

Cabinet (Resources) Panel

Minutes - 28 March 2017

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet (Resources) Panel

Cllr Andrew Johnson (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

Keith Ireland	Managing Director
Kevin O'Keefe	Director of Governance
Mark Taylor	Director of Finance
Dereck Francis	Democratic Support Officer
Kenny Aitchison	Service Manager Housing Strategy/Development
Andy Hoare	Head of Services - ICT
Tim Johnson	Strategic Director - Place

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**
An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Cllr Roger Lawrence.
- 2 Declarations of interest**
There were no declarations of interests.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting - 28 February 2017**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 February 2017 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 **Recruitment and Selection Policy**

Cllr Milkinder Jaspal presented the report on proposed changes to the Recruitment and Selection Policy and Managers Guidance. The changes would further support the Council's commitment to recruit, retain and develop employees from a wide range of backgrounds and ensure equality in employment practices.

Cllr Jaspal also suggested that Councillors, particularly those likely to be involved in recruitment panels for senior employees of the Council should undertake the training proposed for employees involved in interview panels. Kevin O'Keefe, Head of Governance undertook to arrange for a separate training session to be delivered for elected councillors.

Resolved:

That amendments to the Recruitment and Selection Policy be approved to require that:

1. all interview panel members to have undertaken unconscious bias training.
2. all interview panels to be have at least a three-panel member and be gender diverse, with any exceptions being agreed with the Head of Human Resources.
3. all interview panel members to undertake refresh training on recruitment and selection every three years.

6 **Collection and Debt Strategy**

Cllr Andrew Johnson presented for approval a proposed integrated collection and debt strategy that would be followed in respect of all council tax, business rates and sundry debt.

Cllr Johnson also reported that the Council had been awarded a 'Good Protection Guidance Protocol' by the Citizens Advice Bureau for the combined strategy. An official signing ceremony for the award would be arranged.

Resolved:

That the draft collection and debt strategy be approved.

7 **Relocation Policy Review**

Cllr Milkinder Jaspal presented the report on proposed changes to the Council's current relocation scheme which was offered to new employees moving to Wolverhampton as a direct consequence of securing employment with the Council. The revisions would deliver a scheme that was reasonably attractive and which would assist the Council to appoint to roles that were difficult to fill.

Resolved:

That the suggested changes to the Council's current relocation scheme which is offered to new employees moving to Wolverhampton as a direct consequence of securing employment with the Council be approved.

8 **Domiciliary Care Framework - Cost Rate Uplift**

Cllr Sandra Samuels presented the report which set out a proposed increase for the Domiciliary Care, and Direct Payment cost rate.

Resolved:

That the cost rate for all active domiciliary care providers and Direct Payments from 3rd April 2017; in line with the legislative National Living Wage increase and the Retail Price Index rate of 1.6% as of January 2017 be approved. The new rates are:

- All active domiciliary care providers £14.12 per hour
- Direct payment DOM £13.38 per hour
- Direct payments – Personal Assistant £10.40 per hour
- Home-based Care Respite Service £13.00 per hour

9 **Residential Care Fees - Cost Rate Increase**

Cllr Sandra Samuels presented for approval a proposed increase for the residential and nursing care rates paid by the Council.

Cllr Andrew Johnson commented that this and the previous report reflected growth of £1.1 million that had been included in the 2017/18 budget to support the increase in costs associated with the National Living Wage across all care support plans.

Resolved:

That a revised cost rate for new and existing residential and nursing placements from 3 April 2017 in line with the increase in the National Living Wage which becomes effective 1 April 2017 and the revised Retail Price Index rate as of January 2017 be approved. The new rates are:

- Residential care £404.04
- Residential with dementia £454.44
- Nursing care £404.04
- Nursing with dementia £454.44

10 **Developing the Cultural Economy**

Cllr John Reynolds presented the report on proposed capital investment for redevelopment of parts of the Wolverhampton Art Gallery site. The project aimed to improve and widen the cultural experience for local residents and visitors to the city, as part of the overall regeneration of the city centre; and to increase the levels of commercial income generated at the Art Gallery through improved hospitality, venue hire and special ticketed exhibitions.

