

City of Wolverhampton Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet (Resources) Panel on Tuesday, 1 October 2019

Item 5	
Title	Fees and Charges Review 2020-2021
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the fees and charges as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report be approved to take effect from 1 November 2019 or as soon as possible thereafter. 2. That authority be delegated to the responsible Cabinet Member in consultation with the relevant Director as appropriate to vary fees and charges as detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report. 3. That authority be delegated to the responsible Cabinet Member in consultation with the relevant Director as appropriate to approve any other fees and charges not detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report. 4. That in the following instances, authority be delegated to the relevant Director in consultation with the Director of Finance, to vary existing fees and charges during the financial year: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Where the cost of food (including frozen food) and drink procured for resale or onward supply changes, fees and charges may be set taking the new costs into account. b. Where short-term change in fees and charges to ensure that a business opportunity can be pursued or secured; if the change is for a period of more than three months then the change should be referred to Cabinet (Resources) Panel for decision during the three month period. c. Where market conditions dictate, fees may be varied provided that satisfactory market information is maintained. d. Charges to external organisations for bespoke professional services may be varied. e. Court summons costs charged to council tax and business rates payers may be varied following default on payment.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f. Charges to schools/academies for services delivered under Service Level Agreements (SLAs) may be varied. g. Library charges may be varied to fall in line with Black Country Libraries in partnership participating authorities (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton). <p>5. That should any amendments be made to the VAT treatment of specific fees and charges, authority to vary those fees and charges be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, together with the responsible Cabinet Member, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the relevant Director.</p> <p>6. That it be noted that the fees and charges for the following items, are not reviewed as part of the report as they will be subject to separate arrangements for their approval:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Adult social care contributions to care packages. b. Street trading, Hackney Carriage and private hire licensing and general licensing charges. c. Leisure Services. <p>7. That it be noted that the fees and charges which are no longer applicable have been excluded from Appendices 1 and 2 of the report.</p>
Options Considered	<p>In determining the proposed fees and charges for approval, consideration has been made to the impact on demand as a result of price fluctuations and commercialisation. Some fees and charges have been frozen or reduced, whilst others have been uplifted. If we were to freeze all prices at the current levels, any potential additional income that could be generated to support the Council over the medium term would be lost. This would therefore impact on the resources available to the Council and potentially service delivery.</p>

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Reasons for Decision	It is anticipated that the implementation of the revised fees and charges will generate additional income which will contribute towards reducing the Council's projected medium term budget deficit, which stands at £4.9 million to be identified by 2020-2021, as reported to Cabinet on 31 July 2019.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	7 October 2019

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Item 6	
Title	City East Gateway - A454 Willenhall Road Phase 3
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the approach to identifying improvements to the eastern section of the Willenhall Road A454 transport corridor be endorsed. 2. That the identified schemes be approved in principle for public consultation. 3. That it be noted that a future report will be submitted detailing the outcomes of the consultation and to establish next steps.
Options Considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is considered that the evidence based approach to assessment undertaken represents an appropriate evaluation of all options. 2. Based on the output of the objective assessment, the remaining 12 schemes within the sifting process are not being included as viable proposals at this time as they either do not represent value for money, do not deliver the desired outcomes or are considered to have too higher environmental or social impact. 3. The constraints and issues at Neachells Lane junction have been on-going for many years and have a considerable impact upon businesses and residents across the city. The option to 'do nothing' is therefore not considered appropriate.
Reasons for Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council has already agreed that there is a clear need to improve the transport infrastructure in the Willenhall Road corridor to meet current travel demand when considering Phases 1 and 2. 2. The objective assessment process has been extended to look at the options for Phase 3 and an extensive number of options reviewed to determine the potential optimum way forward. The approach being recommended is consistent with the approach already considered for Phase 1 and 2 and caters for current issues identified and supports the regeneration objectives for the corridor.

