

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Ian Brookfield (Chair)
Cllr Harman Banger
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Linda Leach
Cllr Louise Miles
Cllr John Reynolds

Employees

Tim Johnson	Chief Executive
Mark Taylor	Deputy Chief Executive
Emma Bennett	Director of Children's Services
Ross Cook	Director of City Environment
Charlotte Johns	Director of Strategy
David Pattison	Director of Governance
Alison Shannon	Chief Accountant
David Watts	Director of Adult Services
Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. Title

- 1 Councillor Peter Bilson**
Cabinet stood in silent tribute to long-serving City of Wolverhampton Councillor Peter Bilson, who sadly passed away at Russell's Hall Hospital on Saturday 15 February following a period of illness.
- 2 Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Jasbir Jaspal.
- 3 Declaration of interests**
No declarations of interests were made.
- 4 Minutes of the previous meeting - 22 January 2020**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 January 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 5 Matters arising**
There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

6 **Capital Programme 2019-2020 to 2023-2024 Quarter Three Review and 2020-2021 to 2024-2025 Budget Strategy**

Councillor Louise Miles presented the Capital Programme 2019-2020 to 20203-20204 Quarter Three Review and 2020-2021 to 2024-2025 Budget Strategy for approval and recommendation to Full Council.

Councillor Louise Miles also led personal tributes from Cabinet colleagues to the memory of Councillor Peter Bilson. They made reference to some of the many areas where he had left his significant mark on the city, including his work for housing in the city, the capital investment in housing, measures for additional fire safety to flats that he was at the forefront of championing, the Decent Homes Pledge, WV Living, the Tenant Management Organisations, the Grand Theatre, and refurbishment of the Civic Halls, to name just as few.

Resolved:

1. That Council be recommended to approve the revised medium term General Revenue Account capital programme of £368.4 million, an increase of £41.3 million from the previously approved programme, and the change in associated resources.
2. That the virements for the General Revenue Account capital programme detailed at Appendix 5 to the report be approved for:
 - i. Existing projects totalling £8.4 million;
 - ii. New projects totalling £10.4 million.
3. That both delegations to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance, be continued to approve the allocation of:
 - i. The Corporate Contingency to individual projects in order that corporate priorities may be addressed in an agile and timely manner;
 - ii. The Transformation Development Efficiency Strategy to individual transformation projects in order to benefit from the capital receipts flexibility announced in the Autumn Statement 2015 and in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
4. That authority be delegated to the Black Country Joint Committee to make decisions on behalf of the Council in relation to the approval of all Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funding applications, together with submissions for all external funding on behalf of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership and Collaboration Agreement partners.

7 **Treasury Management Strategy 2020-2021**

Councillor Louise Miles presented the Treasury Management Strategy 2020-2021 for approval and recommendation to Full Council.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to approve:

1. The authorised borrowing limit for 2020-2021 to support the capital strategy as required under Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 be set at £1,136.6 million (PI3, Appendix 3 to the report); the forecast borrowing is below the authorised borrowing limit.

2. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2020-2021 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
3. The Annual Investment Strategy 2020-2021 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.
4. The Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators as set out in Appendix 3 to the report.
5. The Annual Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Statement setting out the method used to calculate MRP for 2020-2021 as set out in Appendix 4 to the report.
6. The Treasury Management Policy Statement and Treasury Management Practices as set out in Appendix 6 to the report.
7. That authority continues to be delegated to the Director of Finance to amend the Treasury Management Policy and Practices and any corresponding changes required to the Treasury Management Strategy, the Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators, the Investment Strategy and the Annual MRP Statement to ensure they remain aligned. Any amendments would be reported to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Cabinet (Resources) Panel as appropriate.

That Cabinet approve:

1. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources in consultation with the Director of Finance to progress feasibility and investment propositions in a timely manner. Updates on any propositions would be provided to Cabinet or Cabinet (Resources) Panel in future reports.

That Council be asked to note:

1. That the authorised borrowing limit recommended in the report includes an increase of £5.0 million which has arisen due to changes in accounting treatment of leases.
2. That the MRP charge for the financial year 2020-2021 will be £17.9 million; it is forecast to increase to £20.9 million in 2021-2022.
3. That Cabinet or Cabinet (Resources) Panel and Council would receive regular Treasury Management reports during 2020-2021 on performance against the key targets and Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators in the Treasury Management Strategy and Investment Strategy as set out in paragraph 2.11 and Appendices 2 and 3 to the report.

8 **2020-2021 Final Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2021 - 2023-2024**

Councillor Louise Miles presented the 2020-2021 Final Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2021 to 2023-2024 report for approval and recommendation to Full Council.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to approve:

1. The net budget requirement for 2020-2021 of £248.2 million for General Fund services.
2. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2020-2021 to 2023-2024 as detailed in Table 7 and the budget preparation parameters underpinning the MTFS as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.
3. A Council Tax for Council services in 2020-2021 of £1,681.58 for a Band D property, being an increase of 3.99% on 2019-2020 levels, which incorporates the 2% increase in relation to Adult Social Care.
4. That work starts on developing budget reductions and income generation proposals for 2021-2022 onwards in line with the Five Year Financial Strategy.
5. Revisions to the local council tax support scheme to introduce a disregard of any compensatory payments that are similarly disregarded in the prescribed scheme, and any transitional payments made to compensate for the loss of the severe disability premium in Universal Credit.

