

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet Minutes - 28 July 2021
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Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Ian Brookfield (Chair)
Cllr Stephen Simkins (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Obaida Ahmed
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Linda Leach
Cllr Beverley Momenabadi

Employees

Tim Johnson	Chief Executive
Mark Taylor	Deputy Chief Executive
Emma Bennett	Executive Director of Families
Ross Cook	Director of City Housing and Environment
Charlotte Johns	Director of Strategy
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration
Claire Nye	Director of Finance
Laura Phillips	Deputy Director of People and Change
Tracey Christie	Head of Legal Services
Lynsey Kelly	Head of Community Safety
Neeraj Malhotra	Consultant in Public Health
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services Manager
Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
No apologies for absence were received for the meeting.

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

- 3 **Minutes of the previous meeting**
Resolved:
 That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7 July 2021 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 **Public Health Annual Report 2020-2021**

Councillor Jasbir Jaspal introduced the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2020-2021. She said the Annual Report commemorated the horrendous year of the Covid-19 and celebrated the work that had gone on to fight the pandemic. It thanked the many organisations, services, teams and volunteers across the Council and the city, coming together working to fight the pandemic. It had left some lasting physical, mental, social and economic impacts on the city's population and through the strengthened partnerships and coordinated efforts would relight the city in setting priorities on mental health and wellbeing, physical activity, housing particularly variation in the quality of the city's private rental sector and influencing access to and the quality of healthcare in the city going forward.

Lynsey Kelly, Head of Communities (Public Health) and Neeraj Malhotra, Consultant in Public Health endorsed the summary from Councillor Jaspal, particularly the collective effort in responding to Covid and making use of the way we worked together in partnership, as a springboard to address other inequalities in health and the lasting impacts of Covid on the city's population.

Cabinet placed on record its heartfelt thanks to everyone involved in the massive team effort of the city's response to the pandemic, through the support, guidance or advice they gave to the city's residents and businesses.

Resolved:

That the publication of the Director of Public Health Annual Report for the period 2020 – 2021 be approved.

6 **Brewers Yard (Phase 1) Culwell Street Site**

Councillor Steve Evans presented the report on a proposal seeking approval to the creation of appropriate capital budgets to fund a scheme which would unlock housing development and remediate brownfield land as part of the Brewers Yard masterplan, proposed to deliver up to 1300 new homes. The first phase of the scheme involved relocating existing users at the Culwell Street site (Fleet Services and Meals on Wheels Service) to a reconfigured Wholesale Market site, followed by demolition of buildings and remediation of brownfield land. The relocation of Fleet Services would also deliver a modernised electric fleet depot, fit for purpose and a step towards supporting an electric fleet to be procured as a separate council investment. The project would also offer a significant impact in addressing the carbon reduction challenge that aligned to West Midlands Combined Authority and the Council's targets.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to approve:

1. The creation of appropriate capital budgets funded, through grant and prudential borrowing as detailed within the exempt report, subject to confirmation of successful grant bids.

That Cabinet approves:

1. The relocation of Fleet Services operations and 'Meals on Wheels' to a new facility at the Council owned 'Wholesale Market' Site, to continue providing existing requirements and enable the provision for a new electric fleet.
2. The reconfiguration of the 'Wholesale Market' site to cater for the current wholesale market activities and the new fleet services operations, bringing about an improved and efficient use of Council facilities and decarbonisation of its buildings programme.
3. The site clearance and land remediation of the Culwell Street site and its allocation for disposal with vacant possession for residential development, subject to outline planning consent.
4. Delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change and the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Director for City Housing and Environment and the Director of Finance to agree and enter into the required funding agreements, for the respective funding applications as detailed in the report.

