

Meeting of the Council

Minutes - 20 July 2016

Attendance

Mayor Cllr Barry Findlay (Con)
Deputy Mayor Cllr Elias Mattu (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Ian Angus	Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal	Cllr Anwen Mustom
Cllr Harbans Bagri	Cllr Val Gibson	Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Harman Banger	Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre	Cllr Phil Page
Cllr Mary Bateman	Cllr Julie Hodgkiss	Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Philip Bateman	Cllr Keith Inston	Cllr John Rowley
Cllr Payal Bedi-Chadha	Cllr Jasbir Jaspal	Cllr Judith Rowley
Cllr Peter Bilson	Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal	Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Alan Bolshaw	Cllr Andrew Johnson	Cllr Sandra Samuels
Cllr Greg Brackenridge	Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur	Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Ian Brookfield	Cllr Welcome Koussoukama	Cllr Mak Singh
Cllr Paula Brookfield	Cllr Roger Lawrence	Cllr Tersaim Singh
Cllr Craig Collingswood	Cllr Linda Leach	Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Claire Darke	Cllr Hazel Malcolm	Cllr Martin Waite
Cllr Steve Evans	Cllr Lynne Moran	Cllr Daniel Warren
Cllr Val Evans	Cllr Anwen Muston	

Conservative

Cllr Christopher Haynes	Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Christine Mills	Cllr Andrew Wynne
Cllr Patricia Patten	Cllr Jonathan Yardley
Cllr Udey Singh	

Employees

Tracey Christie	Head of Legal
Peter Farrow	Head of Audit
Ian Fegan	Head of Communications
Dereck Francis	Democratic Support Officer
Tim Johnson	Strategic Director - Place
Kevin O'Keefe	Director of Governance
Colin Parr	Head of Governance
Linda Sanders	Strategic Director - People
Mark Taylor	Director of Finance

The proceedings opened with Prayers

1 **Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Ian Claymore, Arun Photay, Malcolm Gwinnett, Paul Singh and Paul Sweet.

2 **Declarations of interests**

No declarations of interests were made.

3 **Minutes of previous meeting - 18 May 2016**

The Mayor proposed, the Deputy Mayor seconded, and it was

Resolved:

That subject to an amendment to reflect that Cllr Louise Miles was in attendance at the meeting, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 May 2016, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

4 **Communications**

The Late Honorary Alderman George Howells

The Mayor announced that it was with great sadness that we learned of the death of Mr George Howells on Saturday 25 June. George was elected to the County Borough Council in 1969. He represented East Park Ward from 1973 until 1998. He also served twice as Mayor, the first time in 1985/6 and again in 1995/6. Together with the Mayoress he attended George's funeral service on Friday 15 July at Bushbury Crematorium. He extended the Council's deepest sympathies to George's family at this very sad time.

Jo Cox MP

The Mayor referred in sympathetic terms to the death of Jo Cox MP who was attacked in her constituency in West Yorkshire on 16 June.

Terror Attacks

The Mayor reported that he was also sad to announce the loss of more lives since the Council last met as a result of terror attacks around the world, this time in Istanbul, Orlando and Nice. He had sent a letter to his counterparts in the respective Countries conveying the Council's condolences.

Hate Crime

The Mayor added that there had also been a shocking attack on police officers in Dallas, where five officers were shot dead at a protest.

He was sure that everyone at the meeting would join him in condemning these atrocities which resulted in the death of so many people.

The meeting then stood in silent tribute of Honorary Alderman George Howells, Jo Cox MP and in remembering all the victims of the recent terror attacks and hate crime.

Hope Not Hate

On a more positive note, the Mayor stated that Wolverhampton was proud to be a city that respected and valued diversity. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes had no place in the city, region or country.

The City of Wolverhampton, condemn all forms of racism, xenophobia and all hate crimes unequivocally and stand firmly against those who wish to divide us. The City Council is working to ensure that statutory organisations and local communities are aware that they have our active support so that together we can prevent and tackle racism, xenophobia and hate crime wherever we find it.

The Council condemns any attack on our community and Wolverhampton Police have assured us that they are being extra vigilant in monitoring hate crimes. The Mayor requested that all residents pull together and support the city.

The Queen's Birthday Honours

The Mayor reported that the following people with connections to the city had received awards in the Queen's Birthday Honours in June:

- **Steve Morgan**, Chairman of Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club who was awarded a CBE for philanthropic services through the Morgan Foundation; and
- **Adrian Bowater**, who was awarded an MBE for services to Education.