Resolved:

1. That a staged delivery strategy for the proposed development of the central Art Gallery be approved and authority be granted to proceed with Phase 1 Option 3 which would include re-location of the café, improvements to the entrance of the building and refurbishment of the upstairs exhibitions spaces.
2. That a capital allocation of £750,000 towards the re-location of the café and improvements to the entrance, to be financed through prudential borrowing be approved.

3. That an additional capital budget of £65,000 for improvements to the upstairs exhibition spaces fully funded by a grant secured from DCF Wolfson Gallery Improvement Fund be approved.
4. That it be noted that a capital allocation of £750,000 had been agreed as part of the Capital Programme report to Cabinet on 22 February 2017 and Council on 1 March 2017, subject to approval of the report by the Cabinet (Resources) Panel.

11 **External Funding Update - BEIS Benchmarking and Low Carbon ERDF Review**

Cllr John Reynolds reported that the Council had been approached by the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to act as the accountable body for two pieces of work to be grant funded by them (BEIS Benchmarking and Low Carbon European Regional Development Fund Review). Cllr Reynolds also informed Cabinet that the approach to manage the high profile national initiatives was recognition of the Council's work in promoting the low carbon agenda and was an excellent opportunity to enhance the Council's reputation in this area.

Resolved:

1. That approval in principle be given to the City of Wolverhampton Council acting as accountable body for the Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy funded Local Enterprise Partnership and City Region benchmarking and national event and for a European Regional Development Fund low carbon and energy review.
2. That grant funded revenue budgets totalling £95,000 be approved to undertake this work.
3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Economy in consultation with the Strategic Director for Place, to approve any agreements or contracts required to formally agree to manage the project, should they consider them satisfactory.

12 **Acquisition of Privately Owned Empty Properties by Agreement or Compulsory Purchase: 32 Cadle Road, Low Hill - Property Identified for Action**

Cllr Peter Bilson presented the report which sought approval to acquire 32 Cadle Road, Low Hill. WV10 9SJ by negotiation or by the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order under Section 17 of Part II of the Housing Act 1985 (CPO). Should it be possible to reach agreement on a mutually acceptable undertaking, the property would be withdrawn from the CPO.

Resolved:

1. That the Strategic Director, City Housing be authorised to negotiate terms for the acquisition of the property 32 Cadle Road, Low Hill, and, in default of that acquisition, give authority for a compulsory purchase order (CPO) to be made under Part II, Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 in respect of the property.

2. That expenditure for the potential acquisition of the property be approved, with subsequent capital receipts being recycled within the Empty Property Strategy programme.
3. That in the event that the property is improved and re-occupied to the satisfaction of the Service Director for City Housing, the property be withdrawn from the CPO.
4. That following any acquisition, the Strategic Director, City Housing be authorised to 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).
5. That the Director of Governance be authorised to:
 - a. Take all reasonable steps as soon as it is reasonably practical to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the CPO including the publication and service of all Notices and the presentation of the Council's case at any Public Inquiry.
 - b. Approve agreements with the owners of the property setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the CPO, 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.

13

Acquisition of Privately Owned Empty Properties by Agreement or Compulsory Purchase: Two and a Half Clifford Street, Whitmore Reans

Cllr Peter Bilson presented the report which sought approval to acquire Two and a Half Clifford Street, Whitmore Reans. WV6 0AB, by negotiation or by the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order under Section 17 of Part II of the Housing Act 1985 (CPO). Should it be possible to reach agreement on a mutually acceptable undertaking the property would be withdrawn from the CPO.

