Member for City Environment, congratulated the Trading Standards team and extended thanks for their hard work.

6. LGiU & CCLA's Councillor Achievement Awards 2018

The Mayor was also delighted to congratulate the Leader of the Council, Councillor Roger Lawrence, who had been named Leader of the Year at the LGiU & CCLA's Councillor Achievement Awards. These were the only awards to celebrate the work of Councillors and elected members.

The Mayor also congratulated Councillor Celia Hibbert and Councillor Beverley Momenabadi who had been shortlisted in the Community Champion and Young Councillor of the Year categories respectively.

5 Changes to the Constitution

Councillor John Reynolds presented the Changes to the Constitution report. He sought approval for the amendments to the Constitution and authorisation for the Director of

Governance to implement the changes. The proposed changes included updates to delegations and the creation of two separate Licencing Committees to consider statutory and non-statutory matters respectively.

Councillor John Reynolds proposed the recommendations and Councillor Val Gibson seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the amendments to the Constitution be approved.
2. That the Director of Governance be authorised to implement the changes.

6 **Code of Conduct report**

Councillor Val Gibson presented the Code of Conduct report. She sought approval for the revised Code of Conduct and the revised Protocol for Councillor/Employee Relations. The documents had been revised to include the Nolan Principles, to provide clarification on expectations and guidance on declarations of interest and to ensure transparency.

Councillor Val Gibson proposed the recommendations and Councillor John Reynolds seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the revised Councillor Code of Conduct be approved.
2. That the revised Protocol for Councillor/Employee Relations be approved.

7 **Executive Business**

The Council received a summary of Executive Business relating to the Governance Review and Scheme for the Transfer of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, Amendment to Housing Enforcement and Charging Policy, Strategic Asset Plan and School Accessibility Strategy.

In response to Councillor Sohail Khan's question regarding the School Accessibility Strategy, Councillor Lynne Moran confirmed that the Council had always had policies on the requirement to access and that this Strategy pulled all the strands together in one document.

In response to Councillor Paul Singh's question regarding the Amendment to Housing Enforcement and Charging Policy, Councillor Peter Bilson confirmed that the penalties were decided upon depending on the severity of the delay and the circumstances. Details on the charges were provided in the Cabinet report and more information could be provided by the Private Sector Housing team.

Resolved:

That the Executive Business be noted.

8 Motions on Notice

a. Councillor Paul Singh moved the following motion:

That this Council congratulates Wednesfield in Bloom for being awarded the Britain in Bloom 2018 Gold Award in the Urban Community category and the Discretionary Award in the Community Achievement category; and calls upon the Cabinet and all Councillors to recognise this fantastic achievement by erecting a sign in Wednesfield.

Councillor Paul Singh outlined the rationale for the motion. Councillor Udey Singh seconded the motion.

Councillor Greg Brackenridge moved the following amendment to the motion:

That City of Wolverhampton Council congratulates the Wednesfield community on their recent achievements in winning a Gold award and a discretionary community award in the Britain in Bloom Competition 2018. To celebrate this success, the Council has commissioned signs and banners that are now displayed around the entire Wednesfield area. Their success is a wonderful example of community cohesion and of what can be achieved when all sections of our local communities work together. The Council is particularly impressed with the wide range of backgrounds of the various groups and volunteers that contributed to bring colour to the whole of Wednesfield and wishes the group further success for the future.

Councillor Greg Brackenridge outlined the rationale for the proposed amendment. Councillor Philip Bateman MBE seconded the amendment to the motion.

The amended motion was debated by Council.

Resolved:

That the following amended motion on Wednesfield in Bloom be agreed:

That City of Wolverhampton Council congratulates the Wednesfield community on their recent achievements in winning a Gold award and a discretionary community award in the Britain in Bloom Competition 2018. To celebrate this success, the Council has commissioned signs and banners that are now displayed around the entire Wednesfield area. Their success is a wonderful example of community cohesion and of what can be achieved when all sections of our local communities work together. The Council is particularly impressed with the wide range of backgrounds of the various groups and volunteers that contributed to bring colour to the whole of Wednesfield and wishes the group further success for the future.

b. Councillor Hazel Malcolm moved the following motion:

That this Council expresses its grave concern over the proposed 'temporary' closure of A&E overnight services at Telford Princess Royal Hospital. The impact of an estimated 20 extra ambulances a night and up to 300 additional admissions a month on New Cross Hospital cannot be accepted without additional resources. This Council agrees to ask the Secretary of State to intervene to sustain A&E services at Telford and urges all Councillors to support the online petition to prevent this avoidable overnight closure.

Councillor Hazel Malcolm outlined the rationale for the motion. Councillor Martin Waite seconded the motion.

