

### Attendance

**Mayor** Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre (Lab)  
**Deputy Mayor** Cllr Linda Leach (Lab)

### Labour

Cllr Qaiser Azeem	Cllr Val Evans	Cllr Rohit Mistry
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE	Cllr Jane Francis	Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Ciaran Brackenridge	Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal	Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Greg Brackenridge	Cllr Sally Green	Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Paula Brookfield	Cllr Celia Hibbert	Cllr Susan Roberts MBE
Cllr Chris Burden	Cllr Jeszemma Howl	Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Alan Butt	Cllr Carol Hyatt	Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Jenny Cockayne	Cllr Jasbir Jaspal	Cllr Harbinder Singh
Cllr Craig Collingswood	Cllr Jaspreet Jaspal	Cllr Tersaim Singh
Cllr Jacqui Coogan	Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal	Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Lovinyer Daley	Cllr Rashpal Kaur	Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Claire Darke	Cllr Lamina Lloyd	Cllr Iqra Tahir
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar	Cllr Asha Mattu	Cllr Gillian Wildman
Cllr Steve Evans	Cllr Barbara McGarrity QN	

### Conservative

Cllr Paul Appleby	Cllr Sohail Khan
Cllr Simon Bennett	Cllr Bob Maddox
Cllr Jonathan Crofts	Cllr Andrew McNeil
Cllr Wendy Dalton	Cllr Udey Singh
Cllr Christopher Haynes	Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Stephanie Haynes	Cllr Ellis Turrell

### Employees

Tim Johnson	Chief Executive
David Pattison	Chief Operating Officer
Emma Bennett	Executive Director of Families
Ian Fegan	Director of Communications and Visitor Experience
Charlotte Johns	Director of Strategy
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration

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The proceedings opened with Prayers

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*Item No.*     *Title*

1            **Apologies for absence**  
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Obaida Ahmed, Councillor Mary Bateman, Councillor Louise Miles and Councillor Paul Singh.

2            **Declarations of interest**  
There were no declarations of interest made.

3            **Communications**

**1. Mayoral Engagements**

The Mayor attended three memorial services recently, for our Korean War veterans on 27<sup>th</sup> July, Victory in Japan Day on 15<sup>th</sup> August and the Battle of Britain anniversary last Sunday. It was most important that we continued to remember our fallen servicemen and women in the hope that their memory would help to prevent further conflict.

Since the last council meeting in July, the Mayoress and Mayor had completed 40 engagements and attended four British Citizenship Ceremonies. The Mayor also attended two flag raising ceremonies.

**2. Young Citizen of the Year**

The Mayor hosted the annual Young Citizen of the Year Awards, run by the City's Rotary Clubs, on Thursday 7th September in the City Suite.

The Mayor reported there were joint winners in the 13 – 18 age group. They were Imane Sbihi and Eva Abley. Imane, originally from Morocco, had settled in Wolverhampton and had immersed herself in voluntary work. Eva, who has cerebral palsy, came fifth in Britain's Got Talent last year and uses comedy to inspire others to cope with disability.

The Mayor reported the winner of the 18 – 25 year old category was Alethea Parsons, who was nominated by a teacher from the Wolverhampton Music School for her outstanding contribution to music and the arts in            the city.

**3. Shimla Disaster**

The Mayor was saddened to hear of the natural disaster that befell the Shimla area on 14<sup>th</sup> August, when heavy rains caused landslides leading to huge loss of life and property.

The Mayor has written to Mr Surinder Chohan, Mayor of Shimla, on behalf of Wolverhampton to express our sorrow for what had happened.

Mayor Chohan had written back to thank the citizens of Wolverhampton for their support.

**4. Visit of the President and First Lady of Shri Lanka**

The Mayor reported the University of Wolverhampton was holding a ceremony to award the First Lady of Shri Lanka, Professor Maithree Wickramasinghe,

with an Honorary Professorship, in recognition of her contributions to academia.