Resolved:

1. That the Strategic Director, City Housing be authorised to negotiate terms for the acquisition of the property Two and a Half Clifford Street, Whitmore Reans and, in default of that acquisition, give authority for a compulsory purchase order (CPO) to be made under Part II, Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 in respect of the property.
2. That expenditure for the potential acquisition of the property be approved, with subsequent capital receipts being recycled within the Empty Property Strategy programme.
3. That in the event that the property is improved and re-occupied to the satisfaction of the Service Director for City Housing, the property be withdrawn from the CPO.

4. That following any acquisition, the Strategic Director, City Housing be authorised to 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).
5. That the Director of Governance be authorised to:
 - a. Take all reasonable steps as soon as it is reasonably practical to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the CPO including the publication and service of all Notices and the presentation of the Council's case at any Public Inquiry.
 - b. Approve agreements with the owners of the property setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the CPO, 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.

14

Acquisition of Privately Owned Empty Properties by Agreement or Compulsory Purchase: Properties Adjacent to 11 Cyprus Street, Blakenhall

Cllr Peter Bilson presented the report which sought approval to acquire properties adjacent to 11 Cyprus Street, Blakenhall, by negotiation or by the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order under Section 17 of Part II of the Housing Act 1985 (CPO). Should it be possible to reach agreement on a mutually acceptable undertaking the property would be withdrawn from the CPO.

Resolved:

1. That the Strategic Director, City Housing be authorised to negotiate terms for the acquisition of the properties adjacent to 11 Cyprus Street, Blakenhall and, in default of that acquisition, give authority for a compulsory purchase order (CPO) to be made under Part II, Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 in respect of the property.
2. That expenditure for the potential acquisition of the property be approved, with subsequent capital receipts being recycled within the Empty Property Strategy programme.
3. That in the event that the property is improved and re-occupied to the satisfaction of the Service Director for City Housing, the property be withdrawn from the CPO.
4. That following any acquisition, the Strategic Director, City Housing be authorised to 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).

5. That the Director of Governance be authorised to:
 - a. Take all reasonable steps as soon as it is reasonably practical to secure the making, confirmation and implementation of the CPO including the publication and service of all Notices and the presentation of the Council's case at any Public Inquiry.
 - b. Approve agreements with the owners of the property setting out the terms for the withdrawal of objections to the CPO, 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.

15 **Bradley Arms Canal Towpath Improvement - Additional Grant Funding**

Cllr Steve Evans reported following commencement of improvement works to the surface of the Bradley Arm Canal towpath from its junction with the Birmingham Mainline Canal to Highfields Road, the cost of the project had been reassessed and was now anticipated to exceed the agreed budget by up to £85,000. Approval was requested to increase the agreed budget by this amount to ensure the project could be completed. The increase would be funded by grant from the Local Growth Fund via the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership.

Resolved:

That the allocation of further grant funding up to £85,000 for the completion of the Bradley Arm Canal towpath improvement scheme be approved.

16 **The Charter for Sustainable British Steel**

Cllr Andrew Johnson reported that the Council had been approached by North Lincolnshire Council about becoming a signatory to the Charter for Sustainable British Steel. The Charter had been developed by the UK Steel trade association EEF. Signatories to the Charter would pledge to purchase carbon steel reinforcement for concrete only from vendors that adhere to the Framework Standards for Responsible Sourcing. The Council would use the requirement where appropriate in the specifications for construction and highways contracts.

Resolved:

That the Council become a signatory to the Charter for Sustainable British Steel.

17 **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.

18 **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.

Part 2 - exempt items, meeting closed to press and public

19 **Print and Outgoing Mail Strategy**

Cllr Andrew Johnson presented the report on the strategy for the Council's print and outgoing mail service following a review. The review arose from the need to replace life expired equipment and to transform the Council's print and outgoing mail service into a modern and efficient business operation.

Cllr Johnson also reported that he and other members of Cabinet had received email correspondence from a Trade Union representative on the proposals. He informed Cabinet that the submission of the report had been deferred from the last meeting in February 2017 for full consultation with the Trade Unions and that those consultations had taken place. He had also offered to meet with the Trade Unions to discuss the proposals but the offer was not taken up.

