

Meeting of the Council

Minutes - 1 February 2017

Attendance

Mayor Cllr Barry Findlay (Con)

Labour

Cllr Ian Angus	Cllr Val Gibson	Cllr Phil Page
Cllr Harbans Bagri	Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre	Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Harman Banger	Cllr Julie Hodgkiss	Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Mary Bateman	Cllr Keith Inston	Cllr John Rowley
Cllr Philip Bateman	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 Ian Claymore	Cllr Linda Leach	Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Craig Collingswood	Cllr Hazel Malcolm	Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Steve Evans	Cllr Louise Miles	Cllr Martin Waite
Cllr Val Evans	Cllr Lynne Moran	
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal	Cllr Peter O'Neill	

Conservative

Cllr Christopher Haynes	Cllr Udey Singh
Cllr Christine Mills	Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Paul Singh	Cllr Andrew Wynne

Employees

Tracey Christie	Head of Legal Services
Keith Ireland	Managing Director
Tim Johnson	Strategic Director Place
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services Manager
Julien Kramer	Director of Education
Kevin O'Keefe	Director of Governance
Colin Parr	Head of Governance
Laura Phillips	Strategic Business Manager
Philippa Salmon	Democratic Services Officer
Mark Taylor	Director of Finance

The proceedings opened with Prayers

Item No. Title

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Payal Bedi-Chadha, Claire Darke, Elias Mattu, Anwen Muston, Caroline Siarkiewicz, Daniel Warren, Pat Patten, Arun Photay, Jonathan Yardley and Malcolm Gwinnett.

2 Declarations of interest

The following Councillors declared the interests detailed below in respect of agenda item 6 Housing Revenue Account business plan (including 2017/18 budget rents and service charges).

Councillor	Interest	Reason
Ian Claymore	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Council tenant
Linda Leach	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Leaseholder
Peter O'Neil	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Council tenant
Rita Potter	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Member of the board of Wolverhampton Homes
Paul Singh	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Member of the board of Wolverhampton Homes
Tersaim Singh	Disclosable non-pecuniary	Member of the board of Wolverhampton Homes

3 Minutes of previous meeting

The Mayor proposed, the Leader seconded, and it was resolved:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 14 December 2016, be agreed as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.

4 Communications

1. The Baroness Heyhoe Flint OBE

The Mayor announced that it was with great sadness that we had learned of the death of, Baroness Heyhoe Flint OBE on the 18 January 2017. The Mayor extended the council's sincere condolences to the family.

The Leader and Councillor Wendy Thompson paid tribute to Baroness Heyhoe Flint OBE.

2. Former Mayoress Sandra Griffin

The Mayor announced that it was with great sadness that we had learned of the death of, *Sandra Griffin 11 January 2017*. The Mayor extended the council's sincere condolences to the family. The Leader paid tribute to Sandra Griffin.

The Council stood in silent tribute to Baroness Heyhoe Flint OBE and Sandra Griffin.

3. The Queen's New Year's Honours

The Mayor congratulated Mrs Davinder Kaur (Chief Executive Officer, SWEDA and Chair, Sandwell Consortium), of Fallings Park, Wolverhampton who received recognition in the Queen's New Year's Honours for services to Women's Enterprise and the community in Sandwell. The Mayor had written to Mrs Kaur expressing the Council's congratulations on her well-deserved award.

4. Welcome to Councillor Clyde Loakes

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Clyde Loakes, Deputy Leader of the London Borough of Waltham Forest. Councillor Clyde Loakes was a member of the peer review team visiting Wolverhampton this week.

5. The Lord-Lieutenant for the West Midlands

The Mayor advised the Prime Minister announced on 3 January that the Queen had asked Mr John Crabtree OBE to become her representative as the Lord-Lieutenant for the West Midlands. Mr Crabtree took up the position with immediate effect. The Mayor had written to the Lord-Lieutenant on behalf of the City Council to extend the Council's sincere congratulations.

6. 150 Prince Albert, Celebrating Wolverhampton

The Mayor advised a commemorative plaque was fitted on the 'Man on the 'Oss' statue on the 10 January 2017, following the visit of HRH the Duke of Gloucester on the 23 November to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Queen Victoria's visit to Wolverhampton.