Councillor Simon Bennett moved the following amendment to the motion:

That this Council expresses its grave concern over the proposed 'temporary' closure of A&E overnight services at Telford Princess Royal Hospital. The impact of an estimated 20 extra ambulances a night and up to 300 additional admissions a month on New Cross Hospital cannot be accepted without additional resources. This Council agrees to ask the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust to intervene to sustain A&E services at Telford and urges all Councillors to support the online petition to prevent this avoidable overnight closure.

Councillor Simon Bennett outlined the rationale for the proposed amendment. Councillor Wendy Thompson seconded the amendment to the motion.

The amended motion was debated by Council and was lost.

Resolved:

That the substantive motion on Telford Princess Royal Hospital be agreed.

c. Councillor Wendy Thompson moved the following motion:

That this Council notes the problems with the Civic Halls refurbishment identified in the Council's Internal Audit Report; notes that the last estimate of the capital budget for the programme increased from £10.4 million to £38.1 million; recognises that the Council needs to fill a £6 million black hole this financial year; expresses concern at the lack of clarity over exactly how much the final cost of the refurbishment will be, and when it will be completed; and consequently calls for a full and frank report from the project manager on what the total cost will be and an exact timetable for completion so that all options can be reconsidered.

Councillor Wendy Thompson outlined the rationale for the motion. Councillor Jane Stevenson seconded the motion.

Councillor John Reynolds moved the following amendment to the motion:

That this Council agrees to remit the resolution from Councillor Wendy Thompson to the Capital Projects Member Reference Group for due consideration, where the Civic Halls refurbishment is being monitored in accordance with the Council decision of 16 May 2018.

Councillor John Reynolds outlined the rationale for the proposed amendment. Councillor Peter Bilson seconded the amendment to the motion.

The amended motion was debated by Council.

Resolved:

That the following amended motion on Civic Halls refurbishment be agreed:

That this Council agrees to remit the resolution from Councillor Wendy Thompson to the Capital Projects Member Reference Group for due consideration, where the Civic Halls refurbishment is being monitored in accordance with the Council decision of 16 May 2018.

9

Questions to Cabinet Members

a. Illegal Traveller Encampments

Councillor Udey Singh asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment the following question:

What has the total cost been to the Council for removing illegal traveller encampments from all sites within the city in each of the last 3 financial years?

The Cabinet Member for City Environment, Councillor Steve Evans, responded that the total cost of dealing with traveller incursions in each of the last three financial years was as follows:

2016-2017: £210,273

2017-2018: £244,188

2018 to date: £149,226

Councillor Udey Singh asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment whether the Council was reactive to the needs of its residents.

The Cabinet Member for City Environment, Councillor Steve Evans, responded that Wolverhampton was often shown in a negative view in the press. Traveller incursions were a national issue and the Council's response to incursions was in line with the legislation and the reaction was always immediate and professional. Assessments were carried out and officers worked with the Police and courts to remove people from these areas. Council employees had written to the Secretary of State to request stronger legislation, along with other local authorities in the West Midlands.

b. Westside project contracts

Councillor Jonathan Yardley asked the Cabinet Member for City Economy the following question:

Can the Cabinet Member outline the total number of contracts the Council have signed with the primary developer of the Westside project, and the total cost to the Council of those contracts?

The Cabinet Member for City Economy, Councillor John Reynolds, responded that in terms of commercial contracts, i.e. contracts with operators, none had been signed at that stage. The Council entered into a Development Agreement and Agreement for Lease with the developer for the Westside scheme, Urban & Civic in April 2017. There was no specific cost attached to the preparation of these documents although advisory support was provided by JLL and Bruton Knowles throughout the marketing process for the site.

Councillor Jonathan Yardley asked the Cabinet Member for City Economy why it had taken the Council so long to attract private investment in comparison to neighbouring local authorities.

The Cabinet Member for City Economy, Councillor John Reynolds, responded that all Councillors had received an invitation to the Wolverhampton Business Breakfast in September 2017, where Urban & Civic had outlined their investment plans. All contractors involved were still confident in investment, however the current investment climate nationally had been impacted by Brexit. Negotiations with Urban & Civic were continuing with a result expected shortly, but the national uncertainty was impacting on all investments nationwide.

c. Traveller Injunction

Councillor Simon Bennet asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment the following question:

Can the Cabinet Member explain why he believes that Bantock Park and Heath Town Park do not need to be included in the city-wide Traveller Injunction, despite both sites being subjected to illegal encampments in recent months?

The Cabinet Member for City Environment, Councillor Steve Evans, responded that an email had been sent to all Councillors on 8 October 2018 to inform them of the position. The deadline for the injunction had been in June 2018, and at that point Bantock Park had not been subject to a traveller incursion. Council employees had requested to add the site following the incursion, but the Judge presiding the case had advised that, if additional incursions had been added after the deadline, the injunction would not have been granted.

