

Meeting of the Cabinet

Minutes - 13 January 2016

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Roger Lawrence (Chair)
Cllr Peter Bilson (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Claire Darke
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Val Gibson
Cllr Andrew Johnson
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Sandra Samuels
Cllr Paul Sweet

Employees

Dereck Francis	Democratic Support Officer
Tim Johnson	Strategic Director - Place
Claire Nye	Chief Accountant
Kevin O'Keefe	Director of Governance
Linda Sanders	Strategic Director – People

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-----------------|--|
| 1 | Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Elias Mattu. |
| 2 | Declaration of interests
No declarations of interests were made. |
| 3 | Minutes of the previous meeting (9 December 2015)
Resolved:
That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 December 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. |
| 4 | Matters arising
There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting. |
| 5 | Housing Revenue Account business plan (including 2016/17 budget rents and service charges)
Cllr Peter Bilson presented an updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan for recommendation to Full Council for approval. The report also provided, as an integral part of that business plan, a proposed HRA budget for 2016/17, including proposed rents and service charges to take effect from 4 April 2016, and a proposed |

HRA capital programme for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20 also for recommendation to full Council.

In presenting the report Cllr Bilson pointed to a missing figure on Appendix A4. The figure of '200' (£200,000) for 'Right to Buy Social Mobility Fund' should be included in the 'total column' and the grand total for Appendix A4 should be corrected to '225,434' (£225,434,000).

Resolved:

1. That Full Council be recommended to:
 - a. Implement the 1% reduction in social housing rents in accordance with the Welfare Reform and Work Bill and to give 28 days' notice to all secure and introductory tenants of the rent reduction from 4 April 2016.
 - b. Adopt the business plan set out at appendix A to the report as the approved Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan including:
 - i. The revenue budget for 2016/17 at Appendix A3
 - ii. The capital programme for 2015/16 to 2019/20 at Appendix A4 (as now amended).
 - c. Agree the increases to garage rents and service charges set out in the appendices B1-B3 and formally notify tenants.
2. That it be noted that all Council dwelling rents would reduce by 1% in line with the proposals contained in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill.
3. That the housing rents and service charges consultation responses as outlined at Appendix C to the report be noted.
4. That proposals to meet the requirements of the Heat Network regulations 2014 for the district heating schemes at Heath Town and New Park Village be noted.
5. That the potential impact of the current Housing and Planning Bill on the HRA business Plan be noted.

6 **2016/17 budget and medium term financial strategy 2016/17 - 2018/19 - provisional local government finance settlement update**

Cllr Andrew Johnson presented a report on the main headlines from the 2016/17 provisional local government finance settlement, which the Government announced on 17 December 2015; and on an analysis of the impact of the announcement on the assumptions included in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Resolved:

1. That the Director of Finance notifies the Secretary of State that the Council intends to take up the 2% option to increase council tax to support Social Care.
2. That the outcome of the 2016/17 provisional local government finance settlement be noted.

3. That it be noted that the report to Cabinet on 24 February 2016 would reflect the outcome of budget consultation, which is due to be complete on 18 January 2016. This report would also include the outcome of the scrutiny process and the detailed budget work for 2016/17 including a review of all savings and the risks associated with their delivery.

7 Council taxbase and business rates (NDR) net rate yield 2016/17

Cllr Andrew Johnson asked Cabinet to set the estimates for the Wolverhampton Collection Fund for 2016/17, which the Council managed on behalf of local precepting bodies and central government.

Resolved:

1. That the Collection Fund Council Tax Base for 2016/17 be set at 60,405.94 Band D equivalents.
2. That the Collection Fund Business Rates, also referred to as Non-Domestic Rates (NDR), Net Rate Yield for 2016/17 be set at £78.6 million.
3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources in consultation with the Director of Finance to approve amendments to:
 - a. the final Business Rates net rate yield as required as a result of changes to the NNDR1 form (National Non-Domestic Rates return) by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) or data revisions and changes in projections;
 - b. the Council Tax Base as a result of any data revisions and changes in projections.

8 Collection Fund estimated outturn 2015/16

Cllr Andrew Johnson presented the report on the estimated outturn for Council Tax and Business Rates, also referred to as Non-Domestic Rates (NDR), transactions on the Collection Fund in 2015/16.

Resolved:

1. That the payments to the precepting authorities of their share of the Council Tax surplus in equal instalments be approved.

