

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Ian Brookfield (Chair)
Cllr Stephen Simkins (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Obaida Ahmed
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Chris Burden
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Linda Leach
Cllr Beverley Momenabadi

Employees

Tim Johnson	Chief Executive
Emma Bennett	Executive Director of Families
John Denley	Director of Public Health
Charlotte Johns	Director of Strategy
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration
Claire Nye	Director of Finance
Laura Phillips	Deputy Director of People and Change
John Roseblade	Director of City Housing and Environment
Alison Shannon	Chief Accountant
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**
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Steve Evans.
- 2 Declaration of interests**
No declarations of interests were made.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 July 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 4 Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-2024 to 2025-2026**
Councillor Obaida Ahmed reported on salient points from the report on an update on the draft budget and medium term financial strategy (MTFS) 2023-2024 to 2025-

2026 along with an overview of the in-year budget monitoring position for 2022-2023. In doing so she reported that the Council had built up a strong track record over many years of managing its finances well and had consistently set a balanced budget. The Cabinet's approach to strategic financial management, by aligning budgets to service priorities and improving services and by investing in transformation priorities continued to put the Council in a strong financial position. The proposals outlined in the report would go a long way to enabling the Council to set a balanced budget for 2023-2024 without loss of services to the residents of the city.

Resolved:

1. The draft budget strategy and medium term financial strategy which underpin Our City, Our Plan, including changes to corporate resource assumptions, growth and inflation be approved.
2. That it be noted that significant progress had been made towards setting a balanced budget for 2023-2024 however there remains a high level of risk and uncertainty. Further options would continue to be explored to address the updated projected budget deficit of just under £1.0 million.
3. That it be noted 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 section 8 of the report. It is important to note there continues to be a considerable amount of uncertainty with regards to future income streams for local authorities. Any reduction in Government allocation of funding to the Council would have a significant detrimental impact and further increase the budget deficit over the medium term.
4. That it be noted 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.
5. That it be noted that the updated projected budget deficit assumes the achievement of recurrent budget reduction and income generation proposals totalling £12.2 million over the period of 2022-2023 to 2025-2026.
6. That it be noted that a further update on the budget strategy would be presented to Cabinet in October 2022 and that there would be a period of formal budget consultation and scrutiny. This would also align to the annual refresh of Our City, Our Plan, setting out our key city priorities.
7. That it be noted that it is forecast that by 2025-2026 the budget deficit would rise to £25.7 million and that work would continue to be undertaken to bring forward proposals to deliver a sustainable medium term financial strategy.
8. That it be noted that the overall level of risk associated with the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023-2024 to 2025-2026 is assessed as Red.

5

Levelling Up Wolverhampton

Councillor Ian Brookfield presented the update and progress report which set out the city's approach to levelling up following, the Government proactively identifying Wolverhampton as a place that demonstrates strong local leadership and ambition,

ripe to maximise catalytic economic transformation. Councillor Ian Brookfield added that he was pleased Government had recognised the Council's Our City, Our Plan and the way it had been developed was the right approach to levelling up. Included in the report were a set of initial short and medium term interventions identified as catalyst projects to accelerate levelling up in the city.

Resolved:

1. That the approach to how the City of Wolverhampton Council is responding to the Levelling Up White Paper, working with key partners including the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to deliver our strategic framework for levelling up, Our City: Our Plan be endorsed.
2. That it be noted that the City of Wolverhampton had been proactively identified by Government as a place with strong local leadership and ambition, where investment can be maximised to catalyse economic transformation.

6 **Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2021-2022**

Councillors Linda Leach and Beverley Momenabadi jointly presented the Principle Social Worker (PSW) Annual Report 2021-2022 and highlighted salient points. The report highlighted progress the PSW had made against key priorities for adults and children's services over the last 12 months and set several priorities for the year ahead. One of the key roles of a PSW was to support the continued improvement of social work practice and the Annual Report showed significant progress had been made in this regard. The Annual Report also demonstrated a continued commitment to excellence in social work through learning and development, with a variety of training and progression opportunities being offered to provide the Council's social workers with the skills and knowledge to do their jobs effectively. It was noted also that the recent Office for Standards in Education, Children Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspection of Children's Services gave a positive review of local quality assurance arrangements, that are led by the PSW. Councillors Linda Leach and Beverley Momenabadi placed on record their thanks to the PSW and her team for their work during 2021-2022 and welcomed the key priorities set for the year ahead.

Resolved:

1. That the work of the Principal Social Worker (PSW) and the continued impact it has on social work practice across Children's and Adults Services be endorsed.
2. That the main priorities for the Principal Social Worker identified for 2022-2023 be approved.

7 **Public Health Annual Report 2021-2022**

Councillor Jasbir Jaspal presented the Annual Report from the Director of Public Health for the period 2021-2022 and highlighted salient points. She also placed on record her thanks to the Director of Public Health and his public health team for their exceptional work over the last two and a half years during the Covid pandemic. She also thanked the Council's Directors and teams across the council for the way they all come together as one council, working together during the pandemic, and the city's partners, the Clinical Commissioning Group, New Cross Hospital, the care homes, schools, businesses and the city's communities for the way they all rose to the challenge and came together to overcome the Covid pandemic.

Councillor Jaspal also informed Cabinet that the Annual Report was dedicated to the memory of Ross Jervis, Director of Public Health for the Council from April 2014 to July 2017, who sadly passed away in June 2022.

Resolved:

That the publication of the Director of Public Health Annual Report for the period 2021 – 2022 be approved.