



Cabinet (Resources) Panel

24 March 2015

Time 5.00 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Executive
Venue Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

Membership

Chair Cllr Andrew Johnson (Lab)
Vice-chair Cllr Roger Lawrence (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Peter Bilson
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Phil Page
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Paul Sweet

Conservative

Liberal Democrat

Quorum for this meeting is two Councillors.

Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the democratic support team:

Contact Linda Banbury
Tel/Email 01902 555040 or linda.banbury@wolverhampton.gov.uk
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Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential or commercial nature. These reports are not available to the public.

Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

MEETING BUSINESS ITEMS

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
- 2 **Declarations of interest**
- 3 **Minutes of the previous meeting - 3 March 2015** (Pages 5 - 10)
[For approval]
- 4 **Matters arising**
[To consider as necessary]

DECISION ITEMS (AMBER - DELEGATED TO THE CABINET)

- 5 **Update on schools balances** (Pages 11 - 16)
[To endorse the action taken with regard to schools with surplus balances]
- 6 **Arts Council Funding Agreement** (Pages 17 - 20)
[To delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Communities and Strategic Director Place to sign off the funding agreement between Wolverhampton City Council and Arts Council England]
- 7 **Revenue Budget Monitoring** (Pages 21 - 52)
[To provide a projection of the likely revenue outturn position, compared with the Council's approved revenue budgets for 2014/15 and related targets]
- 8 **Improvements Programme - Bereavement Services** (Pages 53 - 56)
[To seek approval to undertake improvements to facilities at the crematorium and cemeteries]
- 9 **Customer Service Standards Report** (Pages 57 - 78)
[To approve the implementation of the corporate customer service standards]
- 10 **Schedule of Individual Executive Decisions** (Pages 79 - 82)
[To note the summary of decisions approved by the appropriate Cabinet Member in consultation with the relevant employee]
- 11 **Exclusion of press and public**

[To pass the following resolution:

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information on the grounds shown below.]

PART 2 - EXEMPT ITEMS, CLOSED TO PRESS AND PUBLIC

- 12 **Transfer of Shops portfolio** (Pages 83 - 86)
[To approve the principle of transferring a number of shops from within the Housing Revenue Account into the General Fund]
- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) Para (3)
- 13 **The Haven, 103 Salop Street** (Pages 87 - 102)
[To consider the relevant issues in order to reach a decision on the request of The Haven for the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of the freehold of this property]
- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) Para (3)
- 14 **Strategic Procurement - award of contracts for works, goods and services** (Pages 103 - 118)
[To award contracts for the provision of Children's Centres and supply, installation and maintenance of backhaul circuits, the wireless network and associated equipment; to enter into the Access Agreement with Scape to call off the framework; to award a five year contract for the provision of CCTV circuits; to approve a waiver of the Council's contract procedure rules to enable revised contracts, and to delegate authority to the Director of Governance to execute contracts in respect of these recommendations as required]
- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) Para (3)

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Cabinet (Resources) Panel

Minutes - 3 March 2015

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet (Resources) Panel

Cllr Andrew Johnson (Chair)
Cllr Roger Lawrence (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Peter Bilson
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Phil Page
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Paul Sweet

Other Councillors present at the meeting

Cllr Elias Mattu
Cllr Val Gibson

Employees

Adam Hadley	Group Manager, Democracy
Andrew Harvey	Graduate Management Trainee
Keith Ireland	Managing Director
Kevin O'Keefe	Director, Governance
Mark Taylor	Director, Finance
Paul Brown	Communications Advisor
Tom Senior	Senior Solicitor

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
There were no apologies for absence
- 2 Declarations of interest**
Cllr Gibson declared a disclosable non-pecuniary interest on item 12 of the agenda as a governor of South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting (10 February 2015)**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 February 2015 be approved as a correct record.
- 4 Matters arising**
There were no matters arising.
- 5 Roll out of Broadband Vouchers**
Cllr Bilson introduced the report which proposed that Wolverhampton City Council enter into an agreement to lead on the roll out of vouchers for superfast broadband across the Black Country.

Resolved:

- 1) To endorse the approach to rolling out the broadband voucher scheme in Wolverhampton and the Black Country.
- 2) To delegate authority to the Cabinet Member of Economic Regeneration and Prosperity and Strategic Director Place to approve the terms of a formal agreement to enable the rollout of broadband vouchers to Wolverhampton.
- 3) To agree to Wolverhampton City Council leading on the rollout of broadband vouchers across the Black Country.

6 **Charging and Contributions Policies for Adult Care and Support Services'**

Cllr Evans introduced the report which sought approval for changes to the Council's charges and contributions policy as a result of the Care Act (2014). Cllr Evans highlighted that phase one of the Care Act (2014) needed to be implemented by April 2015.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Council exercises its power to charge for residential and nursing care and non-residential care and support in every case, unless it is prohibited from doing so by law or determines not to do so under Council policy
- 2) To approve the arrangement fee of £150 in any non-residential case where the person is able to pay the full costs of their care and support but nevertheless the person asks the Council to make the arrangements under the Council's usual terms and conditions (outlined in paragraphs 3.5).
- 3) To approve the annual uplifted contributions to non-residential care and support from 1 April 2015 (outlined in paragraph 3.6 and Appendix A).

7 **Armed Forces Community Covenant Grants Scheme**

Cllr Mattu introduced the report which sought approval to establish a budget for the community covenant grant, and for the Council to approve payments to organisations that are successful in applying for the funding.

Resolved:

- 1) That the Council establish an expenditure budget for Community Covenant Grants.
- 2) That the Council approve the payment of grants to individual recipients.
- 3) To approve delegated authority for the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Communities in consultation with the Strategic Director, Place, to agree any further changes in budget and grants payments to organisations successful in securing grant under the scheme.

8 **PCC Community Safety Grant**

Cllr Mattu introduced the report which sought approval to transfer funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner to the Council, specifically for use by the Wolverhampton Safer Partnership to aid delivery of agreed city-wide crime and community safety objectives.

Resolved:

To approve the delegation of the 2015/16 ring-fenced allocation from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to Safer Wolverhampton Partnership (SWP) for the purposes of delivering against the city's Crime Reduction, Community Safety and Drugs Strategy 2014-17 and the Local Policing & Crime Plan 2015-16.

9 **Compulsory Purchase of 114 Dixon Street, Parkfields, Wolverhampton**

Cllr Bilson introduced the report which outlined the Council's intention to enter into negotiations to acquire the property at 114 Dixon Street, Parkfields, Wolverhampton under the empty property strategy.

Resolved:

- 1) To make the following Compulsory Purchase Order under Section 17 of Part 2 of the Housing Act 1985:

The Wolverhampton City Council (114 Dixon Street, Parkfields Wolverhampton) Compulsory Purchase Order 2015 as shown on the plan attached.

- 2) To authorise the Strategic Director - Place on behalf of the Council to:
 - a) Acquire interests in the land within the Order either compulsorily or by agreement before or after making the Order.
 - b) Take all reasonable steps as soon as it is reasonably practical to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the Order including the publication and service of all Notices and the presentation of the Council's case at any Public Inquiry.
 - c) Approve agreements with land owners setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the Order, and/or making arrangements for re-housing or relocation of any occupiers.
 - d) Approve the making of a General Vesting Declaration (the property is brought into Council ownership via this process).
- 3) Approve the disposal of the whole and/ or parts of the property under lease by auction, tender or private treaty.

10 **Schedule of Individual Executive Decisions**

Resolved:

To note the summary of open and exempt individual executive decisions approved by the appropriate Cabinet Members following consultation with the relevant employees.

11 **Exclusion of press and public**

Resolved:

That in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act set out below:

<i>Item No:</i>	<i>Title Applicable</i>	<i>Paragraph</i>
12	BSF – Deeds of termination Facilities Management.	3
13	Bilston Centre Regeneration Local growth Funding Approvals	3
14	Transfer of Bilston Junior Attendance Centre to WCC	1 and 4
15	Short Term Leasing of Surplus Former School Site and Buildings	3
16	Strategic Procurement	3

12 **BSF Facilities management - Deed of termination**

Cllr Page introduced the report which sought approval to terminate the facilities management contracts between various schools and the Black Country Local Enterprise Zone.

Tom Senior, Senior Solicitor informed the panel of an amendment to paragraph 4.1, he stated that the figure should actually include VAT and therefore the final figure is £391,291, however the Council will be able to claim back the VAT.

Resolved:

- 1) To note progression of discussions with the LEP regarding the terms of a full and final Commercial Settlement at the following Schools: Coppice Performing Arts School, Wednesfield High School, Kings Church of England School, Tettenhall Wood School and the South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy.
- 2) To approve the revised terms of settlement and authorise a final payment of £391,291 to the LEP.
- 3) To approve the termination of the Facilities Management agreement for the Kings Church of England School and Tettenhall Wood School made between (1) the Council and (2) the LEP dated 30 April 2010.

- 4) To approve the termination of the Facilities Management agreements for Coppice Performing Arts School and Wednesfield High School dated 27 March 2013 by the Council entering into a Deed Termination with the LEP.
- 5) To approve the termination of Facilities Management services at South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy.
- 6) To authorise the payment of a final settlement in respect of the termination of the FM Agreements and the service at South Wolverhampton and Bilston Academy based on services which have been provided and which are evidenced by the relevant documentation.
- 7) To accept a letter of waiver relating to the right to exclusivity in the Strategic Partnering Agreement.

13

Bilston Centre Regeneration Local Growth Funding approvals

Cllr Bilson introduced the report which sought approval for Local Growth Funding and the award of various contracts relating to the Bilston Centre regeneration Project.

Resolved:

- 1) To delegate the approval of the Local Growth Funding Agreement for additional infrastructure works on the Bilston Urban Village site to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Prosperity in consultation with the Strategic Director, Place.
- 2) To delegate approval of the award of contracts or contract variations for the undertaking of the work to be funded by the Local Growth Fund to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Prosperity in consultation with the Service Director for City Economy and the Director of Governance.
- 3) To approve the novation of the Homes and Communities Agency's interest in the proposed Advance Works Programme contract and its consultant appointments to the Council.
- 4) To agree in principle to a revision in the terms for the disposal of the commercial development plot by the Homes and Communities Agency and delegate the final details of such a revision to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Prosperity in consultation with the Service Director for City Economy.
- 5) To delegate the approval of terms for the sale and development of the site of the former Leisure Centre, Prouds Lane to the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Prosperity in consultation with the Service Director for City Economy.

14 **Transfer of Bilston Junior Attendance Centre to WCC**

Cllr Gibson introduced the report which proposed that Bilston Junior Attendance Centre be brought under the control of the Council and that the Council works collaboratively with the Black County Youth Offending Teams.