7

Performance, Budget Monitoring and Budget Update 2021-2022

Councillor Ian Brookfield outlined the key points from the integrated finance and performance update report against the Council's Relighting Our City recovery priorities, and the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The report also included the draft budget strategy for 2022-2023, with reference to current information about the in-year budget monitoring. Councillor Ian Brookfield reported that the overriding message from the report was that the Council's finances are run well. This had been achieved against a backdrop of the Council making £1¼ billion of savings during the years of austerity. There would be difficult times ahead for the city, including dealing with long lasting and damaging effects from the Covid pandemic. The Council's finances would continue to be managed well, but it would be helpful to the Council if there was stability in local government finances with the government making two or three years financial settlements. He also suggested that the Council needed a recognition of the 18 months it had gone through.

Resolved:

1. That the ongoing delivery of the Relighting Our City recovery priorities, including aligning our resources and activity to continue to improve performance and outcomes be endorsed.
2. That the draft budget strategy for 2022-2023 be approved.
3. That the use of £817,000 from the Transformation Reserve to fund various transformation work as detailed in paragraph 11.3 of the report be approved.
4. That 31 virements totalling £7.4 million, for transfers within directorates, as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report be approved.
5. That the write-off of one Housing debt totalling £6,419.73 as detailed in Appendix 6 to the report be approved.

6. That any underspends identified in 2021-2022 are transferred to a specific reserve to support the 2022-2023 Budget Strategy and reduce the level of capital receipts to pay for revenue transformation.
7. That the establishment of supplementary expenditure budgets within 2021-2022 approved budget as detailed in Section 10 of the report for grant funded expenditure be approved.
8. That authority be delegated to the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing to allocate grants from the Better Mental Health Fund in line with the conditions of grant.
9. That it be noted that early indications are the outturn for 2021-2022 general fund would be within budget.
10. That it be noted that early indications are the outturn for 2021-2022 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) would be within budget.
11. That it be noted that alongside preparation for the 2022-2023 budget, work would continue to identify measures which would provide a sustainable medium term strategy.
12. That it be noted that 14 Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) debts totalling £137,382.83, as detailed in Appendix 6 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
13. That it be noted that 592 council tax accounts totalling £188,150.96, as detailed in Appendix 6 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
14. That it be noted that 16 housing benefit overpayments totalling £5,232.34 as detailed in Appendix 6 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
15. That it be noted that 55 sundry debt accounts totalling £14,857.47, as detailed in Appendix 6 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
16. The ongoing work to integrate finance and performance information which would continue to be developed, reporting to Cabinet (Resources) Panel / Cabinet on a quarterly basis be noted.

8 **Climate Change - 2028 Net Zero Action Plan Approvals**

Councillor Steve Evans presented the report on progress made by the Council towards its Climate Emergency objectives made in July 2019 and Climate Emergency Declaration to be net zero carbon across its activities by 2028. Actions towards the ambitions included, the Council switching to a renewable electricity provider, replacing over 10,000 streetlight units with LED (Light Emitting Diode) lighting under the Streetlight Replacement Programme, and reduced energy

consumption across the Council's buildings, to name a few. He also presented, for approval, an 84 point action plan to achieve the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration by 2028.

Resolved:

1. That the proposed Climate Change actions to achieve the Council's 2028 net zero ambitions be fully endorsed and the development of the next stage, a costed Roadmap be endorsed.
2. That ownership of the actions be delegated to the respective Cabinet Portfolio Holders and Directors for delivery.
3. That the use of the existing fleet capital budget to purchase electric vehicles and supporting infrastructure to meet needs identified on the fleet priority list, to support short-term fleet electrification plans be approved.
4. That the use of the Climate Change reserve to fund the short-term resource requirements identified in the action plan as set out in paragraph 7.6 of the report be approved.
5. That the use of the Climate Change reserve to fund development works for the depot relocation plans and the heat network feasibility study as set out in paragraph 7.7 of the report be approved.
6. That it be noted that development of the city-wide 2041 action plan would be carried out over summer 2021 through a series of internal and external stakeholder workshops, to agree objectives. This would include working directly with the Wolverhampton Anchor Network to formalise a city-wide delivery plan/roadmap. As such the 2041 actions have been omitted from the report.
7. That it be noted that the actions laid out within the report relating to the 2028 net zero target are not explicit or binding, and the action plan may change, subject to periodic reviews and development of feasibility studies.
8. That it be noted that there is a further anticipated budget / resource requirement to deliver the proposed actions, subject to development of the roadmap and future business case.
9. That the proposed governance structure as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report be noted, and that it would be subject to change as the programme develops.