5 State of the City Address

The Leader of the Council delivered his state of the City address. He highlighted the following issues:

- That over the last 12 months there had been real progress in the pace of transformation and a difference was being made to the people of the City.
- There would be improved transport links with the extension of the metro line to the railway station and the HS2 connectivity package to the region.
- The City centre would offer an enhanced retail offer with the refurbishment of the Mander Centre and the markets relocating to southside. The importance and cultural heritage of the Town Centres in Bilston, Wednesfield and Tettenhall was also recognised.
- The culture offer had also been enhanced due to the refurbishment of the Civic Halls and the Grand Theatre.
- Further growth opportunities would be presented with the western extension of i54 and development of Westside.
- Unemployment was falling in the City but more needed to be done to offer jobs to local people, it was anticipated the following initiatives would help to

reduce unemployment further through Wolverhampton workbox, the City Learning Quarter and Wolves@Work.

- The achievement of Children's Services in relation to safeguarding children through early interventions and reducing the number of Looked after Children was recognised.
- In future the demand for adult social care provision would increase and this would need to be managed through restricted funding.
- There had been significant improvements in the statistical data of public health and further work would be undertaken to improve this further.
- Housing was critical for the growth of the City and would help deliver further jobs. Further work needed to be undertaken on homelessness and a holistic approach was required.
- The contribution of partners was also recognised.
- The Council faced huge challenges but was better placed to deliver on change. The City had become a City on the move, a City on the make, a City to be proud of.

Councillor Wendy Thompson stated that progress had been made in the past five years but not historically under the Labour Party. She welcomed the progress made in certain areas however emphasised that more needed to be done to address the housing and employment issue. She highlighted the importance of the pace and rate of change in certain areas.

The Leader welcomed the comments, he did not agree with the historical analysis but acknowledged that the pace of change needed to be picked up and that the Council was in a better place to deliver on the improvements required in housing, employment and homelessness. The Health and Wellbeing Board would also ensure health services meet the needs of the population.

6 **Housing Revenue Account business plan (including 2017/18 budget rents and service charges)**

Councillor Peter Bilson presented a report on the updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan. The report also provided, as an integral part of that business plan, a proposed HRA budget for 2017/18, including proposed rents and service charges to take effect from 3 April 2017, and a proposed HRA capital programme for the period 2017/18 to 2020/21.

Councillor Peter Bilson proposed and Councillor Andrew Johnson seconded the recommendations.

Councillor Wendy Thompson stated the tenants would be grateful for the 1% reduction in social housing and there were no issues with the financial implications. She queried whether the Council was exploring the option of developing other traded companies for instance in education or other areas.

Councillor Andrew Johnson responded that the Council was constantly looking at trading venture opportunities which would benefit the residents of Wolverhampton. The Council had already set up a number of traded companies such as WV living and Yoo Recruit and the Council was currently in the process of exploring opportunities in an energy company, within education and other small initiatives.

Resolved:

1. That the 1% reduction in social housing rents be implemented in accordance with the Welfare Reform and Work Act and to give 28 days' notice to all secure and introductory tenants of the rent reduction from the 3 April 2017.
2. That the business plan be adopted as set out at appendix A within the report, as the approved Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan including;
 - a) The revenue budget for 2017/18 at Appendix A3 within the report;
 - b) The capital programme for 2017/18 to 2020/21 at Appendix A4 within the report, including the increased new build programme.
3. That the rates for garage rents and service charges be agreed as set out in appendices B1-B3 within the report and formally notify tenants.
4. That it be agreed from April 2017 all new tenancies can start on any day of the week to reduce void times, increase rental income and protect properties from potential anti-social behaviour.

7 Municipal Calendar of Meetings

Councillor Roger Lawrence presented the proposed timetable for Council and committee meetings for the next Council Year (2017-2018).

Councillor Roger Lawrence proposed and Councillor Andrew Johnson seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

That the City of Wolverhampton Council Calendar of Meetings for 2017-2018 be agreed.

8 School Standards - current overview

In the absence of Councillor Claire Darke, Councillor John Reynolds presented a report on of the current standards of schools and education outcomes across the City. He went on to provide an overview of headline data.