Resolved:

- 1) To approve the transfer of responsibility for Bilston Junior Attendance Centre to Wolverhampton City Council.
- 2) To receive a further update report when more detailed information becomes available from the National Offender Management Service and the Youth Justice Board.

15 **Short Term Leasing of Surplus Former School Site and Buildings**

Cllr Johnson introduced the report which outlined the use of a surplus school site and building to be leased to the British Sikh School through discussions with the Education Funding Agency.

Resolved:

- 1) To endorse the agreement of terms (based on provisional discussions with the Education Funding Agency and detailed in this report) and approve the short term leasing of part of the surplus former Parkfields school site and buildings to the British Sikh School, prior to the disposal of this surplus asset.
- 2) To delegate authority for the agreement of detailed terms and approval for the grant of Lease to the Cabinet Member for Resources in consultation with the Strategic Director for Place.

16 **Strategic Procurement**

Cllr Johnson introduced the report proposing the letting of a contract.

Resolved:

- 1) To award the contract for Fixed Electrical Testing to Quartzelec Ltd, 1 Central Park, Ohio Avenue, Manchester, M50 2GT.
- 2) To delegate authority to the Director of Governance to execute contracts in respect of the above, as required.



Cabinet (Resources) Panel

24 March 2015

Report title	Update on School Balances	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Phil Page Learning and Achievement Councillor Andrew Johnson Resources	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Jim McElligott, Education Mark Taylor, Finance	
Originating service	Strategic Financial Services	
Accountable employee(s)	Orlen Johnson Tel Email	Finance Manager - Schools 01902 554114 Orlen.Johnson@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	School Forum	15 January 2015

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Endorse the action taken with regard to schools with surplus balances.
2. Agree to receive a further report on Local Authority maintained schools balances for 2014/15 in September 2015.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 This is a report to update Councillors on the actions taken with regard to those schools that reported high level of balances at the end of 2013/14 following the report to Cabinet (Resources) Panel on 9 September 2014.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 A school's right to carry forward surplus balances is covered in Section four of the Wolverhampton Scheme for Financing Schools. Section 4.1 states that:

'Schools may carry forward from one financial year to the next any surplus/deficit in net expenditure relative to the school's budget share for the year plus/minus any balance brought forward from the previous year'

- 2.2 Where a school is in deficit or its financial planning information suggests that it will be in deficit, the school is required to submit an application seeking the approval of the Local Authority.

- 2.3 With regard to schools with surplus balances the Scheme for Financing Schools states:

- a) The Authority is entitled to request information on the proposed use of surplus balances from any school where surplus balances exceed 8% of the following year's budget share for primary and special schools and by 5% for secondary schools for two consecutive years or in other circumstances where, in the view of the Authority, the level of surplus balances may be cause for concern'.
- b) There is an option for claw back of schools balances subject to an arbitration process. Any decision would be made by a panel comprising:
 - a) Governor nominated by the Schools Forum.
 - b) Headteacher nominated by the Wolverhampton Schools' Improvement Partnership (WSIP) or subsequent successor,
 - c) The Strategic Director of Education and Enterprise
 - d) The Chief Financial Officer or his/her nominated representatives.

Any balances clawed back must be redistributed amongst schools in that local learning community within the City of Wolverhampton.

- 2.4 In addition the Department for Education requests Local Authorities (LAs) that have schools with excessive surpluses for information relating to the reasons behind the surpluses and an explanation of the circumstances, including details of the action the Local Authority is taking to bring about change for the future. The trigger for this additional enquiry is schools with balances in excess of 15% for more than five years.

2.5 At the end of the 2013/14 financial year schools revenue balances stood at £15.95 million. Within the city 13 schools have now had a balance over 15% of schools total income for five years meaning that the Local Authority is liable to challenge from the DfE. There were 46 schools whose surplus balances exceeded the thresholds set out within the Scheme for Financing Schools detailed in paragraph 2.3 with a total value of £7.9 million.

3.0 Actions taken by the Authority

3.1 As reported to Cabinet (Resources) Panel on 10 September 2015, the 46 schools with surplus balances were asked to submit a pro-forma with details of their intended use of that portion of their balance above 5% for secondary schools and 8% for other schools. Schools were required to submit these by 3rd October 2014.

3.1 37 of the 46 schools provided a response by the end of October. The outstanding schools were contacted again and responses have now been received by all schools. An analysis of the intended use of the surplus balances is shown in the table below:

Schools	Contribution to Capital/ Building works £000	ICT £000	Fixtures & Fittings £000	Staffing £000	Other projects £000	Total £000
Infants/ Primary	1,342	546	373	588	1,920	4,769
Secondary	301	85	362	57	200	1,005
Special	1,208	25	127	23	763	2,146
Total	2,851	656	862	668	2,883	7,920

3.2 The responses from schools were reviewed by officers and in parallel a number of school visits were arranged to allow more detailed discussion of plans to be undertaken with the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors and in many cases to show officers how the surplus had been used. The areas covered in the review included:

- a) Was there an explanation for use of all the surplus?
- b) How did proposals link to school improvement plans?
- c) How realistic was the proposed timing of use of balances?

3.3 For the majority of responses the schools demonstrated clear plans for use of the surplus which should result in a significant reduction by the end of the current financial year. The position will be closely monitored and further reports presented to future meetings.

3.4 Follow up queries were raised with a number of schools and formal requests for additional information made to 6 schools. These have been received and provide further clarity. Further work is being undertaken with one school whose plans are based on a single major investment for which further details of the business case are awaited.

4.0 Future Actions

- 4.1 Further discussions will be held with the one school whose proposals require further investigation.
- 4.2 All? Schools have been requested to inform the Authority if their plans for use of balances have changed which may result in a significantly higher level of balances at the end of 2014/15 than previously indicated. Otherwise it is expected that the level of surplus balances should be significantly lower at the end of 2014/15. These will be reported to Cabinet or CRP? as part of the Council's outturn report in July 2015.
- 4.3 Once the accounts for 2014/15 are finalised schools with surplus balances will again be contacted for explanations. In particular any explanations for why previous plans for use have not come to fruition will be reviewed to identify any common themes.

5.0 Financial implications

- 5.1 Schools have a right to hold reasonable levels of balances and plan for the use of those balances over the medium term. Schools have been made aware that where there is evidence that there are no plans for the use of balances held and redistribution would be beneficial to the wider school community resources could ultimately be clawed back.

[OJ/13032015/C]

6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 A school's right to hold balances is regulated by Section 45 – 53 of School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and is contained within section 4 of the authority's Scheme for financing schools, as approved by the schools forum.

[TC/09032015/D]

7.0 Equalities implications

- 7.1 The allocation of resources to schools has a major impact on a school's ability to deliver its desired outcomes and as such has implications for all pupils in the wider school community and within Education and Enterprise.

8.0 Environmental implications

- 8.1 There are no direct environmental implications as a result of the proposals of this report.

9.0 Human resources implications

- 9.1 There are no direct Human resources implications as a result of the proposals of this report, but should an element of a school's balance be clawed back for redistribution this could have implications on the resources available to meet costs of existing staffing structures.

10.0 Corporate landlord implications

10.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

11.0 Schedule of background papers

11.1 Cabinet (Resources) Panel report – School Balances 2013/14 (10 September 2014),

11.2 Schools Forum Report – Update on review of schools balances 2013/14 (15 January 2015)

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Cabinet (Resources) Panel

24 March 2015

Report title	Arts Council Funding Agreement	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Elias Mattu Leisure and Communities	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Dr Keren Jones, City Economy	
Originating service	City Economy	
Accountable employee(s)	Keren Jones, Tel Email	Service Director, City Economy 01902 555410 Keren.Jones wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	N/A	

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member of Leisure and Communities and Strategic Director Place to enter into a funding agreement with the Arts Council in relation to the National Portfolio Funded contemporary arts and crafts programme at The Art Gallery and Bilston Craft Gallery 2015-18 .

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to grant authority for the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Communities and the Strategic Director Place to sign off the funding agreement between the Wolverhampton City Council and the Arts Council of England as part of the funding agreement by the 27 March 2015.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 In July 2014 we were granted funding of £383,256 to fund a programme of contemporary art and craft at the Art Gallery and Bilston Craft Gallery for the period April 2015-March 2018. This funding is granted to organisations in the UK that are considered to represent some of the best arts practice in the world, and the bidding is highly competitive.
- 2.2 As part of our funding agreement the Council is required to produce strategy documents in relation to our programme, audiences and our commitment to equality. These are required in a standard format to meet the Art Council England's grant conditions.
- 2.3 The Collections and Programme Manager has drafted three key strategy documents in consultation with the Arts Council and these have been agreed and signed off through an IEDN on the 9 February 2015:
- Programme Plan
 - Audience Development Strategy
 - Equality Action Plan

These documents are included as appendices 1, 2 and 3. The documents outline our approach to engaging audiences over the next three years and to presenting a high quality programme ensuring that our work is inclusive. Each document has clear SMART objectives and methods of monitoring our work through quantitative data are demonstrated. These have been developed with colleagues in Culture, Arts and Heritage and we are confident that they are achievable within the current financial climate. This recommendation is for sign off of the final funding agreement which references these strategy documents and our commitment to deliver on these targets over the next 3 years.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 By entering into this funding agreement, Wolverhampton City Council will receive £383,256 of funding from the Arts Council to fund a programme of contemporary arts and craft across 2015/16 to 2017/18. This funding is provided on the basis that Wolverhampton City Council will provide mainline match funding of £237,424 over this period. The approved 2015/16 revenue budget for Culture, Arts and Heritage currently provides £84,000 of this match. The requirements for match funding in 2016/17 and 2017/18 can only be met if this budget is maintained going forward noting that this will reduce the scope the service has for meeting savings targets over this period.

[ES/04032015/W]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 Wolverhampton City Council will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Arts Council of England, covering the period 2015-18.

[RB/02032015/L]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 An equalities action plan has been produced as part of the funding agreement. The projects will have positive equalities implications.

7.0 Environmental implications

- 7.1 An environmental plan was produced as part of the funding agreement. Data collection will be collated as part of delivery in relation to environmental performance and reducing carbon emissions.

8.0 Human resources implications

- 8.1 The funding contributes to staffing costs of a number of posts.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

- 9.1 There are no corporate landlord implications.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

- 10.1 Green Decision

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Cabinet (Resources) Panel

24 March 2015

Report title	Revenue Budget Monitoring 2014/15	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Andrew Johnson Resources	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Keith Ireland, Managing Director	
Originating service	Finance	
Accountable employee(s)	Mark Taylor	Director of Finance
	Tel	01902 556609
	Email	mark.taylor@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board and Wider Leadership Team	10 March 2015

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Approve the use of £140,000 from the Efficiency Reserve to fund an invest to save savings proposal 'Transitioning from Local Neighbourhood Partnerships to Community Led Economic Development-Stage 2'.
2. Approve the use of £68,000 from the Regeneration Reserve to fund various regeneration priorities as detailed in Table 7.
3. Approve the use of £20,000 from the Local Strategic Partnership Reserve to fund the set-up of the Wolverhampton Skills Commission, to ensure that Wolverhampton has an appropriately skilled workforce to support the City's economic growth.

