

Cabinet (Resources) Panel

Minutes - 6 December 2016

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet (Resources) Panel

Cllr Andrew Johnson (Chair)
Cllr Roger Lawrence (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Peter Bilson
Cllr Claire Darke
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Val Gibson
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Sandra Samuels
Cllr Paul Sweet

Employees

Ross Cook	Service Director - City Environment
Ian Fegan	Head of Communications
Dereck Francis	Democratic Support Officer
Keith Ireland	Managing Director
Kevin O'Keefe	Director of Governance
Mark Taylor	Director of Finance

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
No apologies for absence were submitted.
- 2 Declarations of interests**
No declarations of interests were made.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting - 1 November 2016**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 1 November 2016 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 **Revenue Budget Monitoring 2016/17**

Cllr Andrew Johnson outlined the salient points of the report on a projection of the likely revenue outturn position for the General Fund and Housing Revenue accounts, compared with the Council's approved revenue budgets for 2016/17.

Resolved:

1. That the use of £100,000 from the Transformation Reserve to fund various transformation priorities as detailed at section 5.2.2 of the report be approved.
2. That the use of £2.6 million from the Efficiency Reserve to fund various efficiency priorities as detailed at section 5.2.3 of the report be approved.
3. That the reinvestment of £500,000 surplus generated through Bus Lane enforcement into the Highways Management Reserve be approved.
4. That the use of £500,000 from the Future Works Reserve to fund the Milestone 6 Agresso upgrade be approved.
5. That the use of £50,000 from the Job Evaluation Reserve to meet the cost of back pay for lunchtime supervisory assistants be approved.
6. That the write off of seven sundry debts totalling £74,469.36 as detailed in Appendix F to the report be approved.
7. That the 18 virements totalling £3.4 million, for transfers within service directorates, as detailed in Appendix G to the report be approved.
8. That the setting up of expenditure budgets within the 2016/17 approved budget as detailed in section 4.2 of the report for grant funded expenditure be approved.
9. That the recovery of £85,000 from Penn Hall School as detailed in section 7.6.2 of the report be approved.
10. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Education in consultation with the Director of Education and the Director of Finance for the approval of licensed deficits as detailed in section 7.7.1. of the report.
11. That it be noted that the projected outturn for the General Fund for 2016/17 is on target to achieve a net balanced position.
12. That it be noted that projected redundancy costs, including the cost of pension strain, totalling £7.0 million are included in the forecast outturn. The projected costs are subject to change dependent upon the actual redundancies approved by year end. It is anticipated that forecast underspends against the Central Provision for Auto-enrolment and Pay Award costs and the Corporate/Transformation Budgets and contingencies, in addition to Capital Receipts flexibility announced by the Secretary of State, would offset the cost of redundancies.

13. That it be noted that 149 sundry debt accounts totalling £63,581.16 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 292 council tax accounts totalling £94,355.99 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 27 non domestic rates accounts totalling £108,642.70 have been approved for write off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
16. That it be noted that 47 housing benefit accounts totalling £6,881.50 have been approved for write off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
17. That it be noted that a £18.4 million surplus on the Housing Revenue account (HRA) is projected compared with a budgeted surplus of £15.3 million as shown at Table 7 and in detail at Appendix H. The projected increased surplus of £3.1 million would be used to redeem debt in line with the HRA Business Plan.

6 **Acquisition of Privately Owned Land by Agreement or Compulsory Purchase: Land Between 44 and 48 Showell Road, Bushbury**

Cllr Peter Bilson requested approval to authorise the acquisition of land between 44 and 48 Showell Road, Bushbury by negotiation or by the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order under Section 17 of Part II of the Housing Act 1985. Should it be possible to reach agreement on a mutually acceptable undertaking, it was proposed to withdraw the property from the Order.

The proposal was one of several on the agenda relating to the recovery of land and property under the Council's Empty Properties Strategy to address nuisance caused by the land or property that was having a visual detriment to an area. Where informal discussions with the owners and the servicing of a Section 215 Notice in order to encourage the owners to address the deteriorating condition of the property/land had proved unsuccessful compulsory purchase action would be taken with a view to seeing the property/land developed or disposed of.

Resolved:

1. That the Strategic Director, City Housing be authorised to negotiate terms for the acquisition of the land between 44 and 48 Showell Road, Bushbury, and, in default of that acquisition, authority be granted for a Compulsory Purchase Order to be made under Part II Section 17 Housing Act 1985 in respect of the land.
2. That expenditure for the potential acquisition of the land, with subsequent capital receipts being recycled within this programme be approved.
3. That in the event that the land is developed to the satisfaction of the Strategic Director, City Housing, the withdrawal of the land from the Order be approved.