The Mayor also said that he was delighted that the efforts of these two individuals, who have contributed so much to Wolverhampton over a great many years, had been recognised in this way.

On behalf of the residents of Wolverhampton, the Mayor added his congratulations to the many they would have already received on these awards, and he hoped that their efforts would inspire others.

VJ Day

The Mayor announced that the Central Branch of the City of Wolverhampton Royal British Legion would hold a service of remembrance at the Cenotaph, St Peter's Square, on 15 August starting at 11:30am. He hoped that as many Councillors as possible would be able to attend this important event.

Civic Events

The Mayor thanked all those who were able to attend the following important occasions in the civic calendar:

- Civic Sunday and Service of Thanksgiving to celebrate Her Majesty's 90th birthday on 12 June 2016.
- Armed Forces Day flag raising ceremony on 20 June 2016.
- Armed Forces Day parade on 25 June 2016.

5 Annual Scrutiny Report 2015 - 2016

Cllr Stephen Simkins presented the Annual Scrutiny Report 2015/16. He placed on record his thanks to all the contributors to the reviews and panel meetings that took place during the year. He also thanked Cabinet members for their contributions and

for taking on board the recommendations from the various scrutiny reviews and panels.

It was proposed by Cllr Stephen Simkins, seconded by Cllr Wendy Thompson and

Resolved:

That the Annual Scrutiny report 2015/16 be received.

6 Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report 2015-16

Cllr Craig Collingswood presented the Audit and Risk Committee Annual report 2015/16. He outlined the role of the Committee and highlighted some of the key developments by the Committee during the year. Cllr Collingswood also placed on record his thanks to the Vice-Chair to the Committee (Cllr Christine Mills) and to past and present members of the Committee over the last year for their contributions to work the Committee had achieved.

It was moved by Cllr Craig Collingswood, seconded by Cllr Christine Mills and

Resolved:

That the content of the 2015/16 Audit and Risk Committee annual report be approved.

7 Executive Business Report

The Council received a summary of executive business relating to the Care Leavers Charter.

Responding to a question from Cllr Hazel Malcolm, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (Cllr Val Gibson) shared with the Council the work taking place to support care leavers. She reported that Cabinet had agreed to sign up to the Department of Education's Care Leavers Charter. The Charter sets out seven promises and principles to care leavers and endorsed the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities in raising the expectations, aspirations and understanding of care leavers locally. Cllr Gibson undertook to arrange for the Cabinet report to be recirculated to Councillors for information.

8 Capital Budget Outturn

Cllr Andrew Johnson presented the report on the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programmes outturn position at the end of 2015/16, and an update on their financial performance as at quarter one of 2016/17. A revised General Fund and HRA capital programmes for the period 2016/17 to 2020/21 were also submitted for approval.

Cllr Andrew Johnson drew to Council's attention a report presented to Cabinet (Resources) Panel on the Civic Halls improvement capital scheme. During the first phase enabling works on the scheme it had been discovered that additional reinforcing of the foundations and other works would be required. This would increase the requirement on the General Fund capital programme by £2.6 million. Cabinet (Resources) Panel had recommended to Council that it increase the capital

programme provision by that amount. This would be funded through additional borrowing that was fully funded from additional net income from the Civic Halls.

Cllr Wendy Thompson reported that the Conservative Group had supported the initial proposal relating to the Civic Halls refurbishment as well as the Council taking the risks on the i10, which had both proved beneficial to the City. However, whilst recognising that improvement was needed to the Civic Halls and welcoming the grant from the Local Enterprise Partnership for the capital scheme, she asked for further information on the request to increase the capital programme provision for the Civic Halls improvement scheme. Cllr Andrew Johnson referred Cllr Thompson to a link contained within the report before Council. He also undertook to provide her with a background paper regarding the structural issues that had come to light since work commenced on the capital scheme.

It was moved by Cllr Andrew Johnson, seconded by Cllr Peter Bilson and

Resolved:

1. That the revised medium term General Fund capital programme of £275.2 million, an increase of £13.6 million from the previously approved programme, reflecting the latest projected expenditure for the medium term be approved.
2. That the revised medium term Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme of £249.5 million, an increase of £24.1 million from the previously approved programme be approved.
3. That the additional resources for two new and sixty two existing General Fund projects totalling £13.6 million and for nine existing HRA projects totalling £24.1 million be approved.
4. That the updated capital financial strategy relating to: the approval of future capital projects, the declaration of identified underspends and the use of capital receipts to either reduce the Council's need to borrow to fund the approved capital programme or to apply the receipts on revenue reform projects under the new capital flexibility arrangements be approved.