The Council was invited to scrutinise the contents of the report and make any suggestions or recommendations that strengthen the council's ability to carry out its functions to monitor the performance of schools in its area and ensure that where improvements were necessary, these were carried out effectively and expeditiously.

Councillor Paul Singh noted that schools were improving however sought clarification on why schools were still not meeting the optimum standard and how the issue would be addressed.

Councillor Wendy Thompson sought clarification on why the figure at 3.21 within the report was a deficit figure.

Councillor Udey Singh commented that the results were poor for key stage 3 and 4 and asked at what point poverty set in.

Councillor Philip Bateman highlighted that Special Schools and Nursery Schools within the City were 100% outstanding/good and that this should not be overlooked.

Councillor Peter Bilson responded the Council was third in the region and no one was in the 100% bracket range and that the Council should be proud of the schools and teachers. The Council was performing better than Solihull Council.

Councillor John Reynolds added the figure at 3.21 was a relative figure with the average being zero. He highlighted that Ofsted noted the support provided by Wolverhampton as outstanding. He went on to add the poverty levels had increased under the Conservative government.

Resolved:

That the report on schools standards – current overview be noted.

9 **Appointment of Local Returning Officer for the West Midlands Mayoral Election**

Councillor Roger Lawrence presented a report to propose the appointment of a Local Returning Officer for the City of Wolverhampton for the West Midlands Combined Authority election on 4 May. It also outlined the arrangements for polling stations for that election.

Councillor Roger Lawrence proposed and Councillor Andrew Johnson seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the Managing Director be appointed as the Local Returning Officer for the City of Wolverhampton for the West Midlands Combined Authority election on the 4 May 2017.
2. That authority be delegated to the Local Returning Officer, following consultation with the Leader, Cabinet Member for Resources and Leader of the Opposition to make any operational changes to polling stations.
3. That it be noted, polling stations for the Mayoral election would be unchanged from those used at the 2016 PCC/City election and EU Referendum with the exception that the St Peter's station situated at the university would be reinstated at the Register Office (Civic Centre).
4. That it be noted, the West Midlands Combined Authority had agreed that no Local Returning Officer should pay any election employee less than the voluntary living wage.

10 Questions to Cabinet Members

Councillor Udey Singh asked the Cabinet Member for Education the following question:

The Progress 8 measure was introduced by the Government to encourage schools to offer a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 4, and was based upon students' progress across English, Mathematics, and six other subjects from a list which includes the English Baccalaureate range of subjects and other approved disciplines. Can the Cabinet Member advise Council of the number of academies and LEA maintained schools in Wolverhampton which score below or well below the national average scores when using the Progress 8 measure?

Councillor John Reynolds responded in the absence of Councillor Claire Darke. A new secondary school accountability system had been implemented in 2016. The headline accountability measures for schools from 2016 were: Attainment 8, Progress 8, Attainment in English and Maths (A*- C), and English Baccalaureate (EBacc) entry and achievement.

- Because of the changes set out above, figures for 2016 were not comparable to those for earlier years
- In addition, only five of our 19 secondary schools were maintained by the Local Authority

Progress 8 aimed to capture the progress a pupil made from the end of key stage 2 to the end of key stage 4. It compared pupils' achievement to their Attainment 8 score, with the average Attainment 8 score of all pupils nationally who had a similar starting point (or 'prior attainment'), calculated using assessment results from the end of primary school. Progress 8 was a relative measure; therefore, the national average Progress 8 score for mainstream schools was zero.

- Average progress for Wolverhampton pupils between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 was -0.14 Wolverhampton's national position was 114th out of 152 Local Authorities. Wolverhampton was seventh against our statistical neighbours and fourth in the region.

DfE's definition of floor standards - this year for the first-time floor standards were calculated based on Progress 8 scores. The guidance stated that: "In 2016, a school would be below the floor standard if its Progress 8 score was below -0.5, and the upper band of the 95% confidence interval was below zero."