The estimated outturn in 2015/16 is a cumulative surplus of £2.6 million. Based on their proportion of the 2015/16 council tax bill, as approved by Council in March 2015 the amounts are as follows:

- City of Wolverhampton Council £2.3 million
 - West Midlands Police £179,000
 - West Midlands Fire Service £92,000
2. That the payments to central government and the precepting authority of their share of the Business Rates, also referred to as Non-Domestic Rates (NDR), deficit in equal instalments be approved.

The estimated outturn in 2015/16 is a cumulative deficit of £8.3 million. As prescribed by legislation the amounts are as follows:

- City of Wolverhampton Council £4.1 million
- Central Government £4.1 million
- West Midlands Fire Service £83,000

3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to confirm any final changes to the forecast outturn reflecting any further information received ahead of the statutory deadline of 31 January 2016.

9 **Local council tax reduction scheme**

Cllr Andrew Johnson asked Cabinet to approve that the Council maintain its existing local Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme for 2016/17 onwards. There was no longer any financial reason for the Council to make a revision to its local CTR scheme following the announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the proposed changes to Tax Credits would not proceed in 2016/17.

Resolved:

That the Council maintain the existing local Council Tax Reduction scheme for 2016/17 onwards.

10 **Universal Credit delivery partnership**

Cllr John Reynolds introduced the report on an overview of the Universal Credit Delivery Partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver Universal Support – delivered locally in preparation for the rollout of Universal Credit.

Resolved:

1. That the Council; enter into the Universal Credit Delivery Partnership with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver Universal Support – delivered locally.
2. That a budget of £59,000 funded through DWP grant to deliver universal support services be approved.
3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Economy, in consultation with the Service Director City Economy to commission Universal Support – delivered locally.
4. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Economy, in consultation with the Service Director City Economy for ongoing negotiations should demand for Universal Support – delivered locally exceed that anticipated by the DWP.

11 **Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy**

Cllr Roger Lawrence congratulated Cllr Sandra Samuels on being awarded the OBE in the Queen's New Year's Honours List. In response Cllr Samuels thanked him for his kind remarks and indicated that the award had been achieved with the support of her Cabinet colleagues.

Cllr Sandra Samuels asked Cabinet to endorse the city's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy (VAWG) 2016-19. The refreshed strategy built upon significant progress achieved from the 2012-15 strategy through close city-wide partnership working and developed work across three strands (processes, policy developments and partnership working).

Cllr Val Gibson welcomed the report and strategy which focused on developing a more systematic approach to identifying victims of violence at a much earlier point through work with schools and specialist support organisations; ensuring services are in place to respond to lower risk cases, avoiding escalation of risk; it would also raise awareness across frontline practitioners and targeted work with communities to challenge a culture of violence against women and girls.

Resolved:

1. That the city's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2016-19 be endorsed.
2. That it be noted that the strategy document would also be subject to formal approval by the Safer Wolverhampton Partnership Board.

12 **Playing pitch strategy and assessment report**

Cllr Sandra Samuels asked Cabinet to approve a playing pitch strategy (PPS) for the city. The strategy provided a strategic framework for the maintenance and improvement of existing outdoor sports pitches and ancillary facilities in the city area between 2015 and 2020. The vision was to 'provide a network of good quality outdoor sports provision to increase participation and promote a healthier lifestyle for all'.

Cllr Roger Lawrence reported that the Building Schools for the Future Programme led to investment in schools and investment in playing facilities for schools to use. However, where these schools have subsequently become academies, the Council's opportunities to ensure that the playing pitches are available for community had diminished. The Council would therefore need to encourage academies to allow community use of these facilities.

Resolved:

1. That the Playing Pitch Strategy be approved.
2. That the Playing Pitch Assessment Report be received and noted.

13 **Active travel strategy**

Cllr Peter Bilson presented the report on the development of an Active Travel Strategy for Wolverhampton, and asked Cabinet to adoption the strategy.

In addition to providing direction for decisions on active travel issues, the strategy would support the case for future bids to funding opportunities. Resources for this project had been secured from the Public Health Transformation Fund and supplemented by contribution from the Local Sustainable Travel Fund.

Resolved:

1. That the adoption and implementation of the Active Travel Strategy be approved.
2. That it be noted that implementation of the Active Travel Strategy had wide-ranging implications for future deployment of resources and decision-making.