Also in attendance will be the President of Shri Lanka, Mr Ranil Wickramasinghe, the High Commissioner of Shri Lanka to the UK, Her Excellency Mrs Saroja Sirisena and other representatives.

The Mayor placed on record thanks to the University for organising the event and inviting the Mayor to attend.

#### **5. Mayor's Charity Fundraising**

The Mayor placed on record, his thanks to Dr Paul Hampton and the University of Wolverhampton for holding a charity golf day on 1<sup>st</sup> September. This event raised £3,000 for the Mayor's charities. Pin badges featuring the city crest were also available to purchase for a minimum donation of £3 to the mayoral charitable fund.

#### **6. British Empire Medal Presentation Ceremony**

The Mayor shall be travelling to Birmingham Council House on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September to witness the investiture ceremony for recipients of the British Empire Medal. This prestigious event was to be hosted by His Majesty's representative for the West Midlands, the Lord Lieutenant Sir John Crabtree.

#### **7. Dutch War Graves**

The Mayor reported representatives of the Dutch Armed Forces, Princess Irene Brigade, will be visiting Wolverhampton in November for the annual memorial service to remember their fallen comrades buried in Jeffcock Road Cemetery.

The Mayor had organised a clean up of the headstones and tidying of the graves, to ensure the site looked its best ahead of the service.

#### **8. Emma Bennett**

The Mayor, reported the Executive Director of Families, Emma Bennett was leaving the Council to take on a new role as Chief Executive of Walsall Council. Emma had been with Wolverhampton in a variety of roles for 16 years. The Mayor thanked Emma for her service to the Council and wished Emma all the very best. Council stood and gave applause to Emma.

### **4 Education, Skills and Employment Strategy**

In the absence of Councillor Louise Miles, the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, Councillor Chris Burden presented the report on Education, Skills and Employment Strategy for approval.

The report detailed the new Education, Skills and Employment (ESE) Strategy which sets out the Council's approach to supporting local people into good quality careers and work.

The report detailed the strategy would focus on five overarching priorities; Children have the best start in life, High quality education which prepares young people for work, Post 16 provision which meets the needs of city employers, Lifelong learning and employment pathways to good quality work.

The report detailed the strategy had been developed through regular, continued engagement with key stakeholders and communities. Formal consultation had also been undertaken between 27 June and 18 August 2023. This included focus groups with young people, city partners, equality groups education and training providers.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, Councillor Chris Burden proposed the recommendations and the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Simkins seconded the recommendations.

The report was debated by Council. Councillor Chris Burden responded to the debate.

Resolved:

1. That the Education, Skills and Employment Strategy to deliver a whole life approach to learning and work which support children, young people and adults to thrive be approved.
2. That the budget from the remaining uncommitted balance of £1.2 million, from the original £3 million programme reserve budget approved by Cabinet on 20 October 2021 for the Wolves at Work 18-24 programme to deliver Wolves at Work Transformation programme be approved.
3. That authority be delegated to the relevant Director to approve targeted interventions and the allocation of the associated budget (from the £1.2 million available).

## 5 **In Year Appointments for the 2023 - 2024 Municipal Year**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Simkins, presented the report on In Year Appointments for the 2023-2024 Municipal Year for approval.

The report detailed changes to in year appointments for the 2023- 2024 municipal year.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Simkins proposed the recommendations. Councillor Milkinder Jaspal seconded the recommendations.

The report was debated by Council. Councillor Stephen Simkins responded to the debate.

Resolved:

1. That the appointment, by the Leader of the Council, of Councillors to the Cabinet, the specified lead Cabinet Member roles and Cabinet Panels set out in Appendix 1 be noted.
2. That the removal of Councillor Jacqui Coogan from the Scrutiny Board for the remainder of the Municipal year 2023/2024 be approved.
3. That the appointment of Councillor Jas Dehar to the Scrutiny Board for the remainder of the Municipal year 2023/2024 be approved.
4. The removal of Councillor Jacqui Coogan from the Governance and Ethics Committee as member and Vice Chair for the remainder of the Municipal year 2023/2024 be approved.