4. Approve the establishment of expenditure budgets within the 2014/15 approved budget for grant funding streams obtained within the year (section 4.0).
5. Approve the write off of two sundry debts that individually exceed £5,000, as a result of liquidation and a deceased debtor, as detailed in paragraph Appendix F.
6. Approve two virements totalling £935,000, for a service transfer between service directorates in addition to a budget transfer between directorates, as detailed in Appendix G.

Recommendations for noting:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is asked to note:

1. The projected outturn for the General Fund is a net underspend of £9.2 million (-3.72%) against the net budget requirement of £247.6 million. This, combined with the receipt of an additional Business Rates support grant totalling £2.7 million in 2014/15, will result in a contribution of £1.9 million to general balances during the year, rather than drawing down almost £9.9 million of general fund reserves to balance the budget in 2014/15 as originally budgeted for.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet (Resources) Panel with a projection of the likely revenue outturn position, compared with the Council's approved revenue budgets for 2014/15 and related targets.

2.0 Summary

2.1 A net underspend of £9.2 million (-3.72%) is projected against the General Fund net budget requirement of £247.6 million, as analysed in Table 1 below. This combined with the receipt of an additional Business Rates support grant totalling £2.7 million in 2014/15, will result in a contribution of £1.9 million to general balances during the year, rather than drawing down almost £9.9 million of general fund reserves to balance the budget in 2014/15 as originally budgeted for.

Table 1 – 2014/15 General Fund Revenue Budget Projected Outturn

	Net Controllable Budget 2014/15 £000	Projected Outturn 2014/15 £000	Projected Variation Over/(Under)	
			£000	%
People	133,569	138,352	4,783	3.58%
Corporate	67,566	54,398	(13,168)	-19.49%
Place	47,020	45,684	(1,336)	-2.84%
Education	(605)	(93)	512	-84.63%
Net Budget Requirement	247,550	238,341	(9,209)	-3.72%
Government Grant (General)	(161,741)	(164,420)	(2,679)	-1.66%
Council Tax	(76,567)	(76,567)	-	0.00%
Collection Fund Deficit	700	700	-	0.00%
Total Resources	(237,608)	(240,287)	(2,679)	-1.13%
Use of General Balances	(9,942)	-	9,942	100.00%
Net Budget (Surplus) / Deficit	-	(1,946)	(1,946)	-0.79%

2.2 The Council continues to be faced with a challenging projected financial position over the medium term, and significant savings are required in order to achieve a robust financial position. The Budget 2015/16 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 to 2018/19 approved by Full Council on 4 March 2015 identified that the Council is now faced with finding further savings totalling £46.3 million over the next four years. It is important to note that the updated projected budget deficit assumes the achievement of prior year savings proposals amounting to £46.0 million over the four year period to 2018/19.

2.3 During the first seven months of 2014/15 significant work was undertaken to identify new savings proposals to achieve the approved budget strategy for 2015/16; identifying £25

million of savings, with the aim of accelerating as many of those savings as possible into 2014/15, to reduce the call on general balances. The budget shown in this report reflects the acceleration of existing and additional 2014/15 savings proposals equating to £1.9 million, approved by Cabinet on 22 October 2014. These savings will reduce the call on general fund reserves this financial year.

- 2.4 In order to support the savings programme in rebuilding general reserves, Cabinet approved in October that expenditure during the remainder of 2014/15 be restricted where possible to generate savings during the year to offset projected overspends in some areas. This therefore may result in a greater underspend than currently forecast.
- 2.5 An update on the General Fund budget risks is provided at section 7. Overall the risk for 2014/15 is currently assessed as amber.
- 2.6 It is important to note that projected redundancy costs of £6.0 million are included in the forecast outturn, and will be funded by a contribution from the Efficiency Reserve. The projected costs are subject to change dependent upon the actual redundancies approved by year end.
- 2.7 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 this panel. There are two virements that require approval during this quarter, as detailed in Appendix G.
- 2.8 The most significant factors contributing towards the projected overspend against the budget are reported on a service-by-service basis in section 3.

3.0 General Fund Revenue Budget Monitoring: Service Analysis

3.1 People

3.1.1 A summary of the projected outturn against the People 2014/15 revenue budget is provided in the table below, whilst a detailed analysis is provided in Appendix A.

Table 2 – 2014/15 Revenue Budget Projected Outturn – People

	Controllable Budget 2014/15	Projected Outturn	Projected Variation	
	£000	£000	Over/(Under) £000	%
Older People & Personalisation	31,377	32,313	936	2.98%
Disabilities & Mental Health	48,803	49,339	536	1.10%
Children, Young People & Families	50,883	54,598	3,715	7.30%
Public Health, Parks and Safeguarding	2,299	2,395	96	4.18%
Community Initiatives	207	207	-	0.00%
Use of one off reserves	-	(500)	(500)	0.00%
People Total	133,569	138,352	4,783	3.58%

3.1.2 Overall a net overspend of £4.8 million (3.58%) is projected for the year. The main factors contributing towards the forecast overspend are:

1. **Older People & Personalisation** - There is a forecast over spend of £1.7 million across care purchasing budgets for older people, which in part has been offset by planned underspends due to staff vacancies across the service directorate and the early achievement of some 2015/16 savings proposals across the service.
2. **Disabilities & Mental Health** - There is a forecast over spend of £510,000 in care purchasing, due to increase in volume and complexity of young people in transition and adult demographic pressures. This overspend has been offset slightly by staffing vacancies within the service directorate.
3. **Children, Young People & Families** - There is a forecast net over spend of £3.7 million within the service directorate, which has arisen primarily as a result of a continued high level of Looked After Children placements equating to £3.5 million, in addition to increased costs associated with adoption and guardianship, and fostering allowances totalling £1.6 million. This overspend has been offset in part due to staffing vacancies within the service directorate.

Cabinet received an update in February 2015 detailing that the Council was continuing to undertake detailed analysis in order to identify and predict the likely

number of Looked After Children in future years. As a result of this exercise, Cabinet approved that additional demographic and demand pressures totalling £5.7 million have been incorporated into the 2015/16 budget: £4.5 million due to the increase in Looked After Children numbers during the year with a further £1.2 million for Children's Social Workers being incorporated into the base budget consistent with the decisions of Cabinet (Resources) Panel in September 2013 and January 2015. In addition to this, it is important to note that that this exercise identified that whilst the approved £6 million saving in this area will be achievable over the medium term, it will take time. Therefore Cabinet also approved a re-profiling of the Looked After Children savings.

3.2 Corporate

3.2.1 A summary of the projected outturn against the Corporate 2014/15 revenue budget is provided in the table below, whilst a detailed analysis is provided in Appendix B.

Table 3 – 2014/15 Revenue Budget Projected Outturn – Corporate

	Controllable Budget 2014/15 £000	Projected Outturn £000	Projected Variation	
			Over/(Under) £000	%
Managing Director	223	229	6	2.69%
Finance	11,933	11,772	(161)	-1.35%
Governance	6,865	7,196	331	4.82%
Transformation	11,257	9,665	(1,592)	-14.14%
Corporate Budgets	37,288	25,536	(11,752)	-31.52%
Corporate Total	67,566	54,398	(13,168)	-19.49%

3.2.2 Overall a net underspend of £13.2 million (-19.49%) is projected for the year. The main factors contributing towards the forecast underspend are:

1. **Finance** – There is a forecast net under spend of £161,000 within the service directorate as a result of staffing vacancies and redundancies.
2. **Governance** – There is a forecast net over spend of £331,000 within the service directorate arising primarily from one-off transitional costs following the implementation of Agresso, similarly to the Finance service directorate. The costs will be fully funded within the directorate.
3. **Transformation** – There is a forecast net under spend of £1.6 million within the service directorate due to the reconfiguration of the service area, voluntary redundancies and staffing vacancies.

4. **Corporate Budgets** – There is a forecast net under spend of £ 11.8 million within this area as a result of the revision to the Council’s Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy.

Councils are required to make prudent provision through the revenue account for the repayment of long-term external borrowing and credit arrangements, referred to as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The straight line method of calculating MRP was adopted by the Council from 1 April 2008, however with the agreement of our External Auditors and the approval of Full Council on 17 December 2014, the approach to calculating MRP was adjusted to an annuity basis from 1 April 2014, resulting in a £4.4 million saving against the in-year budget.

Since making this revision, detailed workings were undertaken to establish how much MRP the Council would have charged to the revenue account had it have adopted the annuity basis from 1 April 2008. This detailed exercise has established that the Council would have charged around £37 million less MRP between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2014, had it adopted the annuity method during this period.

Following seeking legal advice from Leading Counsel and gaining a view from the Audit Commission and our External Auditors that they are ‘not minded to challenge’ the policy, Full Council approved a revised MRP Policy that incorporates an adjustment for being overly prudent during the period from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2014. This will result in a zero MRP charge in 2014/15, with this in-year saving against budget removing the requirement to use General Reserves in 2014/15.

3.3 Place

- 3.3.1 A summary of the projected outturn against the Place 2014/15 revenue budget is provided in the table below, whilst a detailed analysis is provided in Appendix C.

Table 4 – 2014/15 Revenue Budget Projected Outturn – Place

	Controllable Budget 2014/15	Projected Outturn	Projected Variation	
	£000	£000	Over/(Under) £000	%
Directorate	341	341	-	0.00%
City Economy	7,545	7,406	(139)	-1.84%
City Assets	11,644	11,491	(153)	-1.31%
City Environment	27,490	26,446	(1,044)	-3.80%
Place Total	47,020	45,684	(1,336)	-2.84%

- 3.3.2 Overall a net underspend of £1.3 million (-2.84%) is projected for the year. This is largely as a result of a projected underspend within the City Environment service directorate due

to renegotiation of contracts within the Environmental Maintenance service and staffing vacancies, in addition to higher than average levels of salvage within Fleet Services. Staffing vacancies within the City Economy and City Assets service directorates have also contributed towards the overall underspend within the directorate.

3.4 Education

- 3.4.1 A detailed analysis of the projected outturn against the Education 2014/15 revenue budget is provided in Appendix D.
- 3.4.2 Overall a net over spend of £512,000 (-84.63%) is projected for the year. This is largely as a result of overspends within the Education service directorate as a result of savings targets that have not been fully realised within the year.

