

City of Wolverhampton Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Wednesday, 17 February 2021

Item 5	
Title	Capital Programme 2020-2021 to 2024-2025 Quarter Three Review and 2021-2022 to 2025-2026 Budget Strategy
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<p>That Council be recommended to approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The revised City of Wolverhampton Council Capital Strategy. 2. The revised, medium term General Revenue account capital programme of £316.4 million, an increase of £1.6 million from the previously approved programme, and the change in associated resources. <p>That Cabinet approves:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The virements for the General Revenue Account capital programme detailed at Appendix 5 to the report for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. existing projects totalling £3.8 million. ii. new projects totalling £971,000. 2. Continuation of both delegations to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to approve the allocation of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 3. Delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for City Environment, in consultation with the Director of City Environment and Director of Finance, to approve the payments of grants related to the Black Country Blue Network Phase 2 programme where appropriate in order that projects can be progressed in a timely manner.

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Options Considered	This report provides an update on progress of capital projects during 2020-2021 and anticipated budget requirement for future years. 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	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	4 March 2021

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Item 6	
Title	Treasury Management Strategy 2021-2022
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<p>That Council be recommended to approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The authorised borrowing limit for 2021-2022 to support the capital strategy as required under Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 to be set at £1,166.2 million (PI3, Appendix 3 to the report); the forecast borrowing is below the authorised borrowing limit. 2. The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2021-2022 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report. 3. The Annual Investment Strategy 2021-2022 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 2021-2022 as set out in Appendix 4 to the report. 6. The method used to calculate MRP for 2020-2021 as set out in the Annual MRP Statement approved by Council on 4 March 2020 be amended to the method as set out in Appendix 4 to the report. 7. The Treasury Management Policy Statement and Treasury Management Practices as set out in Appendix 6 to the report. 8. 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.

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	<p>9. That authority continues to be delegated to the Director of Finance to lower the minimum sovereign rating in the Annual Investment Strategy, in the event of the UK's credit rating being downgraded by the third credit rating agency, due to the unprecedented impact of Covid-19 on the economy.</p> <p>The Cabinet approves:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That authority is 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. <p>The Cabinet recommends that Council be asked to note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. That the MRP charge for the financial year 2021-2022 would be £18.2 million; it is forecast to increase to £25.5 million in 2022-2023 (paragraph 2.14 of the report).2. That Cabinet or Cabinet (Resources) Panel and Council would receive regular Treasury Management reports during 2021-2022 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 2.12 and Appendices 2 and 3 to the report.
Options Considered	<p>The Treasury Management Strategy 2021-2022 outlined in the report meets the requirements of Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) Code of Practice on Treasury Management and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance along with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG's) Guidance on Local Government Investments and Minimum Revenue Provision. The MHCLG guidance defines a prudent investment policy as having two objectives, security which must be achieved first, followed by liquidity. Only after these have been met should yield be considered. The criteria included in this report are that which meet all the above guidance.</p>

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Reasons for Decision	To seek approval of the Treasury Management Strategy 2021-2022 in accordance with both government guidance and Codes of Practice.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	4 March 2021

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Item 7	
Title	2021-2022 Budget and 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 net budget requirement for 2021-2022 of £258.5 million for General Fund services (paragraph 10.1). 2. The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 as detailed in Table 4 and the budget preparation parameters underpinning the MTFS as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report. 3. A Council Tax for Council services in 2021-2022 of £1,765.49 for a Band D property, being an increase of 4.99% on 2020-2021 levels, which incorporates the 3% increase in relation to Adult Social Care, in line with Government expectations. (paragraph 8.4, Table 1). 4. That work starts on developing budget reductions and income generation proposals for 2022-2023 onwards in line with the Five Year Financial Strategy (paragraph 10.5). 5. Revisions to the local council tax support scheme (paragraph 8.7). <p>That Cabinet approves:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The updated assumptions used in the Budget 2021-2022 and the MTFS 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 as detailed in sections 7 and Appendix 1 to the report. 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 2021-2022 and future years to be passported to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) (Appendix 1, paragraph 1.29). 3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, in consultation with Director of Finance and Director of Children’s and

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Adult Services, to approve changes to the local funding formula for Schools including method, principles and rules adopted (paragraph 12.4).

4. 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 (Appendix 1 paragraph 1.5).
5. That the external provider of Risk Based Verification (RBV) is no longer beneficial to the service and that the Council ceases to operate the external RBV system from 31 March 2021, using an in-house RBV approach to the verification of new Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims (paragraph 8.10).

