

Time 5.30 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Executive

Venue Committee Room 3 - Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

Membership

Chair Cllr Louise Miles (Lab)

Vice-chair Cllr Roger Lawrence (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Peter Bilson

Cllr Steve Evans

Cllr Val Gibson

Cllr Hazel Malcolm

Cllr Lynne Moran

Cllr John Reynolds

Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE

Cllr Paul Sweet

Quorum for this meeting is five Councillors.

Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the Democratic Services team:

Contact Dereck Francis, Democratic Services

Tel/Email 01902 555835 or dereck.francis@wolverhampton.gov.uk

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Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

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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 interests**
- 3 **Minutes of the previous meeting - 4 September 2018** (Pages 5 - 8)
[To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record]
- 4 **Matters arising**
[To consider any matters arising from the minutes]

DECISION ITEMS (AMBER - DELEGATED TO THE CABINET (RESOURCES) PANEL)

- 5 **Council Tax Charges on Empty Properties and Second Homes Policy** (Pages 9 - 24)
[To approve amendments to the policy for council tax charges on long term empty properties and second homes]
- 6 **Schedule of Individual Executive Decision Notices** (Pages 25 - 30)
[To note the summary of open and exempt individual executive decisions approved by cabinet members following consultation with relevant employees]
- 7 **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

- 8 **2 October 2018 - Procurement - Award of Contracts for Works, Goods and Services** (Pages 31 - 72)
[To approve the award of contracts for works, goods and services]
- Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) Para (3)

9

**Black Country and South Staffordshire Plan
Reviews - Call for Sites Submission (Pages 73 - 90)**

[To approve the submission of a number of council owned sites to be considered for removal from the green belt for housing development through the Black Country Core Strategy review]

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) Para (3)

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CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet (Resources) Panel Minutes - 4 September 2018
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Attendance

Members of the Cabinet (Resources) Panel

Cllr Louise Miles (Chair)
Cllr Peter Bilson
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Hazel Malcolm
Cllr Lynne Moran
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE

Employees

Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer
Tim Johnson	Managing Director
Claire Nye	Director of Finance
Kevin O'Keefe	Director of Governance
David Watts	Director of Adult Services

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Val Gibson, Roger Lawrence and Paul Sweet.

- 2 **Declarations of interests**
No declarations of interests were made.

- 3 **Minutes of the previous meeting - 24 July 2018**
Resolved:
 That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July 2018 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 Schedule of Individual Executive Decision Notices

Resolved:

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

6 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 item of business as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within the paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Part 2 - exempt items, closed to press and public

7 4 September 2018 - Procurement - Award of Contracts for Works, Goods and Services

The Panel considered proposals for the award of contracts for works, goods and services. An addendum to the report was tabled relating to a contract variation for the provision of Corporate Security Services.

Resolved:

1. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing, in consultation with the Strategic Director for Place, to approve the award of a contract for Supply of Milk, Bread and Dairy Products when the evaluation process is complete.
2. That Lot 1 of the contract with BBP Security of 1st Floor, St Peters House, Nr 4 Exchange Street, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV1 1TS for Corporate Security Contract – Lot 1 – Key Holding & Alarms be varied from 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 with a variation value of £83,333.
3. That Lot 2 of the contract with Cougar Monitoring Ltd of Cougar House, SapCote Trading Centre, Powke Lane, Cradley Heath. B64 5QR for Corporate Security Contract – Lot 2 – Manned Guards be varied from 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 with a variation value of £83,333.
4. That Lot 3 of the contract with BBP Security of 1st Floor, St Peters House, Nr 4 Exchange Street, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV1 1TS for Corporate Security Contract – Lot 3 – Event Management Security be varied from 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019 with a variation value of £83,333.
5. That the contract for Internet Services for Schools be awarded to JISC Services Limited of One Castle Park, Tower Hill, Bristol, BS2 0JA for a duration of five years from 5 September 2018 to 4 September 2023 for a total contract value of £214,707.
6. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Commercial Services, to approve the award of a contract for Microsoft Dynamics Citizen Self-serve when the evaluation process is complete.

7. That the contract for Springvale School Expansion Project Management and Design be awarded to Faithful and Gould Limited of Woodcote Grove, Ashley Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5BW for a duration of 18 months from 10 September 2018 to 9 January 2020 for a total contract value of £163,890.
8. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Adults, in consultation with the Strategic Director for People, to approve the award of contracts for Mental Health Assessors (MHA) undertaking Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Assessments (DoLS) when the evaluation process is complete.
9. That the Director of Governance be authorised to execute contracts in respect of the above as required.