4.0 Changes to Grant Funded Expenditure

- 4.1 It is not always possible to reflect all grant-funded expenditure in the budget approved by Full Council prior to the start of the financial year. This is due to late notification from grant awarding bodies of grant amounts, and proactive grant applications during the year.
- 4.2 Approval is sought from the panel to establish expenditure budgets within the 2014/15 approved budget as set out in the table below, and in accordance with each individual grant's terms and conditions. This will have no effect on the Council's net revenue budget as this is fully funded from grant.

Table 5 – Grants

Grant	Description of Expenditure	Awarding Body	Expenditure 2014/15 £000
Place			
Planning Advisory	Part fund a Planning post	Planning Advisory Service (DCLG)	18
Heritage Lottery Fund -Black Art Movement	Black Art Movement - collecting and engagement activities around the acquisition of works by the Black Art Movement	Heritage Lottery fund	4
TOTAL			22

5.0 Reserves and Balances

- 5.1 At the beginning of 2014/15 a balance of £27.0 million was held within the general fund reserve.

- 5.2 The following table sets out the projected level of general fund reserves at 31 March 2015:

Table 6 – Projected Uncommitted General Fund Reserves at 31 March 2015

	£000
Balance as at 1 April 2014	(27,000)
Estimated Underspend	(1,946)
Estimated transfer to the Efficiency Reserve (to fund redundancy costs in 2014/15)	6,000
Estimated transfer to the Efficiency Reserve (to fund redundancy costs in 2015/16)	5,000
Transfer balance above £10m to specific reserves	7,946
Projected Balance as at 31 March 2015	(10,000)

- 5.3 The Council introduced a voluntary redundancy programme during late 2013 in order to identify budget savings. Given the anticipated reduction in staffing numbers arising from the implementation of savings proposals during 2014/15, it is projected that redundancy costs in the region of £6.0 million will be incurred during 2014/15 and £5.0 million will be incurred in 2015/16, as can be seen from the table above. It is worth noting that the redundancy costs are an estimate, and are subject to change dependent upon the number and nature of applications.
- 5.4 The balance in excess of £10 million at 31 March 2015 will be transferred into specific reserves for future invest to save and redundancy costs. The general reserves will therefore be £10 million on 1 April 2015, with emphasis on identifying budget savings to meet the projected budget deficit over the medium term.
- 5.5 **Other Transfers to/from Earmarked Reserves**
- 5.5.1 Approval is sought from this meeting for a number of other transfers to/from earmarked reserves, as set out in the following paragraphs.
- Efficiency Reserve
- 5.5.2 The Efficiency Reserve was established to fund pump priming and investment in new developments and initiatives whose main aim is to generate efficiencies and savings in the future, and may also result in redundancy costs.
- 5.5.3 Approval is sought from this meeting for the use of £140,000 from the Efficiency Reserve to fund an invest to save savings proposal 'Transitioning from Local Neighbourhood Partnerships to Community Led Economic Development-Stage 2'. The savings proposal was reported to, and approved by, Cabinet on 23 October 2013.

Regeneration Reserve

5.5.5 The Regeneration Reserve was specifically established to support important regeneration priorities within the city.

5.5.6 Approval is sought from this meeting for the use of £68,000 from the Regeneration Reserve, to fund regeneration expenditure as outlined in Table 7.

Table 7 – Regeneration Reserve

	(Use of/ Addition to Reserve £000	Balance £000
Balance as at 1 April		1,908
<u>Previously Approved</u>		
Cabinet Resources Panel - 29 July 2014		(658)
Cabinet - 23 July 2014 Southside Delivery Strategy		(170)
Cabinet - 11 November 2014		(733)
<u>Approval Sought from this Meeting</u>		
Economic Partnerships and Investments; DTZ Enterprise Zone - To fund advice and to prepare a financial model for the Black Country Enterprise Zone.	(10)	
Economic Partnerships and Investments; Local Growth Fund Project Pipeline - With the aim of accelerating and increasing the move towards a Combined Authority, each Authority has agreed to contribute funding to support the development of pipeline projects. It is hoped that this will improve the ability of the Black Country to secure investment from the Local Growth Fund.	(50)	
Economic Partnerships and Investments; Bantock CCTV Signage - To fund improvements to CCTV and signage at Bantock Park and House to continue to provide an improved customer service.	(8)	
		(68)
Forecast Balance as at 31 March 2015		279

Local Strategic Partnership Reserve

5.5.7 Approval is sought from this meeting for the use of £20,000 from the Local Strategic Partnership Reserve to fund the set-up of the Wolverhampton Skills Commission, to ensure that Wolverhampton has an appropriately skilled workforce to support the City's economic growth.

6.0 General Fund Transformation Programme

- 6.1 The total savings target value for the 205 individual proposals included in the 2014/15 to 2018/19 Medium Term Financial Strategy, which was approved by Council on 5 March 2014, is £66.7 million. Of this, £21.3 million is deliverable in the 2014/15 financial year, with the balance of £45.4 million falling due in the period 2015/16 to 2018/19.
- 6.2 The table below provides an overview of the Council's forecast performance against the current year's savings targets as at the end of February 2015.

Table 8 – 2014/15 Savings Targets – Likelihood of Achievement

Savings Already "Banked"	Savings With a Higher Level of Confidence	Savings With a Medium Level of Confidence	Savings With a Lower Level of Confidence	Total Savings Target
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
13,004	6,357	1,989	25	21,375
60.8%	29.8%	9.3%	0.1%	100.0%
No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
95	89	17	4	205

- 6.3 The table indicates that, by value:
- 60.8% of the savings have already been secured (compared with 47.6% at quarter 2 and 11.0% at quarter 1).
 - 90.6% of the savings have already been secured or are highly likely to be secured (compared with 85.6% at quarter 2 and 76.1% at quarter 1).
 - Only 0.1% of the savings targets have been identified as having a low level of confidence or low likelihood of achievement (compared with 0.7% at quarter 2 and 1.5% at quarter 1).
- 6.4 It is important to note that the monetary totals included in each column do not reflect an end of year forecast. They represent the total value of individual savings targets that have been assessed as falling within each column.
- 6.5 The detail behind the assessment is reflected in the budget forecasts included in this report. Where these give rise to variations greater than £100,000, they are separately disclosed in Appendices A-D.

7.0 General Fund Budget Monitoring – Risk Management

7.1 The overall level of risk associated with the budget 2014/15 is assessed as amber. The six main areas of risk are summarised in the table at Appendix E.

8.0 Revenue Budget Monitoring – Schools Budgets

- 8.1 The local scheme for financing schools requires that maintained schools provide the Local Authority with budget plans setting out their plans for the use of resources over three financial years. Schools are required to submit original budget plans by 31 May each year and revised plans by 31 October.
- 8.2 Cabinet (Resources) Panel received a report on 9 September 2014, setting out schools balances at the end of the last financial year of £15.9 million. The report also detailed schools original plans for the use of resources and suggested schools projected balances of £8.9 million at the end of the current financial year 2014/15, a reduction of £7.1 million.
- 8.3 Schools have now submitted revised budget plans detailing their estimates of balances at the end of the current financial year. The table below provides an overview of these projections.

Table 9 – Schools Balances

Sector	Total Balances 2013/14 £000	Planned Use £000	Forecast Balance 31 March 2015 £000
Secondary	1,587	1,418	169
Primary	8,994	3,119	5,875
Junior	477	237	240
Infant	586	265	321
Nursery	537	146	391
Special	2,861	1,791	1,070
PRUs	914	882	32
Total	15,956	7,858	8,098

8.4 On 27 February the Local Authority published school budget settlements for 2015/16; schools settlements again reflect 0% increase. When set against pay and price inflation pressures, schools will have a challenging time setting balanced budgets for the planning time frame. Once the final position regarding balances for 2014/15 is known, a further report will be presented to Cabinet.

9.0 General Fund Corporate Income – Write-Offs

9.1 **Sundry Debtors** - Income is due to the council for a wide range of services provided to individuals and businesses. To reflect the fact that, despite the council's best efforts, not

all of this income will actually be collected, the council makes provision for bad and doubtful debts, which it charges directly to the General Fund.

- 9.2 Overall debt write offs totalling £141,607.76 have been incurred during quarters one to three of 2014/15. Of those there were 2 write offs greater than £5,000, totalling £29,948.08 which require approval by the Panel, as detailed at Appendix F.

10.0 Financial Implications

- 10.1 The financial implications are discussed in the body of the report.
[MH/16032015/A]

11.0 Legal Implications

- 11.1 Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires local authorities to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs. It is a legal requirement under s25 of the Local Government Act 2003 to set a balanced budget and monitor the financial position throughout the year.
[TS/16032015/M]

12.0 Equality Implications

- 12.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a statutory duty to pay due regard to the impact of how it carries out its business on different groups of people. This is designed to help the Council identify the particular needs of different groups and reduce the likelihood of discrimination on the nine protected characteristics covered in the legislation are:
- Age;
 - Disability;
 - Gender reassignment;
 - Marriage and Civil Partnership;
 - Pregnancy and Maternity;
 - Race;
 - Religion or Belief;
 - Sex;
 - Sexual Orientation.
- 12.2 In relation to determining the overall revenue budget for the Council there is always a difficult balance to be struck in deciding the levels at which to invest, reduce expenditure and raise income set against the often competing needs of different groups within the Wolverhampton community.
- 12.3 In order to address these complex issues the Council operates an open and consultative approach to budget and council tax determination. Year-on-year and medium term spending forecasts are provided to every household and business ratepayer within the city as part of the documentation which accompanies the council tax demand.
- 12.4 Budget consultation meetings have been held with the education community, the business community, the voluntary sector, communities of interest and trade unions. The

Council's budget consultation approach has also included an online survey in order to gain feedback on budget and service priorities.

- 11.5 In determining the budget for 2014/15 considerable focus has been placed on the development of savings proposals. Proposals were considered against the standard corporate process of initial equality screening or via a surgery approach.
- 11.6 The Council is facing a particularly challenging short and medium term financial environment in which savings must be generated and a tight control on spending maintained. This means that a greater focus than ever is necessary to ensure that core equalities commitments are met.
- 11.7 In summary the Council's annual budget and medium term financial strategy supports a range of services designed to meet key equalities objectives. A cumulative equalities analysis has been conducted on the overall budget proposals, including the overall impact of job losses. This can be found on the Council's website via the following link: <http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/budgetsavings>
- 12.8 Councillors should also be aware that under the Equality Act 2010, they must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) when making budget decisions. What this means in practice is that Councillors must consciously think about the three aims of the public sector equality duty as part of the decision making process, the three aims are to have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - Advance equality of opportunity by removing or minimising disadvantages, meet differing needs and encouraging participation, and
 - Foster good relations between people from different groups.
- 11.9 The Act does not require the Council to treat everyone in the same way; sometimes different treatment is required, for example, be making reasonable adjustments to meet the needs of disabled people.
- 11.10 Consideration of equality issues must influence the decisions reached by public bodies including:
- How they act as employers;
 - How they develop, evaluate and review policy;
 - How they design, deliver and evaluate services, and
 - How they commission and procure from others.
- 11.11 The Brown Principles, established as a result of a legal case concerning Post Offices closures in 2008, provide an important checklist that should be considered when making decisions:
- Decision makers must be made aware of their duty to have due regard to the identified goals;

- Due regard must be fulfilled before and at the time that a particular decision is being considered, not afterwards;
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind. It is not a question of ticking boxes;
- The duty is cannot be delegated; it must be fulfilled by the organisation in question rather than through the use of an external body to do it to the organisation;
- The duty is a continuing one, and
- It is good practice to keep an adequate record showing that it has considered the identified needs.

