

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

Item 4	
Title	Capital Programme 2021-2022 to 2025-2026 Quarter Two Review
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<p>That Council is recommended to approve:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The revised, medium term General Revenue Account capital programme of £298.1 million, an increase of £6.7 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 4 to the report for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. existing projects totalling £4.3 million; ii. new projects totalling £1.7 million. 2. The virements for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme detailed at Appendix 4 to the report for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. existing projects totalling £3.6 million. <p>The Cabinet notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That there is an intentional ‘over-programming’ of projects to reflect the reality that some projects will inevitably be delayed due to unexpected circumstances or changes to priorities. Over-programming aims to ensure that, as far as possible, the resources available are fully utilised. 2. That the following capital projects are included in a bid for external European Regional Development Fund grant as part of the Wolverhampton Investment in Smart Energy programme. If successful, and subject to confirmation of grant funding, this could attract up to 40% of external funding that would reduce the amount of internal resources required to fund the Corporate Asset Management programme. Any realised changes in resources as a result of grant confirmation will be reflected in future monitoring reports for approval.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aldersley Leisure Centre (Hockey Pitches) – External lighting to include electrical controls & lighting columns; • Bradley Resource Centre – Mechanical Plant upgrade; • Civic Centre – Flue replacement.
Options Considered	The report provides an update on progress of capital projects during 2021-2022 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)	2 December 2021

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Item 5	
Title	Treasury Management Activity Monitoring - Mid Year Review 2021-2022
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<p>That Council is asked to note:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That a mid-year review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement had been undertaken and the Council had operated within the limits and requirements approved in March 2021, however due to the reprofiling of some capital programmes the authorised limit and operational boundary for commercial activities for 2022-2023 is forecast to be slightly in excess of the best estimate included in the Treasury Management Strategy presented to Council on 3 March 2021. This would be reviewed as part of the 2022-2023 Treasury Management Strategy. 2. That revenue underspends of £899,000 for the General Revenue Account and £706,000 for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) are forecast from treasury management activities in 2021-2022, arising as a result of re-phasing of the capital programme and lower interest rates forecast on borrowing. <p>The Cabinet notes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That there had been no change to the UK's credit rating and therefore the Director of Finance had not been required to use the delegated authority approved by Council on 17 July 2020 to amend the Annual Investment Strategy.
Options Considered	As this is a monitoring report of treasury management activities undertaken in line with the approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2021-2022, there are no alternative options available.
Reasons for Decision	The report provides an update on treasury management activities undertaken in line with the approved Treasury Management Strategy for 2021-2022.

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Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	2 December 2021

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Item 6	
Title	Performance and Budget Monitoring 2021-2022
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the establishment of supplementary expenditure budgets within the 2021-2022 approved budget as detailed in section 9.0 of the report for grant funded expenditure be approved. 2. That the use of £1.0 million from the Regeneration Reserve to fund various transformation work as detailed in paragraph 10.4 of the report be approved. 3. That the use of £105,000 from the Budget Contingency Reserve to fund additional resource to ensure the Council delivers on the Fairness and Inclusion agenda as detailed at paragraph 10.5 of the report be approved. 4. That the contribution of £200,000 to the Budget Contingency Reserve to support environmental works in 2021-2022 as detailed in paragraph 10.6 of the report be approved. 5. That the use of £124,000 from the Recovery Reserve/ Covid Emergency grant to fund additional resources within Insight and Performance to support the work around jobs, skills and enterprise as detailed at paragraph 10.7 of the report be approved. 6. That the write-off of three Council Tax debts totalling £17,693.83 as detailed in Appendix 9 to the report be approved. 7. That the write-off of three Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) debts totalling £30,785.94 as detailed in Appendix 10 to the report be approved. 8. That the write-off of two Housing Benefit debts totalling £12,814.21 as detailed in Appendix 11 to the report be approved.

