

**City of Wolverhampton Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Wednesday, 18 January 2023**

<b>Item 4</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2023-2024 including Rent and Service Charges
<b>Status</b>	Recommendations Approved
<b>Record of Decision</b>	<p>That Council be recommended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adopt the Business Plan set out at Appendix 1 to this report as the approved Housing Revenue Account Business Plan including: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The revenue budget for 2023-2024 at Appendix 1 to this report.</li> <li>b. The Capital Programme for 2023-2024 to 2027-2028 at Appendix 2 to this report that includes the following among the proposed investment plans; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £105 million for new homes</li> <li>• £67 million provision for estate remodelling</li> <li>• £39 million to complete the refurbishment of the Heath Town estate</li> <li>• £43 million remediation works to non-traditional properties including energy efficiency improvements</li> <li>• £114 million for programmes to high rise estates to include building safety improvements, infrastructure replacement, and external works to include energy efficiency.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Approve the implementation of an increase of 7% 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 2023.</li> <li>3. Approve the rates for garage rents and service charges set out in Appendix 3 to this report and formally notifies tenants.</li> <li>4. Approve an increase to Shared Ownership rents of 7%.</li> </ol>

**City of Wolverhampton Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Wednesday, 18 January 2023**

5. Delegate authority to approve the final Management Allowances for Managing Agents in 2023-2024 to include a virement from the debt management repayment budget if required to the Cabinet Members for City Assets and Housing and Resources and Digital City in consultation with the Director of Finance and Director of City Housing and Environment to enable a full review of cost pressures.
6. Delegate authority to agree a financial assistance scheme for tenants experiencing financial hardship to the Cabinet Members for City Assets and Housing and Resources and Digital City in consultation with Director of Finance and Director of City Housing and Environment to be in place by 1 April 2023.
7. Approve the HRA Financial Management and Investment Strategy, at Appendix 6 to the Business plan.

That Cabinet notes:

1. From 1 April 2020 the Regulator of Social Housing has regulated social rents charged by Local Authorities as set out in the Rent Standard 2020. However, the government has capped the increase chargeable from 1 April 2023 at 7%.
2. The increase to Shared Ownership rents is based on agreement to the government's principle of a voluntary commitment of the 7% cap.
3. No increases are planned to service charges in 2023-2024.
4. That, in the opinion of the Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) the current levels of reserves and provisions is appropriate and adequate for the forthcoming financial year.
5. 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.

**City of Wolverhampton Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Wednesday, 18 January 2023**

<b>Options Considered</b>	The proposed rent increase is chargeable in line with Government policy set out in the Rent Standard 2020. Not applying an increase or applying a lower increase would reduce the resources available to fund services and the capital programme. No increases are proposed to service charges. An alternative option could be to reduce the charges, in which case the cost would not be recovered, and a subsidy required from general rents.
<b>Reasons for Decision</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Council is asked to approve the 7% increase to dwellings rent and garage rents in order to be able to maintain services provided to tenants, meet consumer and building safety standards and finance the capital investment as set out in Section 5 of the report.</li> <li>2. The Council is required to approve a balanced HRA budget which is based on income forecasts, maintains supervision and management expenditure, provides for depreciation and finances borrowing.</li> </ol>
<b>Record of Conflicts of Interest</b>	Councillor Ian Brookfield declared a non-pecuniary interest in so far as he is a Wolverhampton Homes leaseholder.
<b>Dispensation Granted</b>	There is a standing dispensation to all Councillors in relation to business rates, housing matters and rents.
<b>Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)</b>	26 January 2023

**City of Wolverhampton Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Wednesday, 18 January 2023**

<b>Item 5</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Council Tax Base and Business Rates (NDR) Net Rate Yield 2023-2024
<b>Status</b>	Recommendations Approved
<b>Record of Decision</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the Collection Fund Council Tax Base for 2023-2024 be set at 65,994.12 Band D equivalents.</li> <li>2. That the Collection Fund Business Rates, also referred to as Non-Domestic Rates (NDR), Net Rate Yield for 2023-2024 be set at £76.9 million.</li> <li>3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to approve amendments to:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The final Business Rates Net Rate Yield as required as a result of changes to the NNDR 1 form (National Non-Domestic Rates return) by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities or data revisions and changes in projections.</li> <li>b. The Council Tax Base as a result of any data revisions and changes in projections.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. That the following extensions to the local Business Rates Discretionary Relief Policy be approved:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. In respect of charitable and voluntary organisations for one year from 1 April 2023</li> <li>b. In respect of Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates relief scheme for one year from 1 April 2023</li> <li>c. In respect of transitional relief for one year from 1 April 2023</li> <li>d. In respect of supporting small businesses for one year from 1 April 2023</li> <li>e. In respect of local newspaper relief for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025.</li> </ol> </li> <li>5. That authority be delegated to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Head of Revenues and Benefits to award relief in individual cases which satisfy the criteria for the categories of discretionary rate relief in accordance with Section 47 Local Government Finance Act 1988.</li> </ol>