5. That the appointment of Councillor Rohit Mistry as Vice Chair to the Governance and Ethics Committee for the remainder of the Municipal year 2023/2024 be approved.
6. That the removal of Councillor Jacqui Coogan from the West Midlands Combined Authority – Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a substitute for the remainder of the Municipal year 2023/2024 be approved.
7. That the appointment of Councillor Rita Potter to the West Midlands Combined Authority – Overview and Scrutiny Committee as a substitute for the remainder of the Municipal year 2023/2024 be approved.
8. That the removal of the Leader from the West Midlands Rail Ltd as Principal Director for the remainder of the Municipal year 2023/2024 be approved.
9. That the appointment of the Deputy Leader as Principal Director to the West Midlands Rail Ltd for the remainder of the Municipal year 2023/2024 be approved.
10. That the appointment of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change as substitute director to the West Midlands Rail Ltd for the remainder of the Municipal year 2023/2024 be approved.
11. That the removal of Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education from the Wolverhampton Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for the remainder of the Municipal year 2023/2024 be approved.
12. That the appointment of Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Education to the Wolverhampton Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education for the remainder of the Municipal year 2023/2024 be approved.

## 6 **Written Questions by Councillors**

The Cabinet Member for Visitor City, Councillor Bhupinder Gakhil responded to a question put to him by Councillor Jacqueline Sweetman on The Halls. He also responded to a supplementary question on the same subject matter.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education, Councillor Chris Burden responded to questions put to him by Councillor Jacqui Coogan on Cost of Living Crisis and Councillor Barbara McGarrity QN on Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC). He also responded to a supplementary question on the same subject matter.

The Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing, Councillor Jasbir Jaspal responded to questions put to her by Councillor Christopher Haynes on Local Police Stations and Councillor Stephanie Haynes on Life Expectancy. She also responded to supplementary questions on the same subject matter.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Simkins responded to a question put to him by Councillor Wendy Thompson on Beatties. He also responded to a supplementary question on the same subject matter.

Resolved:

That the responses to written questions be noted.

## 7 **Motions on Notice**

Councillor Chris Burden, moved the motion on Care Leavers Protected Characteristic Motion:

*“Every Councillor, employee of this Council and our partner agencies is a Corporate Parent to the children in our care and our care experienced young*

people. We are all responsible for providing the best possible care, safeguarding and educational outcomes for the children and young people who are and have been in the care of the City of Wolverhampton Council. Our young people in care and our care experienced young people have the right to expect everything from a good corporate parent that would be expected from a responsible and good parent. This includes how families continue their support, care, and ambition for their children long after they leave home and gain independence. The City of Wolverhampton Council in partnership with the Care Leavers Independent Collective Forum and our partner agencies are proud that together we have been able to achieve, :-

- Wolverhampton Care Leavers being exempt from all Council Tax charges up to the age of 25.
- Wolverhampton Care Leavers up to the age of 25 having free access to leisure facilities at WV Active sites.
- Care Leavers bidding for Wolverhampton Homes properties are entitled to Band 1 Housing allocation.
- Care Leavers living in a Wolverhampton Homes property will never be made intentionally homeless.
- Care Leavers up to 25 years have access to free prescriptions.
- Wolverhampton Care Leavers have access to a variety of apprenticeships within the City of Wolverhampton Council and are able to apply for positions as the two-week internal application stage.
- Care Leavers have dedicated advice and support from an Education, Employment and Training Advisor to help them make their next steps into work or education.

However, as fantastic as these achievements are, we know as a good corporate parent that we can always do more. We are determined that every decision made by this Council and every policy set here considers the impact on our care experienced young people.

This motion proposes including “care experienced”, regardless of age, as a protected characteristic in all our Equality Impact Assessments. This will give these people formal recognition and make sure that all decisions that are made and policies that are set consider their specific needs and the impact on them.

The Government commissioned independent review into children’s social care highlighted the recommendation that care experience should be made a protected characteristic as part of the Equalities Act 2010. As yet, the Government have not progressed this recommendation.