Andy Hoare, Head of ICT confirmed that the Trade Unions and the print and mailroom teams had been involved throughout the consultation process and their feedback had been taken onto account. The proposals were explained to them and they understood what was being recommended.

Resolved:

1. That the externalisation of the Council's outgoing Mail Service to realise cost savings in the region of £950,000 over six years be endorsed.
2. That the modernisation and restructuring of the Council's in-house print service to realise cost savings in the region of £680,000 over three years be endorsed.

20 **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 the contract for Residential Care for Young People at Merridale Street West with Cambian Childcare Limited of 4th Floor, Waterfront Building Hammersmith Embankment, Chancellors Road, London, W6 9RU be extended, for a period of up to one year from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.
2. That the contract for Revenues and Benefits Mail Service be awarded to Critiqom Limited of Document House, Phoenix Crescent, Strathclyde Business Park, Bellshill, ML4 3NJ for a duration of six years from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2023 for a total contract value of £1,900,000.

3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to approve the award of a contract for Print Machines when the evaluation process is complete.
4. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to approve the award of a contract for Housing Benefit External Auditor when the evaluation process is complete.
5. That the contract for the Secondary Data Centre with Staffordshire County Council of 1 Staffordshire Place c/o Wedgewood Building, Tipping Street, Staffordshire, ST16 2DH be extended for a duration of two years from 11 March 2017 to 31 March 2019 with an extension value of £54,000.
6. That the contracts for Black Country Impact be awarded for a duration of one year from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 for:
 - i. Lone Parent Support for a total contract value of £198,361 to Prospects Group 2011 Limited of Prospects House, 19 Elmfield Road, Bromley, BR1 1LT.
 - ii Support Programme for NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) 16-18 year olds for a total contract value of £27,240 to Prospects Services Limited of Prospects House, 19 Elmfield Road, Bromley, BR1 1LT.
7. That the contract for Project Management and Design Team for the Markets be awarded to Faithful+Gould Limited of Woodcote Grove, Ashley Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5BW for one year from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 for a contract value of £222,431.
8. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Economy, in consultation with the Strategic Director for Place, to approve the award of a contract for i54 Western Extension Lead Consultant when the negotiation process is complete.
9. That the Director of Governance be authorised to execute contracts in respect of the above as required.

21

Consideration of a Request for Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant

The Panel considered two applications for additional grant above the maximum mandatory level for discretionary disabled facilities.

Resolved:

1. That the request of Mr & Mrs W for a discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant to top up expenditure in excess of the maximum mandatory grant of £30,000, in order to provide suitable facilities to enable them to maintain the long term foster care of child A, a looked after child of City of Wolverhampton Council be agreed in principle subject to the confirmation of the long term arrangements by the Linking and Matching Fostering Panel and of final costs being received.

2. That the request of Mrs S for a discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant to top up expenditure in excess of the maximum mandatory grant of £30,000, in order to provide suitable facilities to enable her to remain in her own home be approved.
3. That the full amount of any discretionary grant paid would become repayable to the Council if the property is sold within ten years of the completion of the work.

22 **Schools Capital Programme 2017/18**

Cllr Claire Darke presented the report on the priorities for the schools capital programme for 2017-18 for school condition allocation. The report also confirmed funding for devolved formula capital to schools, the locally co-ordinated voluntary aided programme (LCVAP) and basic need up until 2017-18 (including top ups).

Resolved:

1. That the detailed projects for schools condition allocation capital funding in 2017-18 as listed in paragraph 3.3 of the report be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Education in consultation with the Director of Education, to initiate emergency works and asbestos removal works preventing a school closure, the nature of which would not allow sufficient time to gain normal Council approvals, and any such works be confirmed through an Individual Executive Decision Notice.
3. That it be noted that the resources available for implementing the 2017-18 schools capital maintenance programme are provisionally £2 million (This figure would be adjusted once grant confirmed) against a condition backlog of £4.5 million for priority 1 items.
4. That it be noted that the resources available for basic need have been fully committed and future resources, may be required to support the provision of additional pupil places given a continued increase in demand.