The following five schools were below the government definition for the 2015/2016 academic year:

	P8	Interval Upper
Wednesfield High Specialist Engineering Academy	-0.52	-0.34
North East Wolverhampton Academy	-0.6	-0.42
Moreton Community School	-0.62	-0.44
St Matthias School	-0.83	-0.6
The King's Church of England School	-0.91	-0.69

Of the five schools listed above:

- Two schools were academies for which the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) was responsible for interventions into these schools and the School Standards Service (led by Alex Jones – Assistant Director of Education) was working closely with the RSC to ensure that appropriate challenge was delivered to the two schools.
- Three schools were maintained by the Council. These schools were being challenged and supported by the School Improvement Team in line with the interventions outlined in the School Improvement Strategy 2016.

Councillor Udey Singh had no supplementary question.

Councillor Paul Singh asked the Cabinet Member for Governance the following question:

Can the Cabinet Member advice Council on the number of interim appointees and those on fixed contracts holding senior management positions within the authority at the moment at Grade 9 or above (annual salary starting at £48,070)?

Councillor Milkinder Jaspal responded that there were currently 59 interims of which 12 were appointed against permanent positions. 14 officers were appointed on fixed term contracts and the figures varied week by week.

Councillor Paul Singh asked a supplementary question:

Can the Cabinet Member advice on the Council definition of interim.

Councillor Milkinder Jaspal responded that an interim was a short term appointment which varied from one month to twelve months. The length of the appointment varied and depended on the role undertaken. The Council was undergoing a radical change of services and therefore a flexible workforce was required to deliver in line with the changing demands.

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the Cabinet Member for City Economy the following question:

“In the light of various complaints regarding the new traffic flow system serving Wolverhampton Mainline Railway Station, can the Cabinet Member advice Council

on what measures were being considered to solve problems of road safety and convenience arising from the width of the pavements adjacent to the new taxi ranks and other restrictions of space for traffic flow to the station, and can he indicate a timescale for when these issues were likely to be addressed?"

Councillor John Reynolds responded that progress that had been made through the £132m Wolverhampton Interchange Programme. The programme was delivering major improvements at a key gateway into the City and the opening of the Multi Storey Car Park on the 8 January was the latest signal to residents and visitors to the City of the significant improvements that were being made and that the Council was making things happen.

He clarified that the Multi-storey car park and the "run –round" area including the taxi rank and new station drop-off area was the responsibility of Network Rail, not the Council, with operational responsibility falling to the Station Franchise Operator – Virgin Trains. The design of the multi-storey car park extension and the run-round areas were also approved by Network Rail – and neither Network Rail nor Virgin Trains had raised any significant concerns with the Council about road safety, restrictions of space or traffic flow in this area.

He added, the City of Wolverhampton Council was one of several partners in the development of the Interchange and therefore Councillor John Reynolds was responding to the question on behalf of the development partnership as a whole.

The layout had been designed in accordance with Department for Transport guidelines and was intentionally designed to keep traffic speeds low, increasing safety on the site. The site had also been tested using "swept path" analysis software as part of the design process, with the results being approved by both the Council and Network Rail.

The new run-round area provided additional waiting space for taxis and members of the public. The old forecourt had space for 18 short stay spaces, plus two disabled parking bays. The new area had 16 short stay spaces, ten kiss and ride spaces and two disabled bays, a total of eight extra spaces. In addition, members of the public can also park for free for up to 20 minutes in the Multi-Storey Car Park.

For taxi drivers, there were 13 taxi spaces previously, with a further ten spaces in off-site feeder ranks. The new area had 13 taxi spaces (with a further three spaces to be provided once the Metro Alliance undertake work to relocate the Network Rail overhead gantry) and a further 16 spaces would be provided on Bailey Street, once Cornhill was re-opened a total of nine extra spaces for taxi drivers.

As expected with a major development, a snagging list was being worked on with the contractors Balfour Beatty, and it was also expected that the link to Sun Street would be re-opened to the public in early February.

The traffic flow had been monitored and the phasing of traffic lights had been adjusted in peak periods, however it was anticipated that the re-opening of access to Sun Street would improve traffic flow as residents then had direct access to Wednesfield Road and beyond.

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the following supplementary question:

Can the Cabinet Member advice what road safety mechanism would be put in place to address the complaints received and that Network Rail/Virgin be requested to address the traffic flow in Cornwall Street?

Councillor John Reynolds responded that passengers were requested to embark on the pavement side and not road side and that traffic flow was being monitored.