9

Adoption of Black Country Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle Strategy

The intention to make a key decision on the report 'Adoption of Black Country Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle Strategy' at the meeting was not published in advance as required by the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. The decision was urgent and could not be reasonably delayed for the following reasons:

- The report was omitted from the Forward Plan due to a technical error. The report is related to a funding bid due for submission at the end of July, and as such cannot be delayed until the next Cabinet.

In light of the above, consent had been obtained for the key decision to be made at the meeting under the General Exception provisions.

Councillor Steve Evans presented for adoption, the Black Country Ultra Low Emissions Vehicle (ULEV) Strategy. The report and implementation plan set out a range of targets for infrastructure and suggested policy changes to support and accelerate the electrification of the vehicle parc in the Black Country, in order to reduce the transport derived CO₂e emissions for the region. Delegated authority was also requested to accept grant funding from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles, to enter into grant funding agreements and to establish appropriate supplementary budgets, if an On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme bid is successful. The bid aimed to deliver the installation of 50 chargepoint sites across the city.

Resolved:

1. That the final draft of the 'Black Country Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle Strategy' including the 2021 Advisory Note be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change and the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Director of City Housing and Environment and the Director of Finance to:
 - a. Accept the grant funding from the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) and enter into the grant funding agreement if the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) bid is successful.
 - b. Create the appropriate supplementary budgets.
 - c. Approve future delivery of chargepoint infrastructure in line with the targets identified in the Black Country Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Strategy
3. That it be noted that the strategy was subject to a public consultation in August-October 2020, receiving 851 responses, with less than 20% believing the infrastructure targets were too ambitious, and less than 30% believing the emissions targets were too ambitious (35% of responses viewed the emissions targets as not being ambitious enough).
4. That it be noted that any installations would be subject to public consultation with residents and business in the immediate vicinity of each location.
5. That it be noted that the ORCS bid is due for submission to OZEV at the end of July 2021, and they predict a six-week turnaround for responses.

10

Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2020-2021

Councillors Linda Leach and Beverley Momenabadi reported on some of the key points from the Principal Social Worker Annual Report 2020-2021. The Annual Report highlighted progress made against key priorities carried out by the Principal Social Worker for adults and children's services, including the work carried out to support social workers. The report also outlined key priorities for 2021-2022.

The value of the work of the Principal Social Worker in the Education and Skills service, as well as the quality of partnership working between the various elements that the Local Authority is responsible for in social work were acknowledged by Cabinet.

Jennifer Rogers, Principal Social Worker said that although it was her Annual Report about what she and her team had delivered and the impact, she wanted to say how proud she was of social workers in Wolverhampton and the social work profession. She was pleased that the report had received such positive responses because it was testament to how hard social workers had worked during the pandemic to try and make a difference to children, families and adults across the city.

Resolved:

1. That the work of the Principal Social Worker and the continued impact it has on social work practice across Children's and Adult Services be endorsed.
2. That the main priorities for the Principal Social Worker identified for 2021-2022 be endorsed.
3. That the work carried out in respect of: Care Act easements; audit activity, which has highlighted continued strong performance and practice during Covid; and the continued commitment to supporting social work students and routes into social work which is ensuring the Council is able to meet demand and supply needs now and for the future be noted.

11

Education Excellence Strategy (EES) 2021 - 2024

Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre informed Cabinet that the Education Excellence Strategy 2021-2024 had been taken to the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel for pre-decision scrutiny and was not therefore subject to scrutiny call-in under the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules.