That Cabinet approves:

1. The changes to the 2020-2021 draft budget for General Fund services, since the draft budget was last reported to Cabinet on 16 October 2019, as detailed in sections 6 to 18.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to approve the calculation and allocation of growth in the central share of business rates for 2020-2021 and future years to be passported to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).
3. That approval be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to respond to any consultation papers on the Business Rates Retention Scheme, Comprehensive Spending Review, Fair Funding Review and any other related consultation papers.
4. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources and the responsible Cabinet Member of the relevant service area in question, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the relevant Director to allocate budgets from the Corporate Contingency for Budget Growth once business cases have been completed.
5. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Cabinet Member for Education, in consultation with Director of Finance and Director of Children's Services, to approve changes to the local funding formula for Schools including method, principles and rules adopted.

6. That authority continues to be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources in consultation with the Director of Finance to consider further opportunities to accelerate pension contribution payments to secure additional budget reductions.
7. That £750,000 be transferred from the Efficiency Reserve to a new specific Climate Change Reserve.
8. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Environment and the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of City Environment and the Director of Finance to allocate funds from the Climate Change Reserve.

That Cabinet notes:

1. That the budget for 2020-2021 is in balance without the use of general reserves.
2. That, in the opinion of the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), the 2020-2021 budget estimates are robust.
3. That, in the opinion of the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), the proposed levels of reserves, provisions and balances is adequate in respect of the forthcoming financial year.
4. That a further £15.5 million needs to be identified for 2021-2022 rising to £20 million over the medium term to 2023-2024 in order to address the projected budget deficit.
5. That, due to external factors, budget assumptions remain subject to significant change, which could, therefore, result in alterations to the financial position facing the Council.
6. That, there continues to be a considerable amount of uncertainty with regards to future funding streams for local authorities over the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review period. At the point that further information is known it will be incorporated into future reports to Councillors. Any reduction in the Government's allocation of funding to the Council would have a significant detrimental impact and further increase the budget deficit forecast over the medium term.
7. That, the overall level of risk associated with the 2020-2021 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2021 to 2023-2024 is assessed as Red.
8. That Councillors must have due regard to the public sector equality duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) when making budget decisions.

The Towers Outdoor Education Centre - Options Appraisal

Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre presented the report on an options appraisal regarding the Towers Outdoor Education Centre (the Towers) and sought Cabinet's approval to the future of the facility. In doing so he explained the background to the proposal; the use made of the Towers by Wolverhampton schools during 2018-

20919; the funding position; options considered; and that the Council's Asset Management Board would be asked to determine the future use of the Towers. He also informed Cabinet of a petition that had been received calling on the Council to keep the outdoor centre open.

Councillor Ian Brookfield added that the Cabinet had also received today an email from members of the public expressing support for the Towers remaining open. Councillor Brookfield reported that interested parties were invited to come forward with their business plan for the Towers that could be explored by the Asset Management Board.

Resolved:

1. That the preferred option 1 for the future of Towers Outdoor Education (close Towers immediately, with users signposted to alternative provision, and the Council's Asset Management Board to determine the disposal process) be approved.
2. That further work being undertaken with users of Towers to identify alternative options for outdoor education be supported.
3. That under the #YES, engage with parents, young people and schools' longer term to ensure a range of activities and opportunities are accessible for all children and young people.

10 **Determined Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled School 2021-2022**

Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre presented for approval the schemes for co-ordinated school admission arrangements for secondary and primary schools and the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2021-2022. No changes were proposed from the previous year's schemes.

Resolved:

1. That the Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for secondary and primary school admissions at the normal year of entry for 2021-2022 and that the Secretary of State be notified by 28 February 2020 be approved.
2. That the proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2021-2022 be approved.

11 **Supporting Our Most Vulnerable Children to Learn and Achieve**

Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre presented the report that sought approval to consult families and local residents on how the Council could support its most vulnerable children to learn and achieve. The consultation would provide an opportunity to gather opinions from key stakeholders and support the development of robust policy.

Resolved:

1. That the commencement of consultation on the draft High Needs Provision Framework be approved.
2. That it be noted that the draft High Needs Provision Framework has previously benefited from widespread early pre-consultation as outlined in Section 3 of the report.

12 **Helping our Children and Young People to be Healthier and Happier - The Lessons Learnt from HeadStart**

Councillor John Reynolds presented the report on how learning from the Council's involvement in HeadStart, a wide ranging programme offering different ways to support mental health and emotional wellbeing, would be embedded within the future offer for children, young people and their families.