That Cabinet notes:

1. That the budget for 2021-2022 is in balance without the use of general reserves (paragraph 10.1).
2. That, in the opinion of the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer), the 2021-2022 budget estimates are robust (paragraph 10.1).
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 (paragraph 11.4).
4. That a further £25.4 million needs to be identified for 2022-2023 rising to £29.6 million over the medium term to 2023-2024 in order to address the projected budget deficit (paragraph 10.5).
5. That, due to external factors, in particular the impact of Covid 19, budget assumptions remain subject to significant change, which could therefore result in alterations to the financial position facing the Council (paragraph 7.5).

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	<p>6. That, there continues to be a considerable amount of uncertainty with regards to future funding streams for local authorities over the forthcoming multi-year 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 (paragraph 7.20).</p> <p>7. That, the overall level of risk associated with the 2021-2022 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 is assessed as Red (paragraph 9.1).</p> <p>8. That Councillors must have due regard to the public sector equality duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) when making budget decisions (paragraph 17.7).</p>
Options Considered	<p>In determining the proposed 2021-2022 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2022 to 2023-2024, consideration has been made to the deliverability of budget reduction and income generation proposals and budget pressures. If we were to not implement the budget strategy as proposed in the report, alternative options would need to be identified in order for the Council to set a balanced budget for 2021-2022.</p>
Reasons for Decision	<p>Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer to report to the Council when it is making the statutory calculations required to determine its Council Tax. The Council is required to take this report into account when making its budget decision. The Chief Financial Officer’s report must deal with the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides.</p>
Record of Conflicts of Interest	<p>None</p>
Dispensation Granted	<p>Not applicable</p>
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	<p>4 March 2021</p>

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Item 8	
Title	Adult Social Care Annual Report: The Local Account 2019-2020
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Adult Social Care Local Account for 2019-2020 be approved for publication. 2. That the comments of the Adult and Safer City Scrutiny Panel on the Adult Social Care Annual Report: The Local Account 2019-2020 (Appendix 1) be noted. 3. That the proposed priorities for 2020-2021 be noted.
Options Considered	Although not mandatory, it is considered good practice for councils to produce and publish a Local Account every year.
Reasons for Decision	The Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework (ASCOF) measures the extent to which care and support services are achieving the outcomes that matter most to the residents of Wolverhampton. The information in the annual report is used locally to set priorities for care and support and also provide a basis to measure progress and strengthen transparency and accountability. The publication of the report also provides a basis to review and reflect on progress and help identify areas of risk and or where further action is needed to improve performance against national social care standards in the future.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	18 February 2021

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Item 9	
Title	Determined Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2022-2023
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for secondary and primary school admissions at the normal year of entry for 2022-2023 be approved and that the Secretary of State be notified by 28 February 2021. 2. That the proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2022-2023 be approved.
Options Considered	One alternative option may have been to propose changes to the admissions arrangements. However, a full consultation was conducted in 2015, and the current arrangements are compliant with the School Admissions Code 2014.
Reasons for Decision	<p>As prescribed by The School Admissions Code 2014, Admission authorities must set (determine) admission arrangements annually. If there are no changes to admission arrangements, they must be consulted on at least once every seven years. A full consultation was conducted in 2015.</p> <p>There are no proposed changes to the admission arrangements and they comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code 2014.</p>
Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	23 February 2021

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Item 10	
Title	Revision to Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the revised Wolverhampton Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy be approved effective from 1 April 2021. 2. That it be noted that the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy continues to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Director for City Environment to approve discretionary awarding of grants outside the policy in exceptional circumstances via an Individual Executive Decision Notice.
Options Considered	<p>Option one – adopt the proposed revisions to the PSHA Policy. Adopting the proposed changes to the policy will enable greater flexibility to meet the housing needs of disabled and vulnerable residents in the city, particularly where the mandatory grants process is discouraging vulnerable residents from accessing necessary adaptations to assist them to remain independent in their own home. This will have the benefit of reducing reliance on funded care packages and will contribute to a reduction in emergency hospital admissions. It will also make best use of the funding available.</p> <p>Option two - do nothing. By not adopting the revised PSHA Policy it would limit residents to the assistance made available in the existing policy, which is limited and restrictive in parts, and does not make best use of the funds available to the Council to support disabled and vulnerable people make the adaptations to their homes that meet their needs to enable them to live independently for longer. This will have the impact of generating increased costs in the wider health and care system since those who could not access support/early intervention are likely to develop increased dependency needs i.e. domiciliary care/ residential care. It will also limit the council's ability to maximise spend of the funding available, limiting the number of people in need that can benefit from it.</p>

