

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Ian Brookfield (Chair)
Cllr Stephen Simkins (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Obaida Ahmed
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Linda Leach (Virtually)
Cllr Beverley Momenabadi (Virtually)

Employees

Tim Johnson	Chief Executive
Mark Taylor	Deputy Chief Executive
Emma Bennett	Executive Director of Families
Ross Cook	Director of City Housing and Environment
John Denley	Director of Public Health
Ian Fegan	Director of Communications and External Relations
Charlotte Johns	Director of Strategy
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration
Claire Nye	Director of Finance
David Pattison	Chief Operating Officer
Laura Phillips	Deputy Director of People and Change
Brenda Wile	Deputy Director of Education
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services Manager
Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

1 Apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received for the meeting.

2 Declaration of interests

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer reported that in relation to item 4 (Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2022-2023 including Rent and Service Charges) there was a standing dispensation for Councillors in the Council's Constitution in relation to members' allowances, business rates, housing matters and rents. Any Councillor who had a registered interest would be able to speak and vote on the report.

Mark Taylor, Deputy Chief Executive had submitted a note declaring an interest in items 4 and 11 (Purchase of Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership Units – Northcote Development (WV Living) due to being a Director of WV Living.

3 Minutes of the previous meeting

Resolved:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 8 December 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2022-2023 including Rent and Service Charges

Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal presented the report on an updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2022- 2023 for recommendation to Full Council. The Business Plan aimed to balance the provision of new homes for rent, whilst continuing to invest in better and safer homes programmes to the existing stock and improving and redeveloping housing estates. The report also provided, as an integral part of the Business Plan, a proposed HRA budget for 2022-2023, including proposed rents and service charges to take effect from 1 April 2022, and a proposed HRA Capital Programme for the period 2022-2023 to 2026-2027 for recommendation to Full Council.

Resolved:

That the Council be recommended to:

1. Adopt the Business Plan set out at Appendix 1 to the report as the approved Housing Revenue Account Business Plan including:
 - a. The revenue budget for 2022-2023 at Appendix 1 to the report.
 - b. The Capital Programme for 2022-2023 to 2026-2027 at Appendix 2 to the report that includes the following among the proposed investment plans:
 - £118.7 million for new build development.
 - £42.6 million provision for estate remodelling.
 - £50.4 million to complete the refurbishment of the Heath Town estate.
 - £79.8 million for programmes to high rise estates to include fire safety improvements, infrastructure replacement, retrofitting of sprinklers and external works.
2. Approve the implementation of an increase of 4.1% to social housing rents in accordance with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 and to give 28 days notice to all secure and introductory tenants of the rent increase from 1 April 2022.
3. Approve the rates for garage rents and service charges set out in Appendix 3 to the report and formally notifies tenants.
4. Approve Management Allowances for Managing Agents as follows;
 - Wolverhampton Homes - £40,460,000
 - Bushbury Hill Estate Management Board - £1,780,000
 - New Park Village Tenants Management Organisation - £395,000
 - Dovecotes Tenants Management Organisation - £1,148,000

That Cabinet notes:

1. The issues raised during the consultation have been communicated to the managing agents and would also be provided to tenants as areas for possible tenant scrutiny during 2022-2023.
2. From 1 April 2020 the Regulator of Social Housing has regulated social rents charged by Local Authorities. The Rent increase at 4.1% is chargeable in line with Government policy set out in the Rent Standard 2020.
3. The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper (2020) sets out the principles for a new, fairer deal for social housing residents, focusing on the provision of safe and decent homes, resolving complaints, empowering tenants, tackling stigma and building new homes.
4. The National Building Safety Programme of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Grenfell Inquiry pending its full outcomes, would impact upon future building safety planning. The Hackett Review 2018 makes recommendations for residential building safety and improvements to be considered as part of all future HRA asset management and improvement planning and the Building Safety Bill introduces regulation seeking greater assurance on the safety of multi-occupied buildings.
5. Asset planning in 2022-2023 would look at the future management and asset planning for non-traditional homes, including high-rise homes.

5 **SEND Inspection Outcome Written Statement of Action**

Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre presented for approval the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) developed as the Local Area response to the outcome of the Joint Inspection of the Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services and provision conducted by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). The WSOA had been comprehensively and cooperatively put together following consultation with the large number of partners involved in Wolverhampton's SEND provision. There was agreement between all the groups on the WSOA. Councillor Dr Hardacre also informed Cabinet that the report no longer needed to go to Full Council as it had gone through full and comprehensive pre-decision scrutiny by the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel, who were in complete agreement the WSOA.

Resolved:

1. That the Local Area Written Statement of Action (WSOA) that is required to be submitted to Ofsted by the 16 February 2022 in response to the outcome of the Joint Inspection of the Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services and provision conducted by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) between 20 and 24 September 2021 be approved.
2. That it be noted that the Written Statement of Action requires some final detail to be added following feedback from Parent/Carer surveys, the Clinical Commissioning Group. The Written Statement of Action would be prepared as a final designed document prior to submission to Ofsted by the 16 February.