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	<ol style="list-style-type: none">9. That the write-off of one Sundry Debt totalling £5,538.16 as detailed in Appendix 8 to the report be approved.10. That 60 virements totalling £28.9 million, for transfers within directorates, as detailed in Appendix 12 to the report be approved.11. That it be noted that the General Fund projected outturn for 2021-2022 is currently forecast to be an underspend of £235,000 (excluding the impact of Covid-19). This forecast underspend is after the transfer of £4 million into the Future Years Budget Strategy Reserve in accordance with the 2022-2023 budget strategy and £200,000 into the Budget Contingency Reserve to support environmental works.12. That it be noted that at this stage in the financial year it is difficult to forecast redundancy costs. However, as forecast in recent years it is anticipated that the cost of redundancies can be met from reserves.13. That it be noted that a £12.3 million surplus on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is projected compared with a budgeted surplus of £13.1 million as shown at Table 3 and in detail at Appendix 5 to the report. The projected reduction to the surplus of £841,000 would reduce redemption of debt by £841,000.14. That it be noted that council tax accounts totalling £487,356.90, as detailed in paragraph 11.2 and Appendix 7 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.15. That it be noted that 32 Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) debts totalling £259,737.68, as detailed in paragraph 11.2 and Appendix 7 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.16. That it be noted that 51 housing benefit overpayments totalling £27,061.75 as detailed in paragraph 11.2 and Appendix 7 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
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	17. That it be noted that 135 sundry debt accounts totalling £72,957.29, as detailed in paragraph 11.2 and Appendix 7 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
Options Considered	In accordance with the Council's financial procedures rules, all virements in excess of £50,000, or those that result in a transfer between employees and other controllable expenditure headings, require the approval of Cabinet. Contributions to and from reserves and the creation of supplementary budgets also require Cabinet approval. The write-offs, virements, use of reserves and creation of supplementary budgets detailed in the report which seek the approval of Cabinet are all considered prudent in the opinion of the Director of Finance.
Reasons for Decision	In accordance with the Council's financial procedures rules, all virements in excess of £50,000, or those that result in a transfer between Employees and Other Controllable Expenditure headings, require the approval of Cabinet. Contribution to and from reserves also requires the approval from Cabinet. The write-offs, virements and use of reserve requests detailed in the report which seek the approval of Cabinet are all considered to be prudent in the opinion of the Director of Finance and the Leader of the Council.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	23 November 2021

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Item 7	
Title	Relighting Our Council
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the Relighting Our Council vision and strategy, which sets out the high-level approach to develop a new flexible and agile operating model in order to best meet the needs of our city be approved. 2. That the proposal to engage with the organisation and consult with the Trade Unions on the development of a fair, inclusive, and equitable 'Our employee/people offer' be approved. 3. That the drawdown of £200,000 funding which has been previously set aside in the Transformation Reserve for the Our Assets Programme and the utilisation of other existing funding allocations to facilitate this strategy, as outlined in the financial implications be approved. 4. That it be noted that in line with this high level Relighting Our Council strategy, further work would be done to develop a new workspace strategy, new employee offer and Our People Strategy, new staff sustainable travel policy and new digital strategy to ensure the delivery of better outcomes for local people. 5. That the outcome of the pre-decision scrutiny undertaken by the Our Council Scrutiny Panel on 2 November, summarised at paragraph 2.4 and appendix 2 to the report be noted.
Options Considered	Option one would be to adopt the high level Relighting Our Council approach, to continue to ensure that the Council operates in a way that maximises outcomes for local people, learning from the experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic and adopting modern, best practice ways of working.

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	<p>Option two would be to revert to pre-pandemic ways of operating as a Council, which would not maximise the benefits outlined in this report. The Covid-19 pandemic is not over, and in line with our principle of being led by Public Health guidance and ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of our city and workforce, continue to operate Covid safe measures such as social distancing in our workspaces. During engagement with employees, it has been identified that this approach may negatively impact on not only the health and well-being of our employees and/or improved productivity but also our ability to attract and retain talented employees.</p>
<p>Reasons for Decision</p>	<p>Cabinet is recommended to approve the Relighting Our Council strategy, in order to deliver the benefits associated with the approach – namely improved productivity and effectiveness, providing value for money, reducing our carbon emissions and improving employee health, wellbeing, recruitment and retention.</p>
<p>Record of Conflicts of Interest</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Dispensation Granted</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>
<p>Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)</p>	<p>18 November 2021</p>

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Item 8	
Title	Updated Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) Policy
Status	Recommendations Approved
Record of Decision	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the updated, corporate RIPA Covert Investigation Policy and corporate RIPA Operating Procedure be approved. 2. That the contents of the report and the steps taken to address comments made by the most recent inspection of the Council's arrangements in respect to RIPA regulated matters be noted.
Options Considered	There are no alternative options. It is critical that the Council complies with the legal obligations under the RIPA and the IPA.
Reasons for Decision	To ensure that the Council meets its legal obligations under the RIPA and the IPA.
Record of Conflicts of Interest	None
Dispensation Granted	Not applicable
Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)	23 November 2021