13.0 Environmental Implications

- 13.1 A range of services focused upon the Council's environmental policies is supported through revenue budgets reviewed in this report. Changes in levels of funding will be considered as such changes are proposed.

13.0 Background Papers

Budget 2015/16 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 to 2018/19, report to Full Council, 4 March 2015.

Treasury Management Strategy 2015/16, report to Full Council, 4 March 2015.

Investing To Save: Improving The Quality Of Early Intervention By Social Workers By The Reduction Of Caseloads, report to Cabinet (Resources) Panel, 20 January 2015.

Treasury Management Activity Monitoring – Mid Year Review, report to Full Council, 17 December 2014.

2015/16 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 – 2018/19, report to Cabinet, 22 October 2014.

School Balances 2013/2014, report to Cabinet (Resources) Panel, 9 September 2014.

5 Year Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/15 to 2018/19, report to Full Council, 5 March 2014.

5 Year Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/15 to 2018/19, report to Cabinet, 23 October 2013.

Investing To Save: Improving the Quality of Early Intervention by Social Workers by the Reduction of Caseloads, report to Cabinet (Resources) Panel, September 2013.

Revenue Budget Monitoring – People

Service	2014/15 Controllable Budget £000	2014/15 Forecast Outturn £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance at Q2 £000	Reason for Variation
Older People & Personalisation					
Directorate	223	237	14	-	
Assistant Director	144	155	11	4	
Carers Support	1,385	1,276	(109)	(16)	Underspend on care purchasing budgets for carers
ILS, Telecare & Adaptations	2,297	2,350	53	(51)	
Older People Assessment & Care Management	13,979	15,682	1,703	1,647	Overspend across care purchasing budgets for older people, particularly residential and nursing
Older People Provider Management	9,554	9,059	(495)	(432)	Underspends due to staff vacancies across the service
Welfare Rights & Financial	1,732	1,739	7	(17)	
Workforce Development	-	-	-	-	
Housing	1,028	1,027	(1)	(125)	
Community Centres	360	230	(130)	(97)	Underspend on staffing due to vacancies
Libraries	1,675	1,558	(117)	(157)	early achievement of 2015/16 savings target
LDGS	(1,000)	(1,000)	-	-	
Sub Total Older People & Personalisation	31,377	32,313	936	756	

Revenue Budget Monitoring – People

Service	2014/15 Controllable Budget £000	2014/15 Forecast Outturn £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance at Q2 £000	Reason for Variation
Disabilities & Mental Health					
Assistant Director	130	130	-	(4)	
Children's Disabilities Commissioning	64	65	1	19	
Disabilities In-House Provision	8,682	7,946	(736)	(392)	Underspends due to staff vacancies across the service
Emergency Duty Team	411	412	1	16	
Housing Support & Social Inclusion	4,771	5,638	867	-	Unrealised savings relating to block contracts on supporting people
Mental Health Care Management	6,257	6,285	28	433	Overspend on care purchasing budgets due to increase in volume and complexity of young people in transition and adult demographic pressures
Short Breaks	393	408	15	1	
Children With Disabilities	1,015	1,163	148	63	Overspend on salaries and agency costs
Learning Disabilities Assessment & Care Management	20,463	20,743	280	(183)	Overspend on care purchasing budgets due to increase in volume and complexity of young people in transition and adult demographic pressures
Physical Disabilities Assessment & Care Management	5,998	6,200	202	240	Overspend on care purchasing budgets due to increase in volume and complexity of young people in transition and adult demographic pressures

Revenue Budget Monitoring – People

Service	2014/15 Controllable Budget £000	2014/15 Forecast Outturn £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance at Q2 £000	Reason for Variation
Disabilities Commissioning	888	618	(270)	(225)	Higher than budgeted income from other organisations
Families in Focus	-	-	-	-	
SEN	(269)	(269)	-	-	
Sub Total Disabilities & Mental Health	48,803	49,339	536	(32)	
Children, Young People & Families					
Assistant Director	642	460	(182)	(4)	£263,000 savings against voluntary redundancies, partially offset by contribution to Admin review savings of £113,000
Children Centres	5,440	5,094	(346)	-	Underspend against staffing budgets
Children in Need	6,473	7,950	1,477	990	£1.1 million agency expenditure (over and above savings from staffing vacancies). Overpend of £216,000 on volunteer drivers client transport £78,000 all of which are associated with increase caseloads and demand for services
Children Commissioning	820	735	(85)	(29)	

Revenue Budget Monitoring - People

Service	2014/15 Controllable Budget £000	2014/15 Forecast Outturn £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance at Q2 £000	Reason for Variation
Looked-After Children	31,344	35,765	4,421	2,426	£316,000 underspend on staffing. Looked after children continued increase in placements £3.5 million, partially offset by additional income. £1.6 million increased costs associated with adoption and guardianship allowances and inter-agency fees, £266,000 increase costs on LAC transitions linked to client allowances and £122,000 increased costs for remand / secure accommodation over and above funding allocated from Youth Justice Board.
Social Inclusion & Play	3,214	1,988	(1,226)	(633)	Underspends due to staff vacancies across the service held pending a restructure
Youth Offenders Team	1,146	985	(161)	(230)	Underspends due to staf vacancies across the service
Business Support	464	460	(4)	(1)	
Youth	1,340	1,161	(179)	(188)	The budgets awere set as provisional pending significant service reduction for 2014/15 with many staff leaving at the end of July 2014, following this, savings may be earmarked to support further service transition and other service provision within the service
Sub Total Children, Young People & Families	50,883	54,598	3,715	2,331	

Revenue Budget Monitoring – People

Service	2014/15 Controllable Budget £000	2014/15 Forecast Outturn £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance at Q2 £000	Reason for Variation
Public Health, Parks and Safeguarding					
Public Health	(500)	(500)	-	-	
Public Health - Healthier Places	67	40	(27)	-	
Sport & Leisure Trust			-	-	
Business Continuity & Emergency Planning	130	138	8	-	
Community Safety	437	440	3	(6)	
Safeguarding	2,165	2,277	112	126	Forecast cost pressures of £132,000 arising from agency cover for Deprivation of Liberty Standards Manager (DOLS) and additional DOLS assessments as a result of Supreme Court ruling.
Sub Total Public Health, Parks and Safeguarding	2,299	2,395	96	120	
Community Initiatives	207	207	-	-	
Use of one off reserves	-	(500)	(500)	-	Draw down of one off reserves
Total People Directorate	133,569	138,352	4,783	3,175	

Revenue Budget Monitoring – Corporate

Service	2014/15 Controllable Budget £000	2014/15 Forecast Outturn £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance at Q2 £000	Reason for Variation
Managing Director	223	229	6	-	
Finance					
Director of Finance	144	149	5,000	-	
Audit Services	754	585	(169)	-	An underspend is forecast due to a voluntary redundancies and vacant posts
Corporate Financial Management	4,217	4,122	(95)	-	
Corporate Management	850	901	51	-	
Revenues and Benefits	1,804	1,719	(85)	-	
Housing Benefits Payments	(432)	(432)	-	-	
Strategic Finance	1,879	1,874	(5)	-	
The Hub	2,010	2,183	173	-	One off transitional costs following the implementation of Agresso. This cost will be fully funded from within the directorate.
Corporate Procurement	707	671	(36)	-	
Sub Total Finance	11,933	11,772	(161)	-	
Governance					
Corporate Administration	(75)	(75)	-	-	
Democratic Services	1,896	1,948	52	-	
HR Advice	1,973	2,477	504	-	One off transitional costs following the implementation of Agresso. This cost will be fully funded from within the directorate.

Revenue Budget Monitoring – Corporate

Service	2014/15 Controllable Budget £000	2014/15 Forecast Outturn £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance at Q2 £000	Reason for Variation
Legal Services	2,494	2,453	(41)	-	
Scrutiny and Information	577	393	(184)	-	There has been a reconfiguration of the service ahead of the savings target deadline for implementation.
Sub Total Governance	6,865	7,196	331	-	
Transformation					
Communications and Marketing	627	452	(175)	-	There has been a reconfiguration of the service ahead of the savings target deadline for implementation.
Customer Services	1,681	1,581	(100)	-	An underspend is forecast due to a voluntary redundancies and vacant posts
ICTS	4,932	4,689	(243)	-	An underspend is forecast due to a voluntary redundancies and vacant posts
Transformation	4,017	2,943	(1,074)	-	There has been a reconfiguration of the service ahead of the savings target deadline for implementation.
Sub Total Transformation	11,257	9,665	(1,592)	-	

Revenue Budget Monitoring – Corporate

Service	2014/15 Controllable Budget £000	2014/15 Forecast Outturn £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance at Q2 £000	Reason for Variation
Corporate Budgets					
West Midlands Transport Authority Levy	12,600	12,600	-	-	
Environment Agency Levy	67	67	-	-	
Provision for Bad Debts	375	375	-	-	
Treasury Management Budgets	23,480	11,228	(12,252)	(4,400)	A change in the basis of calculating the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for the redemption of debt from straight line to annuity method, as approved by Cabinet on 22 October 2014, will result in savings in the short term. Further to this, a revision to the MRP Policy that incorporates an adjustment for being overly prudent during the period from 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2014, will result in a zero MRP charge in 2014/15. This will reduce the budgeted use of General Balances in year.
Birmingham Airport - Rent	(69)	(69)	-	-	
Contribution from Southside Reserve	(735)	(735)	-	-	

Revenue Budget Monitoring – Corporate

Service	2014/15 Controllable Budget £000	2014/15 Forecast Outturn £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance at Q2 £000	Reason for Variation
Central Provision for increased Pension Costs	2,091	2,091	-	-	
Cross-cutting Savings Proposals	(550)	(50)	500	-	Cross cutting saving held corporately which has been met by the underspend against the Treasury Management budgets.
Redundancy Costs	-	6,000	6,000	7,500	Redundancy payments during 2014/15 arising as a result of the Voluntary Redundancy Programme and savings proposals.
Contribution from the Efficiency Reserve	-	(6,000)	(6,000)	(7,500)	Contribution from the Efficiency Reserve to fund the projected redundancy payments during 2014/15.
Other Corporate Budgets	29	29	-	-	
Sub Total Corporate Budgets	37,288	25,536	(11,752)	(4,400)	
Total Corporate	67,566	54,398	(13,168)	(4,400)	

Revenue Budget Monitoring – Place

Service	2014/15 Controllable Budget £000	2014/15 Forecast Outturn £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance at Q2 £000	Reason for Variation
Directorate	341	341	-	-	
City Economy					
Assistant Director	146	146	-	-	
Enterprise & Skills	959	959	-	-	
Skills Development	1,420	1,420	-	-	
Neighbourhood Services	2,199	2,199	-	-	
Partnerships Operations and Development	38	38	-	-	
Physical Regeneration	442	414	(28)	-	Vacancies and recharges to capital
Visitor Economy	846	846	-	-	
Adult Education	(90)	(90)	-	-	
Culture, Arts and Heritage	1,585	1,474	(111)	-	Salary underspend
Sub Total City Economy	7,545	7,406	(139)	-	
City Assets					
Assistant Director	147	147	-	-	
Transportation	1,865	1,718	(147)	114	Underspend on surface water management plan due to legislation changes and Interchange Phase 2 underspend.