Therefore, we propose to take steps here in Wolverhampton to be the best corporate parents we can be and to recognise care experience, regardless of a person’s age, be defined as a protected characteristic till such a time as it may be introduced by legislation.

The City of Wolverhampton Council, by recognising care experience as a protected characteristic would resolve:

- a. That when making any decisions in relation to its policies or formulating its Council plan that it recognises that care experienced people of all ages are an oppressed group who face discrimination.

- b. That it recognises that the Council has a duty to put the needs of oppressed people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration.*
- c. That in the delivery of the Public Sector Equality Duty the Council includes care experience in the publication and review of Equality Objectives and the annual publication of information relating to people who share a Protected Characteristic in services and employment in so far as available data allows for meaningful monitoring.*
- d. To formally adopt and call upon all other bodies to treat care experience as a protected characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.*
- e. To formally call upon all other bodies and partnership agencies working with the City of Wolverhampton Council to adopt the principal that care experience be a protected characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.*
- f. For the Council to continue to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of care experienced people, regardless of age, when developing new policies based on their views.*
- g. As a Local Authority, this would commit us to acknowledging and addressing the challenges faced by those with care experience across everything we do, from breaking down barriers to work, including transport and digital poverty to ensuring fair access to housing, education, and employment within the City.*

*However, we recognise that as a Council, we can only implement so much alone. Thus, we call upon our civic and regional partners to follow the Council's lead in developing their own initiatives to support our care leavers.*

*We believe as a Council that the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) should recognise the request of Care Leavers to provide transport to our Care Experienced Young People in the region.*

*Furthermore, this Council believes that the Minister for Children and Families should follow the example of the Council and seek to promote the status of Care Leavers as a protected minority characteristic."*

Councillor Chris Burden outlined the rationale for the motion. Councillor Qaiser Azeem seconded the motion and outlined the rationale for supporting the motion.

The Mayor proposed that in accordance with the Constitution, Full Council Meetings Procedure Rules, Council Procedure Rule 22.1 the usual procedure rules of debate be suspended to allow the Youth Council to speak.

The Deputy Mayor seconded the motion.

Resolved: That in accordance with Full Council Meetings Procedure Rules of the Constitution and Council Procedure Rule 22.1 the procedure rules be suspended.

Kye Barton from The Youth Council made a speech in support of the motion. Council stood and gave applause to Kye.

Following the speech from the Youth Council the Mayor re-instated standing orders.

The motion was debated by Council.

Resolved:

1. That the motion on Care Leavers Protected Characteristic Motion be agreed.

Councillor Wendy Dalton, moved the motion on Leisure Membership Concessions and made a verbal addendum:

*“I would like to move a motion calling on the Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing to extend the concession for leisure membership rates to all retired Emergency service personnel, retired NHS workers and Veterans living in Wolverhampton to demonstrate our continued gratitude and support for their years of public service and dedication to our City.”*

Councillor Wendy Dalton outlined the rationale for the motion. Councillor Greg Brackenridge seconded the motion and outlined the rationale for supporting the motion.

The motion was debated by Council.

Resolved:

2. That the amended motion on Leisure Membership Concessions be agreed.

Councillor Simon Bennett moved the motion JCB Pothole Pro Vehicle Purchase:

*“Over the last 10 years, the state of Wolverhampton’s roads has remained largely unmaintained, allowing new cracks and potholes to form regularly resulting in insurance claims against the Council, damage to vehicles, and reduced safety for road users.*

*This Council therefore agrees to take urgent action, and procure a JCB Pothole Pro vehicle, using funds from the Highway Management Reserve - that is there specifically to fund projects to improve roads and pavements in the City.”*

Councillor Simon Bennett outlined the rationale for the motion. Councillor Andrew McNeil seconded the motion and outlined the rationale for supporting the motion.