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	<p>3. To compliment the approach already being considered for Phases 1 and 2 and address the major identified delay and air quality issues experienced at Neachells Lane it is necessary to identify a scheme for this section of the corridor.</p> <p>4. The report seeks approval to consult the public after which a decision on how to address the identified issues can be taken forward.</p>
Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	7 October 2019

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Item 7	
Title	Empty Homes Policy and Strategy Action Plan 2019-2024
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	That the Empty Homes Policy and Strategy Action Plan 2019-2024 be approved.
Options Considered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To continue with the previous strategy, with little or no change to the initiatives offered to owners of empty homes or to the range of potential partnerships to tackle the problem. The previous Empty Property Strategy emphasised advice and assistance to the owners of long-term empty homes, with enforcement as a last resort. While Housing Services will always seek to work co-operatively with the owners of long-term empty homes, a more proactive approach is required if we are to improve performance. The new strategy suggests a greater range of options to assist owners and an ongoing publicity campaign to encourage communities to report empty homes. However, when owners are unwilling to engage with offers of assistance, enforcement action may be required. Often preliminary steps to take enforcement action result in owners letting or selling their property, so full enforcement action is seldom required. 2. To cease work on returning long-term empty homes to use, and re-direct the resources for this work to general private sector housing work. If no action is taken to encourage the use of long-term empty homes, it is likely that the number of these wasted homes will increase. Large numbers of empty and deteriorating homes blight neighbourhoods, attracting anti-social behaviour. This would undermine work being done to improve the quality and availability of homes for rent and sale in the City. 3. The new strategy includes options intended to increase the supply of affordable privately rented accommodation. This will help to relieve and prevent homelessness, reducing the need for expensive emergency temporary accommodation for homeless households. 4. Empty homes staff attend regional events focussing on empty homes, and research best practice in tackling long-term empty homes. The new strategy extends the range of options that will be explored to encourage and assist owners of wasted homes to use, let or sell them.

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Reasons for Decision	The Empty Homes Policy and Strategy Action Plan 2019-2024 will reduce the number of long-term empty homes, providing more homes for sale and rent in Wolverhampton. The strategy outlines a range of options to help owners of long-term empty homes to use, let or sell their property. In cases where owners refuse to engage with offers of advice and assistance, and where the property is dilapidated and/or causing a nuisance to neighbours, enforcement action will ensure that homes are not wasted and do not blight neighbourhoods.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	2 October 2019

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Item 8	
Title	Acquisition of Privately Owned Empty Property by Agreement or Compulsory Purchase: 1 Clarendon Street, Wolverhampton. WV3 9PP.
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Director of City Assets and Housing be authorised to negotiate terms for the acquisition of the property 1 Clarendon Street, Wolverhampton, WV3 9PP and, in default of that acquisition, give authority for a compulsory purchase order (CPO) to be made under Part II Section 17 Housing Act 1985 in respect of the property. 2. That expenditure for the potential acquisition of the property, with subsequent capital receipts being recycled within the Empty Property Strategy programme be approved. 3. That in the event that the property is improved and re-occupied to the satisfaction of the Director of City Assets and Housing, withdrawal of the property from the CPO be authorised. 4. That following any acquisition, the Director of City Assets and Housing be authorised to dispose of the property on the open market on condition that the property is refurbished and re-occupied within six or 12 months (as appropriate to the scale of the works). 5. That the Director of Governance be authorised to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Take all reasonable steps as soon as it is reasonably practical to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the CPO including the publication and service of all Notices and the presentation of the Council's case at any Public Inquiry. b. Approve agreements with the owners of the property setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the CPO, and/or making arrangements for re-housing or relocation of any occupiers. c. Approve the making of a General Vesting Declaration (the property is brought into Council ownership via this process).