8 **City East Gateway A454 Phase 1 and 2 Improvement Options**

Councillor Steve Evans presented the report on options to improve network conditions, improve journey time reliability for all modes and enhance walking and cycling facilities along the Willenhall Road (A454) corridor. The corridor formed the eastern gateway to the City from the M6 at J10, Walsall and the wider West Midlands. Approval in principle was sought to undertake public consultation on identified projects.

Resolved:

1. That the approach, of quantified problem assessment followed by an options appraisal, taken to identify potential options to improve the Willenhall Road transport corridor and the principle of improvements to the corridor be endorsed.
2. That the identified projects be approved in principle for public consultation and that a report be submitted in January 2019 on the outcome of the consultation to establish if a project should be taken forward.
3. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director for Place to undertake initial discussions with potentially affected property owners to agree Heads of Terms for acquisition should the project subsequently be approved for implementation.
4. That the treatment of Japanese Knotweed that had been found on Council owned land at Hickman Avenue that may be affected by any works undertaken be approved.

9 **Procurement Update PP-18002 - Small Sites Newbuild Council Housing Phase Four**

Councillor Peter Bilson presented the report that requested approval to a virement of £0.5 million from the Housing Revenue Account Capital Budget for the New Build Programme to fund Award of Contract for the construction of 35 new council houses across seven sites in the city.

Resolved:

1. That a virement of £0.5 million from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Budget for the New Build Programme to increase the HRA Capital Budget for Small Sites Phase Four to £4.5 million be approved.

2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing in consultation with the Service Director City Housing and the Director of Finance, to approve agreements including deed of covenants, collateral warranties, assignments and such other ancillary agreements, including capital variations as may be deemed necessary to facilitate the above developments.

10

Land and Property Transactions - Corporate Landlord (CRP 007)

Councillor Peter Bilson presented the report that sought approval to declare land at Hare Street, Bilston surplus to the Council's requirements and to approve its disposal. The proposal would realise a capital receipt and reduce an ongoing maintenance liability. It would also enable a business within Wolverhampton to expand and increase the efficiency of its operations.

Resolved:

1. That land at Hare Street, Bilston be declared surplus to the Council's requirements.
2. That the disposal of land at Hare Street, Bilston to the adjoining landowner following the successful stopping up of the public highway be approved.
3. That the Council enter into any required agreements to facilitate the disposal.

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet (Resources) Panel 2 October 2018
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Report title	Council tax charges on empty properties and second homes policy	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Louise Miles Resources	
Corporate Plan priority	Confident Capable Council	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable Director	Claire Nye, Finance	
Originating service	Revenues and Benefits	
Accountable employee	Sue Martin	Head of Revenues and Benefits
	Tel	01902 554772
	Email	Sue.martin@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Directorate Leadership Team	17 September 2018
	Strategic Executive Board	18 September 2018

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Approve an increase in the amount of council tax premium charged for long-term empty properties with effect from 1 April 2019, subject to permissive legislation being finalised and the outcome of consultation.
2. Approve an amendment of the Council Tax Discretionary Relief policy with effect from 1 April 2019 to reduce or remove the empty property premium in certain cases.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To seek approval to increase the council tax premium charged for long-term empty properties with effect from 1 April 2019. The revised policy is included as appendix 1.
- 1.2 To seek approval to amend the council tax discretionary relief policy with effect from 1 April 2019 to reduce or remove the empty property premium in certain cases. The revised policy is included as appendix 2.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Councils have been given discretion to alter the amount of council tax payable on empty properties since 1 April 2013. A local discretionary policy was agreed by Cabinet on 23 January 2013 which applied a premium equal to 50% of the liability on any property left empty for two years or more (subject to statutory exemptions).
- 2.2 In the Spring 2017 budget, the Chancellor announced an intention to give councils the discretion to increase the premium to 100% of the liability from 1 April 2019. Primary legislation is required.
- 2.3 The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Bill is progressing through Parliament and the House of Lords has proposed an amendment to give councils the discretion to increase the premium further to incentivise owners to bring long term empty homes back into use.