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	<p>Option three - partial acceptance of the policy. Adopting a selection of the proposals will provide a greater flexibility to meet need than currently exists and would improve access to grants and adaptations for those who are eligible; however, the full range of support could not be offered which would not make best use of the funds available to the Council and would mean some applicants needs would not be fully met.</p>
Reasons for Decision	<p>Option one, the adoption of the proposed revisions to the PSHA Policy is recommended. The proposed discretionary financial assistance will enable the Council to provide flexible financial assistance which will enable many more people to have adaptations made to their home. The revisions to the policy provide greater access and availability of funding and enables the council to deal with more specialist cases in a controlled and prompt manner. This will help to promote wellbeing, prevent needs escalating and enable people with a disability to live in their homes independently.</p>
Record of Conflicts of Interest	<p>None</p>
Dispensation Granted	<p>Not applicable</p>
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	<p>23 February 2021</p>

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Item 11	
Title	Exclusion of press and public
Status	Recommendation 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 remaining items of business as they involve 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	Outcome of the Procurement Process to Appoint an External Operator for the Civic Halls
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That a preferred operator for the Civic Halls, based on the outcome of the procurement process be approved. 2. That a reserve operator for the Civic Halls, based on the outcome of the procurement process be approved. 3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Economy and Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and the Director of Finance, to approve the details of an agreement for lease and lease together with any ancillary agreements between the Council and the operator.
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
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Item 13	
Title	Future High Streets Fund - Funding Award Update
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the key projects that would form part of the revised City Centre West Future High Streets Fund Programme, to reflect the Government’s “in principle” funding offer be noted. 2. That the additional £5,000 supplementary revenue budget to be funded by grant be approved. 3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Members for Resources, City Environment and City Economy in consultation with Directors of Finance, City Environment and Regeneration to approve the submission to the Future High Street Fund by 26th February 2021 confirming the Council’s intention to request the full £15,760,196 provisionally allocated to the Council by the Fund. 4. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Members for Resources, City Environment and City Economy in consultation with the Directors of Finance, City Environment and Regeneration to approve the creation of specific project budgets, including the required supplementary capital budgets funded by the grant. 5. That the business case for the Bell Street scheme which includes Box Park and Cleveland Street car park at Appendix 1 to the report be approved. 6. That the Council’s success in securing an “in principle” funding offer of £15.76 million from the Future High Streets Fund bid and the Council’s intent to accept the grant award in line with the delegation approved by Cabinet on 11 November 2020 be noted. 7. That the following proposed governance arrangements that would be established to cover the implementation of projects under the Future High Streets Fund programme. (i) a Future High Streets Steering Group to oversee the delivery of the key projects that would form part of the Future High Streets Fund programme, (ii) an internal officer team for each Future High Streets Fund project be noted.

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	8. That the approval of the virement of £600,000 from Corporate Contingency to the Future High Street Capital programme in the Capital Programme 2020-2021 to 2024-2025 Quarter Three Review and 2021-2022 to 2025-2026 Budget Strategy report also on today's agenda; in order to meet the revised co-funding requirements, as detailed in the report be noted.
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)	23 February 2021

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Item 14	
Title	Bilston Business Improvement District (BID)
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Council's vote be exercised in support of the proposed BID Ballot in respect of the hereditaments in the Council's ownership within the BID area and authority be delegated to the Director of Regeneration to complete and return the voting papers on behalf of the Council. 2. That the Cabinet Member for City Economy be authorised to sit as the Council Board member on the BID Board, should the BID Ballot be successful for another five years. 3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Economy, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and the Director of Finance, to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. formally approve the BID Business Plan and associated documents. b. Charge the BID company annual administration and software support charges for the collection of the BID levy which is estimated to be in the region of £1250. In addition, there would also be an implementation (one-off) cost of £5,000 in year one. These costs are for the first year, with the option to review on an annual basis for the duration of the BID (five years) and to cover the Council's costs associated with collection of the BID levy. c. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for City Economy, in consultation with Chief Legal Officer, to negotiate, agree and complete the necessary legal agreements required for the proposed BID renewal and any other agreements to give effect to the recommendations above. 4. The Bilston Business Improvement District Business Plan and boundary be noted.

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	5. That it be noted that formal notice for the Ballot had been received therefore the Returning Officer had been instructed to organise the BID ballot in accordance with the Business Improvement District Regulations (2004).
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)	23 February 2021