9 **Corporate Plan 2016 - 2019**

Cllr Roger Lawrence presented a new three year Corporate Plan for 2016-2019 which had been developed using a strong outcome based business planning approach. He responded to comments made by Cllr Wendy Thompson regarding particularly welcoming the priorities in the Corporate Plan relating to supporting businesses, and encouraging enterprise, challenging schools more to provide the best education; in supporting older people; and on improving critical skills.

It was moved by Cllr Roger Lawrence, seconded by Cllr Peter Bilson and

Resolved:

That the Council's Corporate Plan 2016-2019 be endorsed.

10 **Appointments during the Municipal Year**

Cllr Roger Lawrence presented the report on the creation of a Councillor Champion for Councillor Development and ICT.

Responding to a question from Cllr Wendy Thompson on the necessity for the Councillor Champion post, Cllr Roger Lawrence reported that Councillor development was an important area and Councillors are regularly receiving emails regarding e-learning packages. The old view that Councillors do not need training was now rejected and the continuous development of councillors was essential. He hoped that the Council recognised the important role this post would play.

It was moved by Cllr Roger Lawrence, seconded by Cllr Andrew Johnson and

Resolved:

That the appointment by the Leader of the Council, of a Councillor Champion for Councillor Development and ICT be noted.

11 **Council Efficiency Strategy and Four Year Settlement**

Cllr Andrew Johnson presented a report on a proposal to sign up to the four year Local Government Finance Settlement option announced by the Government in February 2016 by publishing an efficiency strategy which had to be approved by Full Council.

It was moved by Cllr Andrew Johnson, seconded by Cllr Roger Lawrence and

Resolved:

1. That the 2016/17 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2016/17 - 2019/20, approved by Council on 2 March 2016, forms the basis of the Council's Efficiency Strategy subject to any appropriate drafting amendments, in order to sign up to the four year settlement option announced by the Government in February 2016.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to approve the final four year settlement submission to the Secretary of State.
3. That it be noted that an updated Financial Plan and Efficiency Strategy would be presented to Cabinet in October, and to Council in November, and approval would be sought for publishing.

12 **Questions to Cabinet Members**

Question 1 - Forward Planning for Secondary School Places

Councillor Udey Singh asked the following question to Cllr Claire Darke (as Cabinet Member for Education):

“Could the Cabinet Member confirm how many secondary school places are estimated to be required in Wolverhampton in the next 5 years, and advise Council on what plans have been put enacted to ensure that all secondary school children are guaranteed a place over that period?”

Cllr Darke replied that it was projected that 430 year 7 places would need to be introduced across the next five years to accommodate projected demand. This equated to 2150 overall across the five years. The projection is subject to change due to factors outside the Council's control such as changes in Government policy, internal and external migration and any school openings or closures in neighbouring authorities.

She also replied that the Council's school place planning activities were informed by the Council's Primary School Organisation and Secondary Sufficiency Strategies, which were considered and approved by Cabinet earlier on today (20 July).

Cllr Udey Singh asked the following supplementary question to the Cabinet Member:

"Can the Cabinet Member guarantee that every child will have a place in a secondary school that is within one bus ride or within walking distance from their home"

Cllr Darke replied that the Council does its best to find places for all children within the City. Government funding cuts and changes to Government education strategy had impacted on the Council's ability to respond to school places but the Council was doing a very good job.

Question 2 - Use of the Mayoral Vehicles

Councillor Thompson asked the following question to Councillor Milkinder Jaspal (as Cabinet Member for Governance):

"Could the Cabinet Member indicate which Members of the Council – in terms of which office holders – may be driven, with chauffeur, in the Mayoral vehicles, and in what circumstances?"

Cllr Milkinder Jaspal replied that the Council had two mayoral vehicles. They were a corporate resource and are available for use by councillors and employees whilst on council business, such as attending out of city meetings. Priority is given to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for their mayoral duties. Use of the vehicles was monitored and he was sure that the vehicles provided value for money.

Cllr Thompson asked a supplementary question to the Cabinet Member for Governance:

"Will Cllr Milkinder Jaspal make the detail of who uses the mayoral vehicles on a weekly basis to the Conservative Leader's office?"

Cllr Milkinder Jaspal replied that the information could be provided.