3.0 Impact of the current policy

- 3.1 In the last five years, £1.2 million has been charged in long term empty property premium. The amount per year has been broadly consistent, suggesting that the level of charge has not really influenced behaviour by encouraging properties back into use any more quickly.
- 3.2 The following table shows the amount charged in respect of each year to 31 March 2018.

Year	Council owned £,000	Wolverhampton Homes £,000	Other £,000	Total £,000
2013	6	23	208	237
2014	4	15	214	233
2015	3	10	214	223
2016	6	7	217	230
2017	4	1	227	232
Total	23	56	1,080	1,172

3.3 The following table contains further detail about distribution of the premium across the City:

Ward	Average days empty	Number of properties charged	Continuously empty since 01/04/2013
Bilston East Ward	489	48	2
Bilston North Ward	531	60	4
Blakenhall Ward	559	104	10
Bushbury South & Low Hill Ward	630	86	10
Bushbury Ward	529	35	3
East Park Ward	481	48	2
Ettingshall Ward	554	96	8
Fallings Park Ward	685	28	2
Graiseley Ward	581	122	12
Heath Town Ward	387	141	2
Merry Hill Ward	496	41	3
Oxley Ward	516	37	1
Park Ward	528	115	9
Penn Ward	613	63	8
Spring Vale Ward	441	53	4
St Peters Ward	613	126	7
Tettenhall Regis Ward	467	60	5
Tettenhall Wightwick Ward	519	46	5
Wednesfield North Ward	431	19	1
Wednesfield South Ward	539	42	3
Total	532	1370	101

4.0 Exemptions from the empty property premium

4.1 To be classed as empty a property must be unoccupied and unfurnished.

4.2 There are statutory exemptions where unoccupied properties are exempt from empty property charges regardless of whether they are empty. These include situations where:

- The person has gone to live in a care home
- The person has died (exempt for six months after probate granted)
- The person is in prison
- The person is living elsewhere to receive care
- The property has been repossessed.

5.0 Proposed changes

- 5.1 It is proposed that charges are increased in line with The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Bill. As currently drafted and amended this would mean additional charges as follows:

	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022 onwards
Empty up to 2 years	0%	0%	0%	0%
Empty for 2 to 5 years	50%	100%	100%	100%
Empty for 5-10 years	50%	100%	200%	200%
10 years or more	50%	100%	200%	300%

- 5.2 The proposal will be included in the annual budget consultation due to start in October.

6.0 Exceptions to the empty property premium

- 6.1 The local discretionary relief policy provides support for customers who are suffering hardship or other exceptional circumstances affecting their ability to pay council tax. Where a customer is having trouble selling a property, payment of council tax can be deferred until the sale and in some cases the empty property premium will be waived.
- 6.2 There are however some rare occasions where it may be appropriate to reduce or waive the premium that are not currently covered by the discretionary relief policy. It is proposed that the policy is amended to allow consideration where a property already attracts the premium and is purchased by someone intending to live there but unable to do so immediately due to its condition.

7.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 7.1 Option 1 - no change to existing policy. There is little evidence to suggest that the existing policy has encouraged owners to bring properties into use and have a positive impact on the national housing shortage
- 7.2 Option 2 – Increase to 100% then retain. It is difficult to predict the change in behaviour by increasing the charges. Many property owners are accustomed to paying the existing premium and some will adjust to the increased charges as they are choosing to keep the properties empty.

8.0 Reasons for decision:

- 8.1 There is a shortage of homes both locally and nationally. Through charging the maximum permitted by the legislation owners of empty properties are likely to bring empty properties back into use more quickly than under the current charges.
- 8.2 A review of empty properties is being carried out and a new City Empty Homes Strategy is being developed linked to work with Empty Dwellings Orders. The Director of Housing is developing a new service model involving wider partnership working and incentives to bring properties back into use.
- 8.3 The council tax discretionary relief policy provides support for customers who are suffering hardship or other exceptional circumstances affecting their ability to pay council tax. An amendment is recommended to reduce the premium where new owners of long term empty properties have purchased properties to live in themselves but first need to carry out major repair works to make them habitable.