**City of Wolverhampton Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Wednesday, 18 January 2023**

<p><b>Options Considered</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Council Tax Base and the Business Rates Net Rate Yield have been prepared in accordance with relevant legislation.</li> <li>2. The Council could choose not to extend the discretionary relief schemes:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. In respect of relief for charitable and voluntary organisations, this option has been discounted because of the beneficial impact to local communities of the services provided. In addition, there could potentially be increased demand for Council services should these services be withdrawn.</li> <li>b. In respect the other business rates discretionary relief schemes, this option has been discounted as the criteria for award will match the requirement to be fully funded by Government and they provide an opportunity to reduce rates bills for local businesses.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p><b>Reasons for Decision</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To comply with legislative requirements, Cabinet are recommended to approve the Council Tax Base and Business Rates Net Rate Yield for 2023-2024. This will inform the budget setting process for 2023-2024, for the Council and precepting bodies.</li> <li>2. Approval is also sought to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to approve any final changes to the final Business Rates Net Rate Yield as required as a result of changes to the NNDR 1 form and the Council Tax Base reflecting any further information received ahead of the statutory deadline of 31 January 2023.</li> <li>3. Extending the scheme for charitable and voluntary organisations continues to support a range of organisations providing support to vulnerable groups allowing the Council to foster good relations and enhance equal opportunities.</li> <li>4. Providing discretionary rate relief to businesses in accordance with Government guidance reduces the business rate bill at no cost to the Council.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Record of Conflicts of Interest</b></p>	<p>None</p>

**City of Wolverhampton Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Wednesday, 18 January 2023**

<b>Dispensation Granted</b>	Not applicable
<b>Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)</b>	23 January 2023

**City of Wolverhampton Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Wednesday, 18 January 2023**

<b>Item 6</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Collection Fund Estimated Outturn 2022-2023
<b>Status</b>	Recommendations Approved
<b>Record of Decision</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That it be approved that the estimated outturn for Council Tax in 2022-2023 is a cumulative deficit of approximately £846,000 which includes the carry forward of the in-year 2020-2021 deficit, which the Government confirmed could be spread over three years from 2021-2022 to 2023-2024.</li> <li>2. That it be approved that the estimated outturn for Business Rates, also referred to as Non-Domestic Rates, in 2022-2023 is a cumulative surplus of approximately £1.6 million with an estimated surplus in 2022-2023 totalling approximately £1.3 million.</li> <li>3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to confirm any final changes to the forecast outturn reflecting any further information received ahead of the statutory deadline of 31 January 2023.</li> <li>4. That authority be delegated to the Director of Finance to confirm and arrange the final payments to the precepting authorities.</li> </ol>
<b>Options Considered</b>	The estimated outturn on the Collection Fund for 2022-2023 has been prepared in accordance with specifications, regulations and directions made under various sections of the Local Government Finance Acts 1988 and 1992.
<b>Reasons for Decision</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cabinet is recommended to approve the payments to/from the precepting bodies based on the estimated outturn of the Collection Fund for 2022-2023. This will inform the budget setting process for 2023-2024, for the Council and precepting bodies.</li> <li>2. Approval is also sought to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to confirm any final changes to the forecast</li> </ol>

**City of Wolverhampton Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Wednesday, 18 January 2023**

	outturn reflecting any further information received ahead of the statutory deadline of 31 January 2023. This will ensure that the most up to date information is used to inform 2023-2024 budgets.
<b>Record of Conflicts of Interest</b>	None
<b>Dispensation Granted</b>	Not applicable
<b>Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)</b>	23 January 2023



**City of Wolverhampton Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Wednesday, 18 January 2023**

<b>Item 7</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Annual Health and Safety Update
<b>Status</b>	Recommendations Approved
<b>Record of Decision</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That the revisions to the Corporate Health and Safety Policy be approved.</li> <li>2. That the progress with regards to managing health and safety in the organisation be noted.</li> </ol>
<b>Options Considered</b>	There are no alternative options. Having a written Health and Safety Policy is a legal requirement under Section 2 (3) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
<b>Reasons for Decision</b>	There are potentially serious risks for the Council and its operations from inadequate consideration of health and safety issues. The punitive measures include not only enforcement powers of inspectors but can include both personal and corporate liability proceedings. As a significant presence in the West Midlands, City of Wolverhampton Council is a high profile case, particularly if things go wrong.
<b>Record of Conflicts of Interest</b>	None
<b>Dispensation Granted</b>	Not applicable
<b>Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)</b>	23 January 2023

**City of Wolverhampton Council – Decisions taken by the Cabinet on Wednesday, 18 January 2023**

<b>Item 8</b>	
<b>Title</b>	Land and Property Disposal Policy
<b>Status</b>	Recommendation Approved
<b>Record of Decision</b>	That the Land and Property Disposal Policy be approved.
<b>Options Considered</b>	A number of points were considered when creating the new policy to allow the enablement of asset disposals through applying a systematic approach. This provides a robust and fair approach to ensure that legislation is being adhered to whilst ensuring that the Council's interests are sufficiently safeguarded.
<b>Reasons for Decision</b>	The Land and Property Disposal Policy provides a robust, clear and fair approach in line with current legislation and policies to ensure that we are managing and disposing of surplus assets appropriately and ensuring that the Council's interests are sufficiently safeguarded.
<b>Record of Conflicts of Interest</b>	None
<b>Dispensation Granted</b>	Not applicable
<b>Decision available for implementation (subject to call-in)</b>	19 January 2023