Councillor Craig Collingswood moved the following amendment to the motion:

Delete the first paragraph and add the following wording:

*‘This Council recognises that there has been a national underinvestment in the road network across our country by Government and asks that they provide adequate funding to allow this Council to maintain its roads at the standard our residents would expect’.*

In the second paragraph, delete wording after “agrees” and up to “projects” and replace with the words:



*“to urge the Government to provide adequate funding to enable the City’s roads to be well maintained”*

In the second paragraph, wording after “city” add

“and consider the purchase or lease of JCB Pothole Pro Vehicle.”

Councillor Craig Collingswood outlined the rationale for the amendment to the motion. Councillor Steve Evans seconded the amended motion and outlined the rationale for supporting the motion.

The amended motion was debated by Council.

Resolved:

3. That the amended substantive motion on JCB Pothole Pro Vehicle Purchase be agreed.

Councillor Ellis Turrell moved the motion on Business Relationships:

*“The relationship between the Council and businesses in the city centre is crucial to the future success of the whole city. However, this relationship has reached a new low, with allegations in the press of bullying and harassment. Sadly, the new Leader of the Council, in his previous position as Cabinet Member for City Economy, made the relationship far worse rather than better.*

*This Council therefore commits to immediately improving this relationship, using every lever at its disposal to prevent any further harm and disruption, and pledges its full support for any business that operates in the city. The success of our economy and our residents depends on this vital relationship being restored.”*

Councillor Ellis Turrell outlined the rationale for the motion. Councillor Simon Bennett seconded the motion and outlined the rationale for supporting the motion.

The motion was debated by Council.

Upon being put to the meeting, and a division having been demanded and taken voting thereon was as follows:

<b>Business Relationships (Motion)</b>	
Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre	Against
Councillor Linda Leach	Against
Councillor Paul Appleby	For
Councillor Qaiser Azeem	Against
Councillor Philip Bateman MBE	Against
Councillor Simon Bennett	For
Councillor Ciaran Brackenridge	Against
Councillor Greg Brackenridge	Against
Councillor Paula Brookfield	Against
Councillor Chris Burden	Against
Councillor Alan Butt	Against
Councillor Jennifer Cockayne	Against

Councillor Craig Collingswood	Against
Councillor Jacqui Coogan	Against
Councillor Jonathan Crofts	For
Councillor Lovinyer Daley	Against
Councillor Wendy Dalton	For
Councillor Claire Darke	No vote recorded
Councillor Jasbinder Dehar	Against
Councillor Steve Evans	Against
Councillor Valerie Evans	Against
Councillor Jane Francis	Against
Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal	Against
Councillor Sally Green	Against
Councillor Christopher Haynes	For
Councillor Stephanie Haynes	For
Councillor Celia (CeeCee) Hibbert	Against
Councillor Jeszema Howl	Against
Councillor Carol Hyatt	Against
Councillor Jasbir Jaspal	Against
Councillor Jaspreet Jaspal	Against
Councillor Milkinderpal Jaspal	Against
Councillor Rashpal Kaur	Against
Councillor Sohail Khan	For
Councillor Lamina Lloyd	Against
Councillor Robert Maddox	For
Councillor Asha Mattu	Against
Councillor Barbara McGarrity QN	Against
Councillor Andrew McNeil	For
Councillor Rohit Mistry	Against
Councillor Anwen Muston	Against
Councillor Rita Potter	Against
Councillor John C Reynolds	Against
Councillor Susan Roberts MBE	Against
Councillor Zee Russell	Against
Councillor Stephen Simkins	Against
Councillor Harbinder Singh	Against
Councillor Tersaim Singh	Against
Councillor Udey Singh	For
Councillor Paul Sweet	Against
Councillor Jacqueline Sweetman	Against
Councillor Iqra Tahir	Against
Councillor Wendy Thompson	For
Councillor Ellis Turrell	For
Councillor Gillian (Jill) Wildman	Against
<b>Rejected</b>	

The amended motion was LOST by 43 votes.

Resolved:

4. That the motion on Business Relationships be lost.

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]