9.0 Financial implications

- 9.1 Increasing the premium to the levels expected to be permitted could generate additional annual income in the region of £155,000 for 2019-2020 through to £345,000 in 2021-2022. This takes into account the potential for an effect on behaviour and a prudent allowance for collection rate. The projected additional income of £155,000 for 2019-2020 has been included the Council's approved Medium Term Financial Strategy.
[MH/21092018/E]

10.0 Legal implications

- 10.1 The legal provision to charge council tax on empty properties is contained within the Local Government Act 1992 and its associated regulations. The maximum permitted premium on empty properties that have been empty for two years or more is 50%.
- 10.2 The Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Bill is progressing through Parliament and the House of Lords has proposed an amendment to give councils the discretion to increase the premium further to incentivise owners to bring long term empty homes back into use. Once enacted the Council will have the legal right to increase the charges.
- 10.3 The provision to reduce or waive council tax charges is contained within section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
[RB/06092018/F]

11.0 Equalities implications

11.1 Equalities screening has been carried out and there are unlikely to be any adverse impacts in the three key areas.

12.0 Environmental implications

12.1 There are no environmental implications.

13.0 Human resources implications

13.1 There are no human resources implications.

14.0 Corporate landlord implications

14.1 There will be implications for the Council's property portfolio if the Council owns any domestic properties that are empty long term.

15.0 Appendices

15.1 Appendix 1 Council Tax Charges on Empty Properties and Second Homes Policy

15.2 Appendix 2 Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy

16.0 Schedule of background papers

16.1 [Cabinet 23/01/2013 - Agenda Item 5b - Council Tax Base and NNDR Net Rate Yield 2013/14](#)

16.2 [Cabinet \(Resources\) Panel 11/11/2014 - Agenda Item 6 - Technical Reforms of Council Tax - Review of Charges for Empty Properties and Second Homes](#)

City of Wolverhampton Council

Council Tax Charges on Empty Properties and Second Homes Policy

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 Purpose and principles of the policy**
- 3 Charges to be levied**
- 4 Exceptions to the empty property premium**
- 5 Hardship**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Local Government Finance Act 1992 and associated regulations sets out the mechanism for levying council tax on domestic properties.
- 1.2 The regulations allow Councils some discretion in setting the level of council tax charged in respect of unoccupied properties and second homes.

2 Purpose and principles of the policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is set out the charges to be levied in respect of empty unoccupied properties and second homes in relation to the Council’s discretionary powers.
- 2.2 This policy also sets out guidelines to be applied when deciding whether an exception to applying the empty property premium may be considered.

3 Charges to be levied

- 3.1 The Council has resolved to charge council tax empty properties and second homes as follows:

With effect from 01 April 2016

Properties empty and unoccupied for up to 2 years	0% discount (full charge)
Furnished properties and second homes	0% discount (full charge)
Properties empty and unoccupied for 2 years or more	150% charge (includes 50% empty property premium)

With effect from 01 April 2019

Properties empty and unoccupied for up to 2 years	0% discount (full charge)
Furnished properties and second homes	0% discount (full charge)
Properties empty and unoccupied for 2 years or more	200% charge (includes 100% empty property premium)

With effect from 01 April 2020

Properties empty and unoccupied for up to 2 years	0% discount (full charge)
Furnished properties and second homes	0% discount (full charge)
Properties empty and unoccupied for 2-5 years	200% charge (includes 100% empty property premium)

Properties empty and unoccupied for 5 years or more	300% charge (includes 200% empty property premium)
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With effect from 01 April 2021

Properties empty and unoccupied for up to 2 years	0% discount (full charge)
Furnished properties and second homes	0% discount (full charge)
Properties empty and unoccupied for 2-5 years	200% charge (includes 100% empty property premium)
Properties empty and unoccupied for 5-10 years	300% charge (includes 200% empty property premium)
Properties empty and unoccupied for more than 10 years	400% charge (includes 300% empty property premium)

- 3.2 Any periods of occupation of six weeks or less will be disregarded when considering how long a property has been empty. Periods of occupation for six weeks or less will not give rise to a further period of 21 days discount or start a new period of two years before charging the empty homes premium.

4 Exceptions to the empty property premium

- 4.1 The Council will consider waiving the premium for applicants who meet the qualifying criteria as specified in this policy.
- 4.2 The Council will treat all applications on their individual merits and, through these guidelines, will consider granting full or partial exemptions from the empty property premium in the following circumstances:
- Where the owner can clearly demonstrate continuous, ongoing and realistic efforts to sell or let their property over the last two years since it became empty
 - Where the owner is experiencing particular legal or technical issues which is preventing the sale or letting of the property
 - Where the owner is in negotiation with the Council with a genuine view to letting the property under the Council's scheme(s).
 - With effect from 1 April 2019, where the property had been empty for two years or more and the new owner needs to carry out major repairs before they move in.
- 4.3 All applications for exceptions to be made to the empty property premium will be considered under the Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy developed under Section 13a Local Government Finance Act 1992. Details of the policy are available on request.