Revenue Budget Monitoring – Place

Service	2014/15 Controllable Budget £000	2014/15 Forecast Outturn £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance at Q2 £000	Reason for Variation
Housing	703	498	(205)	(218)	Vacant posts pending phased restructure arrangements
Performance and Service Support	10	230	220	214	Overspend due to savings target being held on Performance & Service Support but savings delivered elsewhere
Planning	880	880	-	(82)	
Catering Services	(913)	(883)	30	-	-
Cleaning and Caretaking Services	2,007	1,917	(90)	-	
Community Centres	203	203	-	-	
Corporate Asset Management	495	506	11	-	-
Facilities Management	3,081	3,030	(51)	-	
Estates And Valuations	(1,226)	(1,047)	179	-	Lower than anticipated rental income from investment properties
Property Services (Including Utilities)	4,392	4,292	(100)	-	Vacant posts across Property Services
Sub Total City Assets	11,644	11,491	(153)	28	
City Environment					
Assistant Director	136	136	-		
Bereavement Services	(2,261)	(2,141)	120	150	Anticipated reduction in income due to less demand for bereavement services.
Coroners Services	323	323	-	-	
Environmental Maintenance	7,828	7,478	(350)	-	Renegotiation of west area grounds maintenance contract with external contractor and staff vacancies

Revenue Budget Monitoring – Place

Service	2014/15 Controllable Budget £000	2014/15 Forecast Outturn £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance at Q2 £000	Reason for Variation
Parks	369	329	(40)	(2)	
Regulatory Services	2,104	1,704	(400)	(340)	Underspend due to vacancies
Fleet Services	(892)	(1,172)	(280)	(150)	An underspend is anticipated due to higher than average levels of salvage.
Highways Maintenance	1,881	1,881	-	-	
Landscape	21	21	-	-	
Leisure Services	2,187	2,187	-	-	
Markets	(560)	(560)	-	-	
Parking Services	(547)	(547)	-	-	
Street Lighting	3,388	3,308	(80)	-	
Waste and Recycling Service	13,513	13,499	(14)	-	
Sub Total City Environment	27,490	26,446	(1,044)	(342)	
Total Place	47,020	45,684	(1,336)	(314)	

Revenue Budget Monitoring – Education

Service	2014/15 Controllable Budget £000	2014/15 Forecast Outturn £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance £000	2014/15 Forecast Variance at Q2 £000	Reason for Variation
Education					
Director of Education	(196)	173	369	197	Restructure implemented in 2014/15 does not deliver full savings target in year due to residual staffing costs. This also includes the costs of interim consultants un-resolved savings target to be realised in 2015/16.
Schools	(5,355)	(5,355)	-		
Standards and Vulnerable Pupils	895	933	38	120	There is a projected under achievement of income for Governors Support Team and residual staff costs outside of restructure
School Planning & Resources	4,051	4,156	105	118	The savings target for Learning Technologies has not been realised however this is partially offset by vacant posts and other SLA income within the service area
Total Education	(605)	(93)	512	435	

General Fund Budget Risks 2014/15

Risk	Description	Level of Risk
Financial and Budget Management	Risks that might materialise as a result of the impact of non-pay inflation and pay awards, staff vacancy factors, VAT rules, loss of ICTS facilities, treasury management activity and the impact of Equal Pay and budget management failure.	Amber
Transformation Programme	Risks that might materialise as a result of not identifying savings, not delivering the savings incorporated into the budget and not having sufficient sums available to fund the upfront and one-off costs associated with delivering savings and downsizing the workforce.	Amber
Income and Funding	Risks that might materialise as a result of income being below budgeted levels, claw back, reduction to government grant or increased levels of bad debts.	Amber
Service Demands	Risks that might materialise as a result of demands for services outstretching the available resources.	Amber
Third Parties	Risks that might materialise as a result of third parties and suppliers ceasing trading or withdrawing from the market.	Amber
Government Policy	Risks that might materialise as a result of changes to Government policy during the year e.g. changes in VAT	Amber

APPENDIX F

Corporate Income – Write-offs in excess of £5,000

Account	Reason	Date written off	Amount of write off £
Sundry Debtors			
Care charges	Debtor deceased	Feb 2015	6,353.08
Highways Service Charges	Bankruptcy & Liquidation	Jan 2015	23,595.00
			29,948.08

APPENDIX G

Virements

From		To		£000	Reason for Virement
Directorate	Service	Directorate	Service		
People	Looked after Children	People	Mental Health Commissioning	589	Transfer of CAHMS service
People	Older People Assessment & Care Management	Corporate	Transformation Team	346	Transfer of OLM budget to Strategic ICT

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Cabinet (Resources) Panel

24 March 2015

Report title	Improvements Programme – Bereavement Services	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds Environment	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	No	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Nick Alderman, City Environment	
Originating service	Bereavement Services	
Accountable employee(s)	Stephen Wright	Head of Operational Services
	Tel	01902 554866
	Email	Steve.Wright@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Delivery Directorate Leadership Team	18 November 2014

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Approve the following proposals to improve facilities at the crematorium and cemeteries funded from the cemeteries and crematorium reserve fund.
 - a) Increase seating capacity of the west chapel at the crematorium.
 - b) Resurface worn roads and footpaths at the crematorium.
 - c) Installation of concrete plinths for memorials.
 - d) Installation of Wesley music system at the crematorium.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To seek approval to undertake improvements to facilities at the crematorium and cemeteries funded from the cemeteries and crematorium reserve fund.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Bereavement services reserve fund was established in 1998 for the purposes of investment in service improvements and/or to contribute towards the capital cost of maintaining facilities at the City's cemeteries and crematorium.
- 2.2 Traditionally, all surplus income from the Bereavement services trading account was channelled into the reserve fund annually. This has now ceased in view of the Council's current financial position.
- 2.3 The service carries out general repair and maintenance works annually within cemeteries and at the crematorium, however, the revenue budget has been reduced over the past few years and is now only able to fund routine maintenance and general repair work.
- 2.4 It has become especially important to continue improving facilities at the crematorium and the City's cemeteries because of the ever-increasing threat of alternative facilities being provided in neighbouring authorities by the private sector in the near future
- 2.5 A balance of £160,000 currently remains in the cemeteries and crematorium reserve fund.

3.0 Project Proposals

- 3.1 The projects shown in the table below were proposed for implementation in 2014/15 but will be undertaken in 2015/16 once the outturn situation becomes clearer.

Projects Proposed	Indicative Costs	Details	Reason
a) Increase seating capacity of the west chapel at the crematorium	£40,000	Remove existing pews and replace with individual chairs, remove and replace carpets and curtains, decorate as required – this proposal increases the capacity of the west chapel by a further 25 - 30 seated mourners. (the east ehapel seating capacity will be reviewed at a later date)	The chapels at the crematorium are currently only able to accommodate up to 80 seated persons and it is estimated that at up to 100 funerals each year, some mourners are having to stand during services which has led to complaints from funeral directors and families.

Projects Proposed	Indicative Costs	Details	Reason
b)Resurface worn roads and footpaths at the crematorium	£40,000	Some tarmacadam roads and footpaths within the crematorium grounds require urgent reinstatement.	The roads in the crematorium are used on a daily basis by visitors and maintenance staff and are subject to wear similar to traditional highway roadways. Repair is required in order to reduce the Health & Safety risk to the public and its associated insurance implications.
c)Installation of concrete plinths for memorials	£20,000	All memorial installations on new grave sections at cemeteries are erected on concrete plinths which are essential for stability and to maintain uniformity.	It is considered unreasonable to pass this additional cost on to the public via memorial masons. The grave price already includes a charge for permission to erect a memorial.
d)Installation of Wesley music system at the crematorium	£22,000	This investment is required as an alternative to ttraditional organ music during funeral services. Mourners who wish to use the services of an organist now make arrangements via their funeral director at no cost to the Council.	The Council no longer automatically provide an organist for funeral services at the crematorium.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 Following completion of these proposals, a balance of £38,000 will remain in the cemeteries and crematorium reserve fund.

[CH/05032015/O]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 There are no direct implications arising from this report.

[RB/27012015/H]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 No equalities analysis required for these proposals.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 No direct implications.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 No direct implications.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

9.1 The proposed investment is from a ring fenced reserve for cemeteries and crematorium and it is supported by the Corporate Landlord because the proposed enhancement of facilities enables the delivery of efficiencies and will help to protect the income streams to the service.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

10.1 None.



Cabinet (Resources) Panel

24 March 2015

Report title	Customer Service Standards	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor John Reynolds Central Services	
	Councillor Andrew Johnson Resources	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Keith Ireland, Managing Director	
Originating service	Customer Service	
Accountable employee(s)	Sue Handy Tel Email	Head of Service 01902 553053 Sue.handy@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board Scrutiny Board Joint Strategic Executive and Corporate Delivery Board	13 November 2014 26 November 2014 27 November 2014

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Approve implementation of the corporate customer service standards.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To propose the introduction and implementation of a set of clear, easily understandable and accessible corporate customer service standards for the City of Wolverhampton Council.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 It is vital for an organisation to define service standards for its users/customers, wider stakeholders, employees and managers. They define what a customer can expect, help build their trust and confidence, and remind managers and employees of their obligations. Delivering excellent customer service also supports our Corporate Plan objective of being a Confident, Capable Council.