The Strategy, which replaced the School Improvement Strategy 2018-2021, aimed to drive further improvements in Wolverhampton's schools and early years settings. It made provision for the Council to carry out its functions to monitor the performance of schools in the city and ensure that, where improvements are necessary, these are carried out effectively and expeditiously. In reporting on the salient points of the Strategy, Councillor Dr Hardacre highlighted that previous iterations of the Strategy had led to positive impacts on pupil outcomes, with Wolverhampton now at national standards with 86% of its schools rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted. He also reported that the last 18 months had been incredibly challenging for schools, particularly the children with disruptions to their education. The Education service through its relations with schools was already working with the city's schools to ensure that the effects of this disruption are minimised. The Strategy was key in how the service would work with educational providers right across the sector. He also informed Cabinet that in future an annual report would be produced on the impact of the Strategy.

Cabinet members welcomed the Strategy that spoke to the Council's number one priority, to give children in the city the best start in life. They also commended all those involved in its development and welcomed the challenge and endorsement of the Strategy from the scrutiny panel.

Resolved:

- That the Education Excellence Strategy 2021-2024 be approved and its use from September 2021 be endorsed.

12 **Determined Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2021-2022 and 2022-2023**

Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre presented the report on a proposed variation to the Local Authority's Admission Arrangements for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 to include a priority criterion for children previously in state care outside of England, in order to comply with a new mandatory provision of The School Admissions Code 2021.

Resolved:

1. That the variation to the admission arrangements for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 to include a priority criterion for children previously in state care outside of England, in order to comply with a new mandatory provision of The School Admissions Code 2021 be approved.
2. That the admission arrangements for 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 to incorporate the variation be approved.

13 **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 relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Part 2 - exempt items, closed to press and public

The Chair reported that as stated previously the meeting was in confidential session as the information included in the reports could, if released into the public domain, prejudice the financial position of the Council or its partners. As such all present are under a legal duty of confidentiality and must not disclose any confidential information - to do so would not only be a breach of the Council's codes (for councillors and employees) but also a breach of the legal duty of confidentiality.

14 **Canalside South - Delivery Strategy update**

Councillor Stephen Simkins presented the update report on the delivery strategy for Canalside South, one of the Council's key priorities for residential-led mixed use regeneration. Delegate authority was requested to finalise a revised Collaboration Agreement between the Council and the Canal and River Trust and to take shared landholdings to the market to attract a development partner for the scheme.

Resolved:

1. That the strategy and approach to bringing Canalside South to the market to seek a development partner to deliver this transformation development opportunity be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy and the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Director of Finance, to enter into the revised Collaboration Agreement with Canal & River Trust to enable the joint marketing of landholdings in support of the delivery of Canalside South.

3. That authority be delegated to the Director of Governance for the execution of any legal agreements ensuing from the marketing process and eventual developer selection.
4. That the proposal to declare the Council's landholdings at Canalside South as surplus in preparation for the marketing of the sites be approved.
5. That the revenue budget allocation assigned to support costs associated with bringing forward a scheme of this scale be noted.
6. That it be noted that an update would be brought to Cabinet once the marketing process has been concluded to ratify the outcome of the marketing exercise, the preferred delivery approach and development partner(s).

15

Brewers Yard (Phase 1) Culwell Street Site

Councillor Steve Evans informed Cabinet that the report, Brewers Yard (Phase 1) Culwell Street Site was similar in content to the report discussed at item 6 above, but the exempt report contained information that could, if released into the public domain, prejudice the financial position of the Council or its partners.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to approve:

1. The creation of appropriate capital budgets funded, through grant and prudential borrowing as detailed within the report, subject to confirmation of successful grant bids.

That Cabinet approves:

1. The relocation of Fleet Services operations and 'Meals on Wheels' to a new facility at the Council owned 'Wholesale Market' Site, to continue providing existing requirements and enable the provision for a new electric fleet.
2. The reconfiguration of the 'Wholesale Market' site to cater for the current wholesale market activities and the new fleet services operations, bringing about an improved and efficient use of Council facilities and decarbonisation of its buildings programme.
3. The site clearance and land remediation of the Culwell Street site and its allocation for disposal with vacant possession for residential development, subject to outline planning consent.
4. Delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change and the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Director for City Housing and Environment and the Director of Finance to agree and enter into the required funding agreements, for the respective funding applications as detailed in the report.