4. That following any acquisition, the Strategic Director, City Housing be authorised to dispose of the land on the open market on condition that planning permission is obtained within a three month period and the development is built within an appropriate period after obtaining the permission.
5. That the Strategic Director, City Housing be authorised to:
 - a. Take all reasonable steps as soon as it is reasonably practical to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the Order including the publication and service of all Notices and the presentation of the Council's case at any Public Inquiry.
 - b. Approve agreements with land owners setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the Order, and/or making arrangements for re-housing or relocation of any occupiers.
 - c. Approve the making of a General Vesting Declaration (the property is brought into Council ownership via this process).
 - d. Approve the disposal of the whole and/ or parts of the property by auction, tender or private treaty.

7 **Empty Property Strategy - Revocation of a Final Empty Dwelling Management Order - 96 Hawksford Crescent, Bushbury, Wolverhampton**

Cllr Peter Bilson presented a report on a proposal to authorise the Director of Governance to revoke the Final Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO) currently in force at 96 Hawksford Crescent. Since making the Final Order the owner of the property had progressed the refurbishment of the property and it is now ready for occupation. It was therefore no longer necessary for the Council to take management control of the property under the Final EDMO.

Resolved:

That the Director of Governance be authorised to revoke the Final Empty Dwelling Management Order currently in force at 96 Hawksford Crescent and made under Section 136 of the Housing Act 2014.

8 **Empty Property Strategy - 74 Rayleigh Road, Pennfields, Wolverhampton**

Cllr Peter Bilson presented the report on a proposal to authorise Council employees to commence formal negotiations with the owner of 74 Rayleigh Road with a view to acquiring the property by agreement. The property and land had a visual detriment to the area and informal negotiations and Notices served on the owner had not brought about a solution. Further action was therefore proposed under the Council's Empty Property Strategy.

Resolved:

1. That Housing Improvements officers and Corporate Landlord be authorised to enter into formal negotiations to acquire the property 74 Rayleigh Road, Pennfields by agreement.
2. That approval in principle be granted to the use of Compulsory Purchase Order action if required.

3. That the property be declared surplus to Council requirements and disposed of on the open market via auction on condition that the property is refurbished and re-occupied within six or 12 months dependent of the scope of works.
4. That the property identified for action (74 Rayleigh Road) under the Empty Property Strategy be noted.

9 **Empty Property Strategy - Compulsory Purchase of 42 Lawrence Avenue, Perry Hall, Wolverhampton**

Cllr Peter Bilson presented a report on a proposal to take Compulsory Purchase Order action to purchase 42 Lawrence Avenue, Perry Hall, Wolverhampton. The property had been identified for action following complaints from neighbours in July 2013 due to the deteriorating condition of the property. Attempts to resolve the situation informally and through the serving of a Section 215 Notice on the property in 2014 had not resolved the situation. It was now considered necessary to continue to formal action under the Council's Empty Property Strategy which aimed to bring empty property back into use.

Resolved:

1. That the making of the following Compulsory Purchase Order under Section 17 of Part II of the Housing Act 1985 be approved:

The City of Wolverhampton Council (42 Lawrence Avenue, Perry Hall, Wolverhampton, WV11 3PE) Compulsory Purchase Order 2016.

2. That the Strategic Director, City Housing on behalf of the Council be authorised to:
 - a. Take all reasonable steps as soon as it is reasonably practical to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the Order including the publication and service of all Notices and the presentation of the council's case at any Public Inquiry.
 - b. Acquire interests in the land within the Order either compulsorily or by agreement before or after making the Order.
 - c. Approve agreements with land owners setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the Order, and/or making arrangements for re-housing or relocation of any occupiers.
 - d. Approve the making of a General Vesting Declaration.
 - e. Following any acquisition, authorise the Strategic Director, City Housing to declare the property surplus and dispose of the property on the open market on condition that the property is refurbished and re-occupied within six or 12 months (as appropriate to the scale of the works).
 - f. Approve the disposal of the property by auction, tender or private treaty.
 - g. Declare the property surplus to council requirements and dispose of the property on the open market via auction on condition that the property is refurbished and re-occupied within six or 12 months dependent of the scope of works.

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Empty Property Strategy - Compulsory Purchase of 473 New Birmingham Road

Cllr Peter Bilson requested approval to authorise the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order in respect of 473 Birmingham New Road, and for negotiations to continue with any established interested parties in advance of confirmation of the Order as appropriate. Following confirmation of the Order, it was proposed to make a General Vesting Declaration.

The proposal was in furtherance of informal discussions and a Section 215 Notice served on the property in order to encourage the owner to address the deteriorating condition of the property and the detrimental effect it was having on the neighbourhood. The proposal also supported the Council's Empty Property Strategy 2010/15 which aimed to bring empty properties back into use.

Resolved:

1. That the making of the following Compulsory Purchase Order under Section 17 of Part II of the Housing Act 1985 be approved:

The City of Wolverhampton Council (473 Birmingham New Road, WV14 9PJ)
Compulsory Purchase Order 2016.