3.0 Current situation

- 3.1 Whilst some departments may have existing service-specific standards as part of existing policy or statutory requirement, there are no overarching customer service principles or standards for the City of Wolverhampton Council. If we are to be a Confident, Capable Council intent on delivering high service satisfaction, public trust and confidence, we need to have clear, easily understandable and accessible corporate customer service standards.

4.0 Research

- 4.1 In developing the draft standards attached at appendix 1, secondary research has been undertaken which included reviewing the standards set out by the Institute of Customer Service (ICS) and reviewing the policies of the following local authorities: Nottinghamshire County Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Coventry City Council, Leeds City Council, Harborough, South Gloucestershire, Ealing, Redbridge, Staffordshire, Cheshire and Chester.

5.0 Way forward

- 5.1 New standards for customers and procedures for our employees have been developed – two draft documents have been produced and are attached at appendix A. Document one details the proposed external-facing customer service standards which is essentially our commitment to the public and other key stakeholders who use our services. Document two details the internal procedures and improvements that we need to make in order to deliver our new corporate customer service standards.
- 5.2 Wider engagement, consultation and feedback in respect of the draft standards has been sought from senior management and employees delivering administrative functions and the 'Equality and Diversity Forum' which is a group external to the Council. All feedback received was considered and where appropriate the draft customer service standards have been amended to reflect comments and suggestions made.
- 5.3 Implementing the new approach of the new customer service standards

will require support from a number of areas within the Council:

- **The role of leadership**
Any new customer service standards need ownership, visibility and commitment from senior leaders across the organisation. Leadership is critical to successful implementation and managers need to hold employees to account for delivering against the standards set.
- **Internal communication**
The implementation of any new standards will need to be supported by a corporate approach to internal communication with consistent key messages and visibility to create awareness which supports leaders in changing culture.
- **Training and development**
Existing on line training provision has been reviewed to ensure it's consistent with the new standards and face to face briefings will be carried out where appropriate. User guides to support the internal procedures will also be made readily available on-line to all employees.

6. Review and evaluation

6.1 Corporate ownership / governance

Each service standard needs to have accountable leadership and a named business owner who is responsible for delivering against the standards. Performance needs to be communicated to all staff, on a regular basis, to maintain focus. The standards themselves will need to be corporately reviewed every 12– 18 months, in response to organisational or wider environmental changes.

6.2 Management responsibility

Managers will be responsible for regular monitoring, review and dip sampling to ensure that their teams are meeting the standards set.

6.3 Member scrutiny

Performance against service standards, specifically internal telephony performance will be included in scheduled performance reports to governance and performance panel.

6.4 Mystery customer / independent assessment

There will be an opportunity to gain an external perspective and feedback on the service we provide. Consideration will be also be given to use of an independent company to undertake a mystery shopper exercise or alternatively we could seek volunteers from existing stakeholder groups such as Citizens Panel.

8.0 Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.
[CH/10032015/I]

9.0 Legal implications

9.1 There are no immediate legal implications arising from this report.
RB/14112014/V.RB/09032015/D

10.0 Equalities implications

10.1 An initial equality screening undertaken on this proposal shows there are no adverse impact on any protected group.

11.0 Environmental implications

11.1 There are no environmental implications arising from this report.

12.0 Human resources implications

12.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

13.0 Corporate landlord implications

13.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

14.0 Schedule of background papers

14.1 Strategic Executive Board 13 November 2014
Scrutiny Board 26 November 2014
Joint Strategic Executive and Corporate Delivery Board 27 November 2014

Section 1: External-facing customer service standards



Every contact counts

Delivering excellent customer service

Welcome!

As your council, we want to give you the highest standards of customer service whether you:

- contact us by telephone
- visit us in person
- visit our website
- send us a letter or email
- communicate with us through social media
- invite us into your home
- make a complaint, comment or compliment.

We take our responsibility to provide good customer service personally. We invest in our staff and we set ourselves high standards.

Though these standards may be high, we've also tried to make them simple, user friendly and measurable. This booklet will explain what they are and also set out what you as a service user or customer can expect from us.

Our ambition is to get things right first time, every time. We're human beings, however and we realise that sometimes we might not get all the way there.

That's why your views are so important to us. Your feedback is the single most important thing in helping us improve our services.

Please feel free to get in touch with your comments and suggestions – you'll find our contact details on the last page of this document.

Our commitment to you

We will always...

- Treat you fairly, with respect and consideration.
- Be courteous, helpful, open and honest.
- Listen to you and respond positively to what you're telling us.
- Deliver high quality, value for money services organised around your needs.
- Give you information, advice and services in the way you want to receive them.
- Use clear, understandable English.
- Try wherever we can to communicate with you in the method you prefer.
- Ask for your feedback and use it to help improve our services.
- Respect your confidentiality.
- Let you know how quickly we can take action to answer your enquiry or resolve your complaint.
- Let you know if we are unable to assist you and if that is the case , provide advice on how you might obtain assistance
- Tell you who's dealing with your enquiry or direct you to the best person to help.
- **Keep our promises by doing what we say we are going to do.**

If you telephone us we will...

- Aim to answer calls within 90 seconds at our Customer Services Centre.
- Tell you the name of the service area and the person you're speaking to.
- Give you contact details of someone who can help you with any future enquiries.
- Try to deal with your enquiry then and there. If we can't for any reason, we'll tell you when you can expect a response.
- Offer to take your details and arrange for someone to call you back if we can't put you through to the right person.
- Respond to your telephone messages within two working days, wherever possible – if it's going to take longer, we'll let you know.
- Avoid using answerphones whenever we can – but if you have to leave a message, we'll respond within two working days.
- Comply with the Data Protection Act (1998), making sure that proper steps are taken to protect your personal and sensitive information.
- Support you to carry out your transaction or source information electronically to save you time and money in the future

If you visit our website we will:

- Make sure it is easy to use.
- Provide feedback forms for you to ask questions or leave comments.
- Make paper forms available electronically or as PDF documents.
- Make sure that information on the site is both accurate and easy to find.
- Display opening times and the times that council services are available clearly and simply.

If you email or write to us we will:

- Give an initial or holding response to your e-mail or letter within five working days.
- Let you know if your email or letter has to be sent to a specialist department or another person to deal with. If this happens, you should expect to hear from us within ten working days of the date we get your letter or email original date of receipt. If we need more time to give you a proper answer, we'll tell you as soon as we can.
- Keep our correspondence simple and easy to understand.
- Provide you with contact details and a reference number if you need to get in touch.
- Direct you to the council's website if we think there's information there that can help you.

If you visit us in person we will:

- Make sure that you can find our reception areas.
- Be welcoming, attentive, helpful and courteous.
- Let you know how long it will be before someone can see you.
- Aim to deal with your enquiry within 20 minutes.
- Get in touch with the appropriate service for you if we're unable to deal with your enquiry directly.
- Create a clean, safe, comfortable and easily-accessible environment for you, advance notice of any particular access requirements that you have will help us to achieve this.
- Provide you with a confidential meeting area if you need it.
- Try wherever we can to communicate with you in the method you prefer.
- Make sure that all our employees wear identification and receptionists wear name badges, so you know who you're talking to.
- Provide signing and language interpretation – as long as you let us know in advance that you need it.
- Support you to carry out your transaction or source information electronically to save you time and money in the future

If we visit you we will:

- Offer you a choice of appointment times when we can.
- Carry identification and show it to you straight away.
- Explain who we are and the purpose of the visit.
- Be on time – and let you know as soon as possible if we are going to be late or miss an appointment.
- Advise you who to telephone if you want to confirm the identity of the person visiting you.
- Let you know what will happen next as a result of our visit.
- Do our best to arrange home visits and interviews around the need to respect a day of worship if you let us know in advance

If you contact us on social media such as Facebook and Twitter we will:

- Endeavour to join the conversation where possible. However, we may not be able to reply individually to all the messages we receive
- Read all direct messages and replies to posts and ensure that any emerging themes or helpful suggestions are passed to the relevant people at Wolverhampton City Council
- If we need further information from you about any issue, we'll either ask for this through direct messaging or give you a telephone number or email address to provide this.
- Work to the principles set out in the council's social media policy which you can find here [Social Media Policy](#)

Customer Feedback

We welcome and learn from all of the feedback we receive, complaints compliments and comments. If you make a complaint we will:

- Acknowledge it within four working days.
- Try to resolve your complaint as soon as possible.
- Help you by taking your complaint details over the telephone if you prefer not to write or email your complaint to us.
- Tell you if we need to deal with the issue using specific procedures, which may take longer.
- Provide a full and final written response within 21 calendar days, or a timescale which we have agreed with you.
- Learn from your suggestions, compliments and complaints, using them to improve and develop our services.
- Provide you with details of the complaints procedure, so that you know what to do if you are not happy with your response.

You can find out more about the council's Customer Feedback Process here:

[Customer Feedback](#)

Protecting your data and answering Freedom of Information requests

We will:

- Make sure that all council employees have had appropriate training.
- Sensitively and confidentially handle all information that you give to us..
- Make sure your information is not discussed with, or disclosed to, any unauthorised person.
- Ask you only for information that is relevant.
- Respond within 40 calendar days to requests for access to your personal information, in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.
- Respond within 20 working days to requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Equality and Diversity

- The council complies with the aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty in providing inclusive and accessible services. We'll make reasonable adjustments to address your individual needs. Advance notice of any particular access requirements that you have will help us to achieve this.

What we ask of you

We'll do our best at all times to meet the service standards that we've set out in this booklet. However, there are some small things you can do to help us provide the level of service we all want. Please...

- Give us feedback and tell us where we can make improvements to our services.
- Treat our employees with respect.
- Be considerate and polite to other customers.
- Let us have all the information we need to help you.
- Let us know if you have special needs.
- Ask us to explain anything that you are not sure about.

Get in touch with us

If you'd like to know more about our commitment to customer service, please contact us through one of the following methods:

- Customer Services online forms: [Customer Feedback](#)
- E-mail: city.direct@wolverhampton.gov.uk.
- General enquiries for service requests: 01902 551155.
- Minicom: 01902 555554.
- Fax: 01902 551195.
- Emergency out of hours: 01902 552999.
- Post: Wolverhampton City Council, Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square, Wolverhampton. WV1 1SH.

You can get this information in large print, Braille, audio or in another language by calling 01902 551155.

Section 2: Internal customer service procedures

Every contact counts

How we deliver excellent customer service at Wolverhampton City
Council

March 2015

Our new standards: what you need to know...