Councillor Simon Bennett asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment why sites included in the injunction had been prioritised over other areas.

The Cabinet Member for City Environment, Councillor Steve Evans, responded that the 20 locations had been identified based on incursions from 1 August 2015 to 1 April 2018. Following a significant increase in incursions in early 2018, a further survey had identified an additional 40 locations that were potentially vulnerable and also considered incursions prior to August 2015. Physical protection of sites, police powers and intelligence from the traveller community had also been considered as evidence for the injunction. Bantock Park had not been considered vulnerable prior to July 2018 but it was also acknowledged that the Police were more likely to exercise their powers on high profile sites. The Cabinet Member agreed to share the legal advice with Councillor Simon Bennett.

d. Garden Waste Collection Charges

Councillor Christopher Haynes asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment the following question:

The Cabinet has chosen to penalise residents who have a garden by introducing a £35 charge for garden waste collection from February. How can the Cabinet Member justify spending £500,000 on new purple bins, given the Council's own forecasts which suggest that just 15% of households will sign up to the new scheme?

The Cabinet Member for City Environment, Councillor Steve Evans, responded that residents with a garden had not been penalised, an option had been provided for residents to sign up to the scheme. The scheme had been based on historical data and evidence from neighbouring authorities that had implemented similar schemes. The changes to waste services were necessary due to the cuts in funding from Central Government. Over 50% of local authorities in the country had introduced a new garden waste service.

Councillor Christopher Haynes asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment, as the choice made by the controlling party was not in line with residents' wishes and could lead to a significant increase in fly tipping, whether the Council would agree to scrap the Garden tax.

The Cabinet Member for City Environment, Councillor Steve Evans, responded that the charge was not a tax, it was a choice for residents. The Council had to make changes to waste services due to limited resources. The approach was sensible and fair, and the charge was offered with a 50% concession to those on low incomes.

e. Fly Tipping

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment the following question:

Coventry City Council has seen a 40% increase in fly-tipping year on year since fortnightly bin collections were introduced. Can the Cabinet Member explain what he thinks will happen to fly tipping levels in Wolverhampton once the reduction in bin collections has been fully rolled out?

The Cabinet Member for City Environment, Councillor Steve Evans, responded that fly tipping levels might reduce.

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment whether he would agree to be quoted on his response and if figures on fly tipping could be supplied on a monthly basis over the coming year.

The Cabinet Member for City Environment, Councillor Steve Evans, responded that there had been 692 fly tipping incidents in Wolverhampton over the last 12 months but that it was a national issue regardless of the frequency of waste collections. Fly tipping in other areas had increased but the majority of objects that were collected were items of construction waste or other large items such as sofas and fridges, rather than generic household waste. The Council's officers were issuing fixed penalty notices and fines, using public protection powers and investigating incidents with the option to prosecute. The Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel were provided with a regular update containing figures that could be shared.

f. Maintained Nursery Schools

Councillor Philip Bateman MBE asked the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills the following question:

What is the Council considering regarding the future of Wolverhampton's Maintained Nursery Schools; and what will happen if the Government supplementary funding for maintained Nursery School provision does not continue beyond 2019-2020?

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Councillor Lynne Moran, responded that there were two strands in response to the question, one from the Council's officers and a political perspective. Wolverhampton had seven nursery schools in the City that engaged 900 children. Over half of the nursery schools had been assessed by Ofsted as 'outstanding' and the remainder as 'good'. Wolverhampton's early years offer was rich and diverse, with 90% of children engaged in the activity provided. The Council did not have control over supplementary funding but recognised the extra costs of nursery school staffing, specialised teachers and building maintenance. An Early Years Advisor had been appointed in the previous year to offer support to nursery staff to help maximise income. The Cabinet Member had written to all nursery

headteachers and Chairs of Governors to ask that funding information was shared with parents and MPs, whilst organising events to stimulate a campaign. Councillors could visit their local nursery schools and lobby ministers and MPs. The loss of funding would run the risk of nursery schools closing or the Wolverhampton offer being diluted. The Cabinet Member urged all Councillors to join the campaign.

Councillor Philip Bateman MBE asked the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills whether she would consider meeting with him and the Leader of the Opposition to discuss how best to proceed with cross-party support. The LGA had carried out research into the impact of the removal of the funding to maintained nursery schools and many Councils had responded to say that closures would be likely.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Councillor Lynne Moran, responded that she agreed to the meeting as proposed to consider a working party to examine the issue.

Resolved:

That the responses to the written questions be noted.