5 Hardship

- 5.1 Any person who believes they are suffering financial hardship due to exceptional circumstances may make an application for relief from the charges under the Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy under Sections 13a Local Government Finance Act 1992. Details of the policy are available on request.

City of Wolverhampton Council

Council Tax Discretionary Discount Policy

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Purpose and Principles of the Policy**
- 3. Awarding a Discount**
- 4. Application Process**
- 5. Appeal Process**
- 6. Fraud**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides councils with discretion to grant a discount in individual cases or to a prescribed classification of cases. The discount can be anything up to 100% of the council tax bill and is met from Council resources.
- 1.2 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 abolished the national council tax benefit scheme and councils were given powers to develop their own schemes for council tax reduction from 01 April 2013.
- 1.3 The Wolverhampton Council Tax Reduction Scheme does not award full support with council tax liability to anyone of working age. As a consequence some households in Wolverhampton may be experiencing extra difficulty in meeting their new or increased liability.
- 1.4 In the event of any future revisions that make the scheme less generous, the council has a duty to consider transitional protection. Individuals who are identified as in need of transitional protection will be considered for a discount under this policy.
- 1.5 This document sets out the Council's framework for granting a discount to customers experiencing hardship for any reason.

2 Purpose and Principles of the Policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to assist those people experiencing hardship either as a result of the introduction of, or revisions to, the council tax reduction scheme or for any other reason. It is expected that a discount will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.2 This policy aims to provide financial assistance where the customer is the victim of unusual and significant misfortune. A consideration would be whether the situation is of such an unusual nature and have such an impact on the customer that any reasonable taxpayer would accept them being allowed relief to reduce their council tax e.g. where an area is subjected to unexpected flooding.
- 2.3 This policy also aims to support people to meet their council tax liability where they are able to demonstrate exceptional hardship. The test of hardship will be determined by the applicant's individual circumstances and financial ability to make payment.
- 2.4 Each application will be considered on its own merits.
- 2.5 Where appropriate, discounts will complement other support mechanisms for example debt management, money/budgeting advice, maximising benefit, other discretionary support available for other purposes (e.g. Discretionary Housing Payments, Local Discretionary Grant Scheme awards) or referrals to specialist advice services.

Section 3: Awarding a Discount

- 3.1 A discount will be considered to meet some or all of the costs of council tax liability for a period of time where the applicant is able to demonstrate exceptional hardship. It may be granted for any period considered to be reasonable and where the applicant's circumstances are long standing will be subject to a review before the end of that period to check for any changes. The period and amount of any discount under this scheme will be at the discretion of the Council.
- 3.2 The application should relate to the current council tax year unless the liable person has recently received a council tax bill for a previous year. No award may be made in respect of future years.
- 3.3 Factors that will be taken into account when considering applications for a discretionary award are:
- That the applicant has an outstanding balance on their council tax account
 - Whether an extended repayment period is an appropriate alternative
 - There must be evidence of hardship or particular personal circumstances to justify a discount
 - Whether any other occupants of the property could be expected to contribute
 - The applicant has taken reasonable steps to resolve their situation prior to their application i.e. has made efforts to access alternative source of support, claimed discounts, exemptions and any council tax reduction they may be entitled to
 - Enforcing payment of the customer's full council tax liability would result in severe hardship e.g. insufficient money being available for their basic and essential needs such as housing, food, heating, lighting or medical needs
 - Whether there has been a major incident which forces the customer out of the property such as a flood, storm damage or explosion
 - Whether any award would be reasonable having regard to the interests of other council tax payers.
- 3.4 If a person is submitting an application for discount from the long term empty property premium the following will also be taken into account:
- Where the owner can clearly demonstrate ongoing and realistic efforts to sell or let their property over the last two years since it became empty
 - Where the owner is experiencing particular legal or technical issues which is preventing the sale or letting of the property
 - Where the long term empty premium is already being charged and the new owner is being prevented from immediate occupation due to major repairs needed to make the property habitable. The new owner must occupy the property within 3 months of purchase and then continuously for at least 6 months.
 - Where the owner is in negotiation with the Council with a genuine view to letting the property under the Council's scheme(s)