2. That the Strategic Director, City Housing on behalf of the Council be authorised to:
 - a. Take all reasonable steps as soon as it is reasonably practical to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the Order including the publication and service of all Notices and the presentation of the Council's case at any Public Inquiry.
 - b. Acquire interests in the land within the Order either compulsorily or by agreement before or after making the Order.
 - c. Approve agreements with land owners setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the Order, and/or making arrangements for re-housing or relocation of any occupiers.
 - d. Approve the making of a General Vesting Declaration.
 - e. Following any acquisition, authorise the Strategic Director, City Housing to declare the property surplus and dispose of the property on the open market on condition that the property is refurbished and re-occupied within six or 12 months (as appropriate to the scale of the works).
 - f. Approve the disposal of the property by auction, tender or private treaty.
 - g. Declare the property surplus to council requirements and dispose of the property on the open market via auction on condition that the property is refurbished and re-occupied within six or 12 months dependent of the scope of works

11 Flood Risk Management Service Delivery Arrangements

Cllr Steve Evans presented the report on proposed joint working with Staffordshire County Council and other Black Country authorities on flood risk management. The proposal would substantially raise the level of service the Council would be able to provide in this widening area of work.

Resolved:

1. That the use of Staffordshire County Council to assist City of Wolverhampton Council in the delivery of its statutory flood risk management duties be approved.
2. That subject to 1 above, the Council enters into a legal agreement with Staffordshire County Council in respect of flood risk management delivery.

12 Schedule of Individual Executive Decision Notices

Resolved:

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

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 falling within the paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

14 Conversion of Properties to Council Housing

Cllr Peter Bilson presented the report which sought approval to the conversion of two former housing offices into council housing.

Resolved:

1. That the conversion of the former housing office at 134 – 137 Chetton Green, Fordhouses to four two bedroomed maisonettes be approved.
2. That the conversion of the former housing office at 29 Vicarage Road, All Saints to a one bedroomed ground floor flat be approved.
3. That Housing Revenue Account capital funding from the newbuild budget of £465,000 for the planned conversion works be approved.
4. That the development of a programme of similar conversions of disused areas within the Council's existing residential accommodation across the City, to be identified from the review of the blocks being undertaken by Wolverhampton Homes in line with housing need and housing demand be approved.
5. That authority be delegated to agree further conversion opportunities under this programme to the Cabinet Member for City Housing and Assets in consultation with the Strategic Director for Housing and the Director of Finance, to expedite the delivery of further conversion schemes for new homes, as identified.

15 **Disposal of Garage Site behind 23-33 Beach Avenue, Spring Vale**

Cllr Peter Bilson presented the report on the proposal to dispose of the garage site behind 23-33 Beach Avenue, in Spring Vale, Wolverhampton at auction, once outline planning approval for residential use has been obtained, as recommended by the Council's Corporate Landlord Board.

Resolved:

1. That the disposal at auction of the garage site behind 23-33 Beach Avenue, in Spring Vale, Wolverhampton as shown on the plan attached at Appendix 1 to the report be approved, subject to the site obtaining outline planning approval for residential use.
2. That the recommendation of Corporate Landlord Board to take the site to auction and also obtain outline planning for residential use beforehand be noted.

16 **Procurement - Award of Contracts for Works, Goods and Services**

The Panel considered a report on proposals for the award of contracts for works, goods and services.

Resolved:

1. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, in consultation with the Strategic Director: People, to approve the award of a contract for the Intensive Therapeutic Support Service when the evaluation process is complete.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Economy, in consultation with the Strategic Director: Place, to approve the award of contracts for Black Country Impact when the evaluation process is complete.
3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Economy, in consultation with the Strategic Director: Place, to approve the award of contracts for delivery of Voluntary and Community Services when the evaluation process is complete.
4. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Adults, in consultation with the Strategic Director: People, to approve the award of a contract for a Community Based Preventative Service for Mental Health when the evaluation process is complete.
5. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Well Being, in consultation with the Strategic Director: People, to approve the award of a contract for the Healthy Child Programme when the evaluation process is complete.
6. That authority be delegated to the Director of Governance to execute contracts in respect of the above as required.

17

New Boundary Signs to Boost City Pride and Generate Income

Cllr Roger Lawrence presented the report on proposals to transform the current 16 year old, outdated and unwelcoming signage at City of Wolverhampton boundary points. The proposals would be part of the Council's wider push to improve perceptions of the city, raise pride and generate income.

Resolved:

1. That the approach to install a mixture of new, fixed and digital City of Wolverhampton boundary signs be approved.
2. That the capital investment and revenue budget and the funding strategy, which seeks the best possible return on capital employed and aims to be self-funding be approved.
3. That, in terms of digital signage options, following initial market testing, a procurement process be undertaken as soon as possible to purchase six digital signs for key locations.
4. That as part of this renewal process, the inner core of signage "Welcome to the City Centre" be decommissioned.