

City of Wolverhampton Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Wednesday, 11 November 2020

Item 5	
Title	Capital Programme 2020-2021 to 2024-2025 Quarter Two Review
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<p>That Cabinet recommend that Council approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The revised, medium term General Revenue account capital programme of £299.9 million, an increase of £11.4 million from the previously approved programme, and the change in associated resources. <p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approve the virements for the General Revenue Account capital programme detailed at Appendix 4 to the report for;<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. existing projects totalling £2.7 million;ii. new projects totalling £6.3 million.2. Approve the virements for the HRA capital programme detailed at Appendix 4 to the report for;<ol style="list-style-type: none">i. existing projects totalling £1.5 million;ii. new projects totalling £32.9 million.3. Approve the Supplemental Deed of Variation relating to governance of Enterprise Zone funding across the four Black Country Authorities detailed at Appendix 5 to the report.4. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Members for City Economy in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Director of Governance to conduct any negotiations and to make any minor amendments and to subsequently authorise the sealing of the Supplemental Deed of Variation Relating to the Collaboration Agreement in Relation to the Black Country Executive Joint Committee City Deal and Growth Deal dated the 7 May 2014 and the sealing or signing of any related documents.

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">5. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, in consultation with the Director of Children's Services and the Director of Finance, to approve the allocation of the Expansion Programme budgets to individual capital projects including making grant payments where appropriate in order that projects can be progressed in a timely manner.6. Continue to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance to approve the terms of a loan facility to Wolverhampton Homes. This is an extension of time in respect of the approval that was previously given by a joint meeting of Cabinet and Cabinet (Resources) Panel on 23 June 2020.7. Note there is one new project requiring internal resources included in this report, which is subject to a separate detailed project report also on this agenda. The inclusion of this project is for budget approval purpose and is on the assumption that the approval to progress with the project is given. As the progression is dependent on that decision, if the project is not approved, the capital programme will be reduced accordingly. The name of the project is:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Future High Street Fund
Options Considered	This report provides an update on progress of capital projects during 2020-2021 and anticipated budget requirement for future year. The evaluation of alternative project options is detailed in individual investment proposals.
Reasons for Decision	To seek Cabinet's recommendation to Council to approve the revised capital budgets. This will ensure that the capital programme budget reflects the latest forecasts and requirements.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	Mark Taylor, Deputy Chief Executive and Ross Cook, Director of City Environment declared a non-pecuniary interest as they are both Directors of WV Living.

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Dispensation Granted	None
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	Cabinet recommendations - 17 November 2020 Council recommendation – to be confirmed

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Item 6	
Title	Treasury Management Activity Monitoring - Mid Year Review 2020-2021
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<p>That Council be recommended to approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That a mid-year review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement has been undertaken and the Council has operated within the limits and requirements approved in March 2020. 2. That revenue underspends of £1.8 million for the General Revenue Account and £682,000 for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) are forecast from treasury management activities in 2020-2021, arising as a result of re-phasing of the capital programme and lower interest rates forecast on borrowing due to the impact on the economy of Covid-19. 3. That two of the three credit rating agencies have downgraded the UK's credit rating. If the remaining credit rating agency follows suit the Director of Finance will lower the minimum sovereign rating in the Annual Investment Strategy in line with the delegated authority approved by Council on 17 July 2020. <p>That Cabinet notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The financial information included in this report is based on the 'Capital Programme 2020-2021 to 2024-2025 Quarter Two Review' report also on the agenda for this meeting. The capital report is subject to a report being separately approved by Cabinet also at this meeting. Therefore, if this approval is not obtained, a revised version of this report would be presented to Council on 18 November 2020.
Options Considered	As this is a monitoring report of treasury management activities undertaken in line with the approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2020-2021, there are no alternative options available.