- Whether collection of the charges could reasonably be deferred until the property is sold.
- 3.5 Meeting the above factors will not give an automatic entitlement to a discount. The discretionary nature of this scheme will require consideration of individual circumstances based on supporting information to demonstrate exceptional hardship.
- 3.6 In assessing basic and essential needs the claimant's age, health and status will be taken into consideration. Expenditure which does not relate to basic and essential needs will not normally be taken into account when assessing hardship and examples of these items are listed below, however this is not an exhaustive list and will depend on individual circumstances:
- Rental charges for TV, satellite and internet
 - Telephone charges for mobile and landline considered unreasonably high
 - Credit cards, store cards, loans and other catalogue debts.
- 3.7 A discount would be considered to cover the following; however, this does not guarantee a discount to cover the full council tax liability:
- The shortfall between the amount of daily council tax reduction awarded and the daily council tax liability
 - In the case of persons not in receipt of council tax reduction the discount could be up to the amount of daily council tax liability but not exceed it.
- 3.8 A discretionary discount will not be considered to cover the following:
- Court and bailiff costs applied to the account
 - Charges relating to empty homes that are normally rented out on a commercial basis.
- 3.9 No cash payments will be made. Any discount under this discretionary scheme will be credited to the council tax account.

4. Application Process

- 4.1 Customers who wish to make an application for this discretionary discount should apply in writing giving details to support their application. If appropriate, the Council may ask for further information to support the application. If this is not provided within the timescale requested, a decision will be made based on the information already provided.
- 4.2 The application should normally be made by the person liable for council tax. However, a person acting on their behalf can submit an application if the customer is vulnerable and requires support. The applicant must provide their consent in writing in these circumstances.
- 4.3 The council will aim to process all applications within 28 working days and applicants will be notified of the decision in writing.

- 4.4 If a discount is granted and the customer has a change of circumstances which may reduce or remove the need for the discretionary discount, they should inform the council in writing within 14 days of that change in circumstances and the discount may be reduced or recovered.
- 4.5 Changes in circumstances include any changes to the circumstances of the claimant, their partner or any non-dependant in the household. The list below is not exhaustive and recipients are advised to contact the Revenues and Benefits Service if they need clarification:
- Entitlement and payment of housing benefit
 - Address
 - Income and capital
 - Outgoings
 - Availability of other financial assistance
 - Household composition
 - Entitlement to any other benefits including disability related income.
- 4.6 The discretionary discount will be ceased or reduced if the council determines any of the following:
- The application was based in whole or part on a misrepresentation
 - The applicant has failed to disclose a material fact
 - The discount was made as a result of an error
 - The applicant informs the Council of a relevant change in circumstances
 - The applicant fails to inform the Council of a relevant change in circumstances.
- 4.7 If the Council decides to cease or reduce the discount, it will notify the applicant of the decision in writing with reasons. The applicant may appeal against the decision in accordance with Section 5.
- 4.8 Any discretionary discount that we have deemed to have been paid incorrectly will be recovered from the council tax account or by invoicing the recipient if the council tax account is closed.

Section 5: Appeal Process

- 5.1 Any customer who considers the decision to be unreasonable may appeal against the decision. The appeal should be made in writing to the Council and include the reasons for the appeal and any supporting information.
- 5.2 The applicant will be notified of the outcome of the appeal in writing within two months as required by law.
- 5.3 If the applicant still disputes the decision, or has not received a response within two months, he or she has the right to submit an appeal to the Valuation Tribunal. However, the Valuation Tribunal can only consider whether the decision was made reasonably by the Council by applying

Judicial Review principles. Applicants would be advised to seek independent advice.

Section 6: Fraud

- 6.1 The Council is committed to protecting public funds and ensuring funds are awarded to the citizens who are rightfully eligible to them. An applicant who tries to fraudulently claim an award from the council tax discretionary fund by falsely declaring their circumstances, providing a false statement or providing evidence in support of their application, may have committed an offence under The Fraud Act 2006.
- 6.2 Where the Council suspects that such a fraud may have been committed, this matter will be investigated as appropriate and may lead to criminal proceedings being instigated.