At a glance:

- Customer care and service is everyone's responsibility.
- Managers are responsible for embedding customer service into the operational delivery of their service area.
- All internal and external telephone calls will be answered in six rings.
- Working as a team, when we are away from our desks we will ensure that our calls can be answered by our colleagues and vice-versa.
- We will always keep our customers updated - from their initial call to resolution.
- We will see customers who have an appointment with us within 20 minutes of their allotted time
- We will see customers who do not have an appointment within 1 hour.
- For all emails and letters, we will respond within five working days using the agreed corporate templates.
- We will make sure our email out-of-office facility is enabled when we are away from the office for more than a day, using the corporately agreed out of office message.
- Customer service training is now mandatory for all employees
- If you are expecting a visitor you will notify main reception desk on extension 0138 to ensure that your guest is dealt with as efficiently as possible.
- It is mandatory for all employees to wear their access badge on a corporate lanyard around their neck and ensure that it is visible at all times whilst they are on duty.

Every council employee, no matter what job they do, has a responsibility to treat the people we come into contact with every day with courtesy, professionalism and fairness. It's what our service users, customers and partners expect from a Confident, Capable Council and it's the absolute minimum they deserve from us.

Managers will ensure that their teams know about, and more importantly, deliver upon these standards. There is an expectation that performance against delivery of **customer service standards will be included in service plans and form part of every employee's one-to-one and annual appraisal**, and that they will be regularly reviewed by senior managers.

Teams, departments and managers will also be held to account by the Strategic Executive Board (SEB) through monthly customer service performance reporting. This report will provide information on performance against telephone, standards as well as complaint trends. We will set high standards and we will expect these to be met. Where action to tackle poor performance is required this will be taken swiftly and service areas will be offered support to achieve these standards.

These standards aim to create a 'one council', corporate approach and are designed to set clear expectations for everyone who has regular contact with customers, both from inside and outside the council.

Handling telephone calls

- All internal and external telephone calls **will** be answered or diverted to a colleague within **six rings**.
- When you answer the phone remember to say 'good morning' or 'good afternoon' and to clearly state your name, for example:
"Good morning, you're speaking to Joe Smith, how can I help you?"
- When you are away from your desk, you will make sure that your calls can be picked up by colleagues within the team. This may require a hunt-group number, or a pick up group setting up and ICT can help you with this – email [ICT service desk](#) for support. If you are regularly away from the office, please divert your phone to a colleague who has the knowledge and skill to deal with any queries appropriately or take messages which should be responded to within agreed timescales. Alternatively you can divert your number to a temporary location, the following link will help you to do this [ICT service desk](#)

- If for whatever reason it's not possible to divert your phone, you should activate your voice mail. Voicemail messages should say who you are and when you will get back to the caller – in practice this should be no longer than **two working days** after their voicemail was left. Advice on how to set up your voicemail [can be found here](#).
- To ensure that you are accessible and available to work colleagues and our external customers, you need to make sure that the corporate telephone directory is updated if your details change. This is a personal responsibility but managers also have a role in checking and monitoring accuracy. Advice on how to do this [can be found here](#).

Handling face-to-face contact

- Reception areas will be kept smart, clean, tidy and free from clutter. This includes removing or reporting unnecessary and out-of-date posters and flyers to your manager. Again, managers will be accountable for ensuring that these standards are rigorously maintained at all times
- Standards of dress should be adhered to at all times – particularly by staff in customer-facing roles such as receptionists who should also wear an appropriate name badge. That means wearing your uniform if you have one, following the dress code if you don't (this should be available from your manager)
- All employees will wear their access badge if you do not have a corporate lanyard please speak to your manager or supervisor who will arrange to have one ordered for you.
- We will see customers who have an appointment within 20 minutes of their allotted time. If there's going to be a delay, you will let reception staff know, liaise with the officer dealing with the enquiry and – above all – **keep your customer updated**. It's important to remember that excellent customer service is about keeping our promises.
- If you are expecting a visitor you must notify main reception on extension 0138 giving the customer's name, the title of the meeting, the name of the employee meeting with the customer and their contact number

- You will ensure that your customer's preferred method of communication is used where you know it – and find out if you don't. This information should be captured in the future on the City Council's new customer relationship management (CRM) system.
- When dealing with assertive and challenging customers you will do so calmly, professionally and fairly. Customer excellence training, which includes handling aggression, is mandatory for every existing and new employee and must be part of continued professional development plans. A customer care training package can be found on the learning hub. If you don't have access to the learning hub please speak to your manager who will make alternative arrangements for you to access this training.
- When you visit customers in their own homes, you will carry up-to-date identification to show them and give your name and reason for visiting before you cross the threshold. You will also provide a number for them to call so that they can verify who you are.
- When you are visiting a customer in their own home you should follow your departmental lone working policy **at all times**. Please speak to your line manager if you are not aware of the policy in your area of work or if you require any clarification of the processes that are in place.
- If you have to cancel a home visit or you're running late, then you **must** let your customer know at the first opportunity.
- At the end of any home visit, you **will** always make sure that your customer knows what will happen next.

Handling social media contact i.e. Face book and Twitter

Social media is a very powerful tool, but you have to be careful about how you use it, both in your professional and personal lives.

The council has a social media policy which you need to be familiar with. You can find out more about it here:

[Social Media Usage Policy](#)

Handling contact by letter

For many people, a letter may be the only contact they have with the council. You should always remember to:

- Only use the agreed, corporate letter templates (and no others) which can be found [here](#).
- Include, as a matter of corporate standard, your customer's first name (and if this is not available their sign-off – for example, Mr Mrs, Ms) in your response
- Explain any technical terms you use clearly and simply if their meaning isn't immediately obvious.
- You will acknowledge - and ideally respond to - all letters within **five working days** of receiving them.
- Written correspondence is one of the most expensive methods of communicating with our customers. Every effort should be made – where appropriate - to encourage customers to use channels such as email and digital self-service which are more efficient and environmentally-friendly.

Handling email contact

- You should keep internal emails to a minimum – and use the Cc option only when it's absolutely necessary
- The first and third Wednesday of every month have been designated 'internal email-free days' to encourage better internal communication and productivity. So, unless you're communicating time-sensitive information relating to statutory requirements, for example complaints and Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, you shouldn't send **any** internal emails. If you are unsure about sending something, please take advice from your line manager
- Every **internal** email you send will include the appropriate protective marking– for example PROTECT – LOCSEN , NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED. You can find out more here: [Protective Marking Guidance](#)
- The subject bar on each email should state clearly what the email's about

- You will acknowledge - and ideally respond to - all emails within **five working days** of receiving them
- You should send an initial holding response to all external emails immediately. The holding response should set out for our customers when they can expect to receive a full response. IT helpdesk can support implementation of this function for service specific mailboxes within service areas.
- When you are away from the office for more than half a day you will need to ensure that your Microsoft Outlook out-of-office notification is activated. The corporate email response should be used for your out of office message, It will read: "I am currently away from the office returning on DAY/MONTH/YEAR. If your enquiry is of an urgent nature, please contact XX on 01902 55XXXX. Thank you. Kind Regards XXXXX" All out -of -office notifications will be written in Arial size 14 text.

Handling customer feedback

You should always refer customer complaints, comments and compliments to the Corporate Complaints team. If you have any doubts about whether this should be done, ask your manager for advice or consult the council's complaints policy which can be found [here](#).

Ends



Cabinet (Resources) Panel

24 March 2015

Report title	Schedule of Individual Executive Decision Notices	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	All	
Key decision	No	
In forward plan	No	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Kevin O'Keefe, Director of Governance	
Originating service	Democratic Support	
Accountable employee(s)	Laura Gilyead Tel Email	Graduate Management Trainee 01902 553219 Laura.gilyead@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	N/A	

Recommendations for noting:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is asked to note the summary of open and exempt individual executive decisions approved by the appropriate Cabinet Members following consultation with the relevant employees.

Schedule of Individual Executive Decision Notices

Part 1 – Open Items

1. Corporate

Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Phil Page	Director of Education	2 March 2015	Emma Balchin, 01902 555269
Title and Summary of Decision			
Instrument of Government That the Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Learning, in consultation with the Director of Education, approves the proposed Instrument of Government for Whitgreave Infant School.			
Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Phil Page	Director of Education	2 March 2015	Emma Balchin, 01902 555269
Title and Summary of Decision			
Instrument of Government That the Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Learning, in consultation with the Director of Education, approves the proposed Instrument of Government for Penn Fields School.			
Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Phil Page	Director of Education	2 March 2015	Emma Balchin, 01902 555269
Title and Summary of Decision			
Instrument of Government That the Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Learning, in consultation with the Director of Education, approves the proposed Instrument of Government for Castlecroft Primary School.			
Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Phil Page	Director of Education	2 March 2015	Emma Balchin, 01902 555269
Title and Summary of Decision			
Instrument of Government That the Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Learning, in consultation with the Director of Education, approves the proposed Instrument of Government for Springdale Junior School.			
Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Phil Page	Director of Education	2 March 2015	Emma Balchin, 01902 555269
Title and Summary of Decision			
Instrument of Government That the Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Learning, in consultation with the Director of Education, approves the proposed Instrument of Government for Fallings Park Primary School.			

2. People

None

3. Place

Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor John Reynolds	Service Director, City Environment	19 February 2015	Ric Bravery, 01902 552177
Title and Summary of Decision			
Office for Low Emission Vehicles: Go Ultra Low City Scheme – Expression of Interest That the Cabinet Member for City Services, in consultation with the Service Director, City Environment, approves the participation of Wolverhampton City Council in the submission of a proposal summary for the West Midlands metropolitan area and Warwickshire to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles for the Go Ultra Low City Scheme.			
Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Peter Bilson	Service Director, City Assets	4 March 2015	Marianne Page, 01902 551798
Title and Summary of Decision			
Broad Street Car Park – Bus Layover Space That the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Prosperity, in consultation with the Service Director, City Assets, approves the use of the former bus layover space adjacent to Broad Street car park as a temporary construction compound and, upon removal of the compound, approves the conversion of the former bus layover space into a short stay car park to be controlled and operated by Wolverhampton City Council.			
Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Peter Bilson	Service Director, City Assets	4 March 2015	Bob Willis, 01902 555790
Title and Summary of Decision			
Extension to the Service Level Agreement with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) for the provision of Urban Traffic Control (UTC) services That the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Prosperity, in consultation with the Strategic Director, Place, approves the extension of the SLA for the provision of UTC services to DMBC from the 1 April 2015 for a period of up to twelve months, subject to the implementation of the UTC merge phase two outcome.			
Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Peter Bilson	Service Director, City Assets	4 March 2015	Rowan Jones, 01902 554990
Title and Summary of Decision			
Reclassification of three bedroom maisonettes at The Haymarket That the Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration and Prosperity, in consultation with the Service Director, City Assets, reclassifies the properties at The Haymarket from three bedroom maisonettes to two bedroom maisonettes.			

Part 2 – Exempt Items

1. Corporate

None

2. People

None

3. Place

Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Andrew Johnson	Service Director, City Assets	2 March 2015	David Harris, 01902 555576
Title and Summary of Decision			
Land and Property Transactions That the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Service Director, City Assets, approves the completion of the transactions outlined in the report.			

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