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Reasons for Decision	This report provides an update on treasury management activities undertaken in line with the approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2020-2021.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	Mark Taylor, Deputy Chief Executive and Ross Cook, Director of City Environment declared a non-pecuniary interest due to the references to loan facilities to WV Living within the report.
Dispensation Granted	None
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	To be confirmed

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Item 7	
Title	Draft Budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2022 to 2023-2024
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<p>That Council be recommended to approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The updated draft budget strategy linked to the Five Year Financial Strategy, including changes to corporate resource assumptions and growth and inflation, for inclusion in the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2022 to 2023-2024.2. That work continues to further develop budget reduction and income generation proposals, in order to ensure that a balanced budget can be set for 2021-2022.3. That authority be jointly delegated to the responsible Cabinet Member and the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the responsible Director and the Director of Finance to vary fees and charges in line with key priorities.4. That authority be jointly delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance to establish supplementary revenue budgets funded by grant and approve any virements required to support the costs associated the second national lockdown. As detailed in paragraph 3.8 of the report, the Government have announced a number of grants for local authorities in response to the second national lockdown. At the time of writing this report, the full details of these grants were not known. <p>That Cabinet notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the Council needs the Government to provide confirmation of future years funding as soon as possible and by early December at the latest, in order to ensure that the Council has a clear direction of funding available over the medium term.

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">2. That, despite austerity since 2010, the Council has a strong track-record of managing money well, planning ahead and delivering excellent services. The financial implications of the pandemic have significantly distorted the budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.3. The impact Covid-19 has had and would continue to have a significant financial impact on the 2020-2021 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy. However, following announcements made by Government it is assumed that sufficient grant funding would be provided to cover the cost pressures arising as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Taking this into account, the 2021-2022 projected budget deficit stands at £4.5 million.4. That, in the event that the Government do not provide sufficient grant funding to meet the cost pressures arising as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the 2021-2022 projected budget deficit would be in the region of £23.2 million. This would have a significant impact on the Council and result in the Council undertaking a fundamental review of all services in order to identify budget reductions sufficient enough to set a balanced budget.5. That, a number of assumptions have been made with regards to the level of resources that would be available to the Council as detailed in the report. It is important to note that there continues to be a considerable amount of uncertainty with regards to future income streams for local authorities over the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review period. At the point that further information is known it would 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.6. 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.7. That the 2021-2022 budget timetable would, as in previous years, include an update on all budget assumptions and the outcome of the Provisional Local Government Settlement would be presented to Cabinet by January 2021, with the final budget report due to be approved by Full Council in March 2021.
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	8. That the overall level of risk associated with the 2020-2021 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 is assessed as Red.
Options Considered	In determining the proposed Five Year Financial Strategy, consideration has been made to the deliverability of budget reduction and income generation proposals and budget pressures. In the event that sufficient grant funding to meet the pressures arising as a result of Covid-19 is not provided to local authorities, this would have a significant impact on the Council and result in the Council undertaking a fundamental review of all services in order to identify budget reductions sufficient enough to set a balanced budget. This may therefore potentially impact upon service provision.
Reasons for Decision	It is recommended that the updated draft budget strategy linked to the Five Year Financial Strategy, including changes to corporate resource assumptions and growth and inflation, for inclusion in the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 is approved by Cabinet. Cabinet will be provided with an update on progress in the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 report which will be presented to Cabinet in January 2021. In approving this strategy, the Council will be working towards identifying options to be able to set a balanced budget for 2021-2022.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	Councillor Linda Leach declared a non-pecuniary interest as she is a small business owner in the City.
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	To be confirmed