3. That it be noted that the Written Statement of Action would also need sign off by the Clinical Commissioning Group governance structures as it is required to be developed as a co-produced document including input from a range of stakeholders following their engagement in the process through focus groups and surveys undertaken since the publication of the Inspection report and the DfE Senior Officials meeting with Local Area Leaders on the 29 November 2021.
4. That the '6 Focus Areas' which would outline the actions to be taken to address the 'Areas of Significant Weakness' as identified in the SEND inspection report in Appendix 1 to the report be noted.
5. That it be noted that the Joint SEND Strategy developed by the Wolverhampton SEND Partnership Board in 2020 and approved by the Cabinet and the Children and Families Together Board sets out the vision and key priorities of the Council and partners in the city to improve the lives of children and young people with SEND. Additional actions to those set out in the WSOA are also being closely monitored
6. That it be noted that the Strategy reflects the vision that Wolverhampton is an inclusive City where we work with children, young people, and their families with SEND so that they can achieve their full potential. It recognises that all children with SEND are individuals with aspirations to lead their own lives. While life for a child or young person with SEND and their family is anything but ordinary, the ordinary life principles are what extraordinary achievements are built on.

- 6 **Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement and Draft Budget Update**
Councillor Ian Brookfield outline the key points from the report on an overview of the 2022-2023 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, which the Government announced in December 2021 and the impact of the provisional settlement on the Council's Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Resolved:

1. That the outcome of the 2022-2023 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement be noted.
2. That it be noted that the final budget report presented to Cabinet on 23 February 2022 would reflect the outcome of the settlement and detailed budget work for 2022-2023, including a review of all budget reduction proposals and the risks associated with their delivery.

- 7 **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2024**
Councillor Paula Brookfield asked Cabinet to approve the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2024. The Strategy outlined the Council's commitments, ambitions, current activities and future plans and brought together actions and activities designed to have an impact on equality and inclusion across the organisation. The document was structured around four key objectives, three with an internal focus and one externally focused, looking at ensuring services continue to remain accessible inclusive and responsive. Councillor Paula Brookfield also asked Cabinet for delegated authority to approve corrections to typographical errors and additions to the Public Health directorate's priorities that came in after the report was published.

Resolved:

1. That the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2024 as attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Governance and Equalities in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer to update certain departmental targets and to correct typographical errors in the Strategy.

8 **Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2025**

Councillor Ian Brookfield moved the recommendations in the report Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2025.

Councillor Beverley Momenabadi reported that the Strategy had been co-produced with Care Leavers Independent Collective and the Children in Care Council. It aimed to raise awareness about the strengths, and challenges with the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities. It showcased work and achievements over the last two years but also holds the Council to account in making sure that children in the care of the city and Councillors as corporate parents make sure that they have the best opportunities and life outcomes as children who are not in care.

Resolved:

1. That the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2025 be endorsed.
2. That Cabinet member roles and responsibilities as Corporate Parents be noted.

9 **Determined Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2023-2024**

Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre presented for approval the schemes for coordinated school admission arrangements for secondary and primary schools and admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2023-2024. No changes were proposed to the existing admission arrangements and they were compliant with the provisions of the School Admissions Code 2021.

Resolved:

1. That the Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for secondary and primary school admissions at the normal year of entry for 2023-2024 be approved and that the Secretary of State be notified by 28 February 2022.
2. That the proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2023-2024 be approved.

10 **Building Surveys of Large Panel System Blocks**

Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal presented the report on arrangements to carry out surveys of six council owned tower blocks constructed using the large panel system to determine their safety. The surveys were in response to a requirement in a circular issued to local authorities from the then Department for Communities and Local Government. Testing would be required of 18 flats in total. To enable the survey work to be undertaken and minimise the disruption to existing tenants, it would be necessary to utilise void properties in the tower blocks.

Resolved:

1. That the requirement to hold a total of 18 void properties within the six tower-blocks built using the Large Panel Systems (LPS) to enable the completion of specialist surveys be approved.
2. That suitable void properties within the each of the six tower-blocks be held to allow the survey work to be carried out.
3. That the rehousing of the tenants from these dwellings following a consultation period and housing needs assessment be approved.
4. That a level of compensation payment and disturbance payments as detailed in exempt Appendix 2 to the report for those tenants in identified properties within the six tower blocks to voluntarily move to suitable, alternative accommodation to decant the property in order to carry out the specialist surveys be approved.
5. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing in consultation with the Director of City Environment, to agree any alternative compensation payment and disturbance payment to that detailed in exempt Appendix 2 to the report under exceptional circumstances.
6. That it be noted that a further report on the outcome of the testing and the future investment or regeneration of these tower blocks would be presented to a future meeting.

11

Purchase of affordable rent and shared ownership units - Northicote development (WV Living)

Mark Taylor, Deputy Chief Executive left the meeting whilst Cabinet considered this item.

Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal presented the report on a proposal to purchase 29 affordable rents and 16 shared ownership units on the Northicote development site from WV Living. Once the 45 affordable housing units are completed the properties would be allocated through Homes in the City choice based letting system. The marketing of the shared ownership units would be managed through an appointed Sales and Marketing Agent. The purchase of the affordable rents units would meet the objectives within the Council's Plan Better Homes for All and the Housing Strategy's More and Better Homes by increasing the number of additional affordable housing to meet the house demands within the city. The purchase of the shared ownership units would provide an opportunity for residents to access low cost home ownership.

Resolved:

1. That the purchase of 29 homes for affordable rent and 16 homes for shared ownership units from WV Living on the Northicote housing development site through a standard form of development agreement at the agreed purchase as detailed in exempt Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
2. That approval be granted to enter into contract using a standard form of development agreement between the Council and WV Living including staged payments as detailed in exempt Appendix 2 to the report.

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

3. That Chief Operating Officer or other authorised officers be authorised to execute the contract agreement, transfers, associated wayleave agreements, deed of easements, deeds of grant, collateral warranties together with any ancillary agreements.