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet (Resources) Panel 2 October 2018
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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, Governance	
Originating service	Democratic Support	
Accountable employee(s)	Dereck Francis Tel Email	Democratic Services Officer 01902 555835 dereck.francis@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	N/A	

Recommendation 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

None

2. People

None

3. Place

Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Peter Bilson	Service Director, City Housing	4 September 2018	Steve North 01902 555782
Title and summary of decision			
Conversion of Properties to Council Housing			
1. Approved the conversion of the former West Midlands Police base at 8 – 9 The Haymarket, Pendeford to two, two bedroomed maisonettes.			
2. Approved the conversion of the former Re-Entry project office at 29 Gower Street, All Saints to a four-bedroom house			

Part 2 – Exempt Items

1. Corporate

Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Louise Miles	Director of Finance	21 August 2018	Alison Shannon 01902 554561
Title and summary of decision			
External Finance Advice Consultants			
Awarded the contract for External Financial Advice Consultants for a duration of two years from 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2020 at a value of £180,000.			

People

Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Sandra Samuels OBE	Strategic Director for People	6 September 2018	Sarah Smith 01902 555318
Title and summary of decision			
Statutory Advocacy Services			
Awarded the contracts for Statutory Advocacy Services for a duration of up to five years (including extension options) from 16 October 2018 to 15 October 2023 to the organisations and at the values listed below:			
Lot	Bidder	Annual Budget £	
1. Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy	PohWER	101,563	
2. Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding	PohWER	45,564	
3. Relevant Persons Paid Representatives (including volunteers)	PohWER	96,000	
4. Care Act Advocacy	PohWER	45,366	
5. Non-Statutory General Advocacy	One Voice for disable people	20,000	
Contract term	Contract Value		
Annual	308,493		
Three years	925,479		
Three years + two-year extension	1,542,465		
Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Sandra Samuels OBE	Strategic Director for People	6 September 2018	John Linighan 01902 551733
Title and summary of decision			
Bentley Bridge Changing Places Toilets Update			
Awarded a Grant to Aviva Investors of £39,350.00 for the development and construction of specialist Changing Places Toilets from capital funds received from the Department of Education in April 2014.			

Place

Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Peter Bilson	Service Director, City Housing	18 September 2018	Steve Nock 01902 5655782
Title and summary of decision			
The Former Patchbox Public House Site – Purchase and Development			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approved the acquisition of the former Patchbox Public House site, Bradley for the sum of £177,000 including land value and associated fees. 2. Approved proposals for the development of the site for future new build council housing using modular methods of construction. 			
Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Peter Bilson	Director of Commercial Services	11 September 2018	Julia Nock 01902 550316
Title and summary of decision			
Land and Property Transactions – Corporate Landlord (IEDN 012)			
Approved the release of restrictive covenant at 171 Caledonia Road.			
Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Peter Bilson	Service Director, City Housing	4 September 2018	Steve North 01902 5782
Title and summary of decision			
Future Small Sites Council Housing Development			
Approved the next 11 sites to be investigated for the Housing Revenue Account small sites development programme, subject to a further Cabinet (Resources) Panel report to approve capital funding for the future developments.			
Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor Peter Bilson	Director of Commercial Services	14 August 2018	Julia Nock 01902 550318
Title and summary of decision			
Corporate Landlord – Land and Property Transactions (IEDN 009)(IEDN 10)			
Approved the completion of the transactions listed below and the terms:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lease of 412 Stafford Road, WV10 6AJ the former Goodyear Building now let as nursery. • Disposal of former EKTA Resource Centre, Mander Street, Wolverhampton, WV3 OJZ. 			
Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor John Reynolds	Service Director, City Economy	17 September 2018	Robert Harrington 01902 323274
Title and summary of decision			
Black Country Transformational Growth Opportunities Local Delivery (GOLD) project – payments of grants to small and medium sized enterprises			
Approved the payment of grants through the European Regional Development Fund funded Black Country Transformational GOLD project to seven companies for projects totalling £57,792 (£57.792 capital and £0 revenue). The grants will attract match funding from the businesses of £159,179 and will therefore enable projects to take place with a total value of £216,971.			

Decision maker	In consultation with	Date Approved	Contact Officer
Councillor John Reynolds	Strategic Director for Place	12 March 2018	Crissie Rushton 01902 552050
Title and summary of decision			
Contract Award: Box Office Services Awarded the contract for Box Office Services to Ticketmaster UK Ltd of London for a duration of eight years from 1 October 2017 to 31 September 2025 for a total expected income over the contract period of £2,760,000.			

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