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Item 8	
Title	Principal Social Worker Annual Report
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the work of the Principal Social Worker and the continued impact it has on social care practice across children's and adults' services be endorsed. 2. That the main priorities for the Principal Social Worker identified for 2020-2021 be approved.
Options Considered	The priorities outlined within this report would contribute to the transformation of Adult Social Care (ASC) and Children and Young Peoples (CYP) Services.
Reasons for Decision	<p>The role of the Principle Social Worker (PSW) contributes to a number of key priorities across CYP and ASC Services. The post holder is the senior reporting officer leading the culture change programmes in ASC and CYP Services. Restorative Practice in CYP and Three Conversations in ASC are approaches and models that enable social workers to build professional relationships with people who need services that help and promote a strength based approach to their practice. These approaches will enable the workforce to strengthen families where children are at risk, promote the independence of older people and people with disabilities as well safeguarding people in vulnerable situations.</p> <p>The PSW provides dedicated resource to the recruitment and retention strategy which in turn helps the Council reduce its spend on agency. The role is also responsible for raising the profile of social work in the City which also contributes to making the City of Wolverhampton a social work employer of choice.</p> <p>The role also provides the professional knowledge required to drive local and regional workforce development plan that will help develop good and outstanding.</p>

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Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	17 November 2020

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Item 9	
Title	Community Asset Transfer: Policy and Strategy Review
Status	Recommendation Approved
Record of Decision	That the revised Community Asset Transfer Strategy be approved.
Options Considered	A number of points were considered when updating the new policy and through collaboration both with various Council service areas and the Voluntary Sector, the updated Strategy as presented allows the enablement of transfers that will have a positive impact and assists in avoiding those that may have a detrimental effect through applying a systematic approach. This provides a robust and fair approach to ensure that we are allowing Community organisations to excel, whilst ensuring that the Council's interests are sufficiently safeguarded.
Reasons for Decision	The updated CAT Strategy provides a robust, clear and fair approach in line with current legislation and policies to ensure that we are allowing community organisations to excel, whilst ensuring that the Council's interests are sufficiently safeguarded.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	17 November 2020

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Item 10	
Title	Housing Allocations Policy Implementation
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the amendments to the Housing Allocations Policy as detailed in paragraph 3.6 of the report be approved. 2. That an extension to the implementation of the Housing Allocations Policy be approved. 3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Director for City Environment, to authorise a 'go live date' for the Housing Allocations Policy.
Options Considered	<p>Option one would be to implement the recommendations of the report, ensuring the Council is meeting its legislative requirements and is responding to the current operating environment as reflected by the revised policy objectives, including making best use of homes and ensuring those in the greatest housing need have the greatest opportunity for accessing suitable accommodation.</p> <p>Option two would be to not implement the recommendations of this report, this would result in the new Allocations Policy not being implemented by the originally approved date of February 2021, this option is therefore not recommended.</p>
Reasons for Decision	Option one will ensure the Allocations Policy remains as fit for purpose as it can be dependent on the development of the IT system. This is important as allocations policies make decisions that change people's lives and housing opportunities and so need to reflect the latest legislation, regulation, case law and the local market.

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Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	17 November 2020

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Item 11	
Title	Exclusion of press and public
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
Options Considered	Not applicable.
Reasons for Decision	Not applicable.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	Not applicable
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	Not applicable

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Item 12	
Title	Future High Streets Fund - Bid Update
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Members for City Economy, City Environment and Resources in consultation with the Directors for Regeneration, City Environment and Finance to approve the full terms and conditions of a resultant Future High Streets Fund grant funding agreement.2. That it be noted that the capital costs, funded by internal resources, included in this report have been incorporated into the 'Capital Programme 2020-2021 to 2024-2025 Quarter Two Review' report which is also on this agenda and would subsequently be reported to Full Council for approval on the 18 November 2020, assuming that Cabinet approval to progress with the project is given. As the progression is dependent on that decision, if the project is not approved, the capital programme will be reduced accordingly.3. That it be noted that Cabinet would receive future update reports that would detail the individual projects within the Future High Streets Fund bid.4. That it be noted that if the City Centre West Future High Streets bid is unsuccessful or a reduced grant is awarded, the spending commitment may be reviewed accordingly.5. That the land assembly strategy for the Future High Streets Fund area and previous Cabinet approvals as set out in the report be noted.
Options Considered	As detailed in the exempt report.

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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)	17 November 2020