Resolved:

1. That the learning from Headstart into future planning of wellbeing services for children and young people be endorsed.
2. That it be noted that this item was considered as pre-decision scrutiny on 15 October 2019 by Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel and would therefore not be available to call in once a decision is made by Cabinet.

13 **NHS Digital Social Care Programme**

Councillor Linda Leach presented the report seeking approval for the Council to formally accept grant funding from NHS Digital to continue its involvement in NHS Digital's Social Care Programme, and for the Council to act as an accountable body. The programme was part of the NHS approach to breaking down barriers between health and social care. Specifically, the programme looked to engage with social care providers, research organisations and suppliers of business intelligence and data tools to develop analytical tools that ultimately benefit the people of Wolverhampton. Some of the benefits would include: reduction in hospital admissions for people through early intervention/prevention; promotes greater independence of our citizens for longer by targeted prevention work; and lower levels of emergency admissions to hospital or residential care.

Resolved:

1. That the acceptance of the NHS Digital Social Care Pathfinder grant and the establishment of supplementary budgets totalling £344,000 to be funded by the grant be approved.
2. That City of Wolverhampton Council becomes the Accountable Body for ensuring the grant and grant agreement are delivered.
3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Adult Services in consultation with the Director of Adult Services to agree actual expenditure of the grant monies in line with the broad allocation set out in section 2.4 of the report.
4. That the Council enter into such agreements as are necessary to receive grant funding for the NHS Digital Social Care project including any variations to current agreements for the release of further funds.
5. That the Council enter into any necessary agreements for the provision of funds by the Council to other organisations in respect of the NHS Digital Care Project.
6. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Adults in consultation with the Director of Adult Services to approve the terms of any agreements referred to in Recommendation 4 and 5 above

7. That the Council's successful engagement with the NHS Social Care Programme be noted.

14 **West Midlands Enhanced Bus Partnership**

Councillor Steve Evans presented the report seeking approval for the Council to participate in the development of an Enhanced Bus Partnership in the West Midlands and to the making of an Enhanced Partnership (EP) Plan.

An EP was a formal agreement between a local transport authority, local highway authorities and local bus operators to work together to improve local bus services. It included the aim to ensure the entire bus fleet in the West Midlands metropolitan area achieved at least Euro VI emissions standards by April 2021, cutting harmful pollution from buses by up to 95%. The West Midlands Combined Authority Board had given its approval for Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) to proceed with the development of an EP and using an EP for the delivery of Sprint routes in readiness for the Commonwealth Games in 2022.

Resolved:

1. That the development of an Enhanced Bus Partnership for bus services in the West Midlands in conjunction with Transport for West Midlands, other local authorities and local bus operators be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Environment, in consultation with the Director for City Environment, to "make" the Enhanced Partnership Plan, subject to complying with the statutory preparation, notice and consultation on the Enhanced Partnership.
3. That authority be delegated to Cabinet Member for City Environment in consultation with the Director for City Environment to approve the details of any contracts or agreements necessary for implementation of an Enhanced Bus Partnership.
4. That it be noted that participation in the development of the Enhanced Partnership and making of the Enhanced Partnership Plan cannot commit the Council to future Enhanced Partnership Schemes without their agreement.

15 **Allocations Policy Review**

Councillor Louise Miles presented to approval a revised Allocations Policy, the scheme by which applicants on the City's housing register are prioritised for social housing. The Allocations Policy had been reviewed alongside the development of the new City Housing Strategy, adopted in October 2019, which emphasised the need to provide a range of good quality homes whilst making the best use of the social housing stock that we own.

Councillor Miles also reported that Councillor Peter Bilson's commitment to social housing was reflected in major changes to the policy. A new band would be introduced that gave the greatest priority for housing to applicants with a full homelessness duty who are also care leavers, members of the Armed Forces, require a substantially adapted property, or anyone who requires rehousing due to a significant threat to life. Priority would also be given to residents committed to adopting and fostering, and increased priority for households that are overcrowded. The proposal had undergone pre decision scrutiny by the Vibrant and Sustainable

City Scrutiny Panel, who had made a suggested change to the Policy that had been reflected in the revised policy document.

Resolved:

1. That the implementation, from 1 April 2020, of the aspects of the revised Allocation Policy that are not dependant on the development of the IT system as detailed in paragraph 6.4 of the report be approved. The remainder of the policy, that is dependant on the development of the IT system to be implemented from February 2021.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director for City Assets and Housing to approve any minor changes to the final policy, where any structural constraints to the IT system are identified which are not able to support implementation of minor aspects of the recommended changes.
3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director for City Assets and Housing, to make minor editorial changes to the Allocations Policy when necessary.
4. That the recommendations from the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel referred to in the pre-decision scrutiny at appendix 1 to the report be noted.
5. That it be noted that the Allocations Policy continues to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Director for City Assets and Housing, to approve local lettings plans which are time limited variations to the Allocations Policy to achieve specific objectives pertaining to a local area or addressing a specific issue.