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	<p>d. Approve the disposal of the whole and/ or parts of the property by auction, tender or private treaty.</p>
<p>Options Considered</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do nothing – the property is likely to remain empty, continue to be a wasted housing resource, continue to have a detrimental effect on the amenity of the area and continue to be a drain on the public purse. 2. Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) – An EDMO is considered to be a less draconian option than a compulsory purchase. However, the cost of refurbishment could place a strain on the Council’s finances. It may not be possible to recover the cost of initial refurbishment and subsequent management/ maintenance through the rental income generated over the seven years that a Final EDMO could be in place. 3. Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) – The prospect of a CPO often prompts the owner to act leading to the property being refurbished and re-occupied. However, if it is necessary to acquire the property, the proposals for the onward disposal and refurbishment set out at 5.0 of this report ensure that the property is brought back into use at a minimum cost to the Public Purse.
<p>Reasons for Decision</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure that the property provides much needed housing by prompting the owner(s) either act voluntarily or via enforcement through a CPO. 2. To ensure that the property does not continue to be a drain on public resources. 3. To ensure that the detrimental effect that the property is having on the area is removed. 4. To ensure that the property has a positive financial impact on the public purse through additional New Homes Bonus funding. 5. The proposal to pursue a CPO is the most cost effective in terms of financial and physical resources for the Council.

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Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	7 October 2019

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Item 9	
Title	Schedule of Individual Executive Decision Notices
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	That the summary of open and exempt individual executive decisions approved by the appropriate Cabinet Members following consultation with the relevant employees be noted.
Options Considered	Not applicable in relation to the summary report.
Reasons for Decision	In accordance with the Council’s Constitution a summary of open and exempt individual executive decisions approved by Cabinet Members following consultation with the relevant employees must be reported to the next available meeting of the Cabinet (Resources) Panel.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	2 October 2019

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Item 11	
Title	Procurement - Award of Contracts for Works, Goods and Services
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Director of City Assets and Housing, to approve the award of a contract for Merridale Fire Station Refurbishment when the evaluation process is complete. 2. That the novation of the contract for Affordable Warmth Grant Assistance from British Gas Trading Limited of Millstream, Maidenhead Road, Windsor, Berkshire. SL4 5GD to Surefire Management Services Limited of 168 Church Road, Hove, East Sussex. BN3 2DL for the remaining period of the provision of the Affordable Warmth Grant be approved. 3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Adults, in consultation with the Director of Adult Services, to approve the award of a contract for Domiciliary Care inclusive of Home-Based Respite, Reablement and Rapid Response services when the evaluation process is complete. 4. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive, to approve the award of a contract for Dark Fibre (LFFN) when the evaluation process is complete. 5. That the award of the contract for Franking Machine Credits to Pitney Bowes Limited of Building 5 Trident Place, Hatfield Business Park, Mosquito Way, Hatfield, Hertfordshire, AL10 9UJ for a duration of three years from 7 October 2019 to 6 October 2022 for a total contract value of £270,000 be approved. 6. That the Chief Legal Officer and staff with appropriate delegated authority be authorised to execute contracts in respect of the above as required. 7. That the exemptions to the Contract Procedure Rules approved by the Head of Procurement and Director of Finance from 1 to 31 August 2019 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted.

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Options Considered	As detailed in the exempt report.
Reasons for Decision	As detailed in the exempt report.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	7 October 2019

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Item 12	
Title	Maintaining the School Estate
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	That the virement of existing agreed capital budgets to fund urgent works in Local Authority maintained schools be approved.
Options Considered	As detailed in the exempt report.
Reasons for Decision	As detailed in the exempt report.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	7 October 2019

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Item 13	
Title	Bilston Urban Village - Long Term Land Management Arrangements
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the creation of a capital budget which is equal to the costs of the proposed endowment to The Land Trust for the management of land at Bilston Urban Village as described in the report be approved. 2. That the Chief Legal Officer be authorised to execute the grant of the 125 year lease, the funding agreement and licence with The Land Trust which govern the proposed long term land management arrangements.
Options Considered	As detailed in the exempt report.
Reasons for Decision	As detailed in the exempt report.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	7 October 2019