23 **City of Wolverhampton Consent to Restructuring of the Wolverhampton LEP and Associated Special Purpose (PFI) Vehicles**

Cllr Claire Darke presented the report on proposals for the restructure on of the Wolverhampton Local Enterprise Partnership. The restructure could only take place with the explicit consent of the Council.

Resolved:

1. That the Panel consents to the restructuring of the Wolverhampton Local Enterprise Partnership and associated Special Purpose Private Finance Initiative (PFI) Vehicles as set out in the report.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Education and Cabinet Member for Resources in consultation with the Director of Education and Director of Finance to approve any changes to the details of this transaction.

3. That the Council enters into the documents set out in the Legal Implications section of the report and any other ancillary documents necessary to complete the restructure.
4. That authority be delegated to the Director of Governance to execute all necessary contract documentation.
5. That it be noted that the proposed restructure can only take place with the explicit consent of the Council.
6. That it be noted that the proposed restructure had been subject to due diligence and is believed to present no financial benefit, detriment or material risk to the Council.

24

West Midlands Growth Company

Cllr John Reynolds presented the report on proposals for the Council's involvement in the West Midlands Growth Company. The Growth Company would play an important role in facilitating the delivery of the West Midlands Combined Authority Strategic Economic Plan. It would also attract more investment, jobs, businesses and visitors to the West Midlands region.

Resolved:

1. That City of Wolverhampton Council be an 'A' Member of the West Midlands Growth Company which is scheduled to go live on 1 May 2017.
2. That the Leader of the Council be the representative of the City of Wolverhampton Council as an 'A' Member of the West Midlands Growth Company.
3. That the proposed budget allocation of £275,000 in year one, and £300,000 in years two and three with an annual performance review, to the West Midlands Growth Company be approved.
4. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Economy, in consultation with the Strategic Director, Place, to agree the details of the Service Level Agreement between the City of Wolverhampton Council and the West Midlands Growth Company.
5. That it be noted that West Midlands Combined Authority Board on 3 March 2017 approved the creation of the West Midlands Growth Company with a scheduled 'go live' date of 1 May 2017.

25

Sale and Leaseback of Alfred Squire Road Offices

Cllr Peter Bilson presented the report which sought authority to progress a sale and leaseback of Alfred Squire Road offices to the Trustees of Wednesfield Guru Nanak Sikh Temple. The offices were surplus to the Council's long term requirements

Resolved:

1. That the Alfred Squire Road Offices be declared surplus to the Council's long terms requirements.

2. That authority be granted to progress a sale and leaseback of Alfred Squire Road Offices to the Trustees of Wednesfield Guru Nanak Sikh Temple.
3. That it be noted that the proposed transaction is linked to a previous option agreed for the priority sale of this asset. Resubmission is due to a variation to the terms of the original option agreement in the favour of the Council.

26 **Declare Surplus and Approve Disposal of the Land at Compton Wharf, Bridgnorth Road**

Cllr Peter Bilson presented the report which sought approval to declare surplus to requirements the freehold interest in the land known as The Wharf, Bridgnorth Road, Compton. Approval was also sought to sell the interest to the existing leaseholder at a value assessed by the District Valuer and agreed by the leaseholder.

Resolved:

1. That the land at Compton Wharf, Bridgnorth Road, which is at present subject to a lease, be declared surplus to requirements.
2. That the disposal of the existing freehold interest of land at Compton Wharf, Bridgnorth Road be approved.

27 **Disposal of Former Ettingshall Primary School Site and Land at Sweetbriar Road**

Cllr Peter Bilson presented the report which sought approval to dispose of part of the former Ettingshall School site together with land at Sweetbriar Road to WV Living and to agree Heads of Terms with the NHS for a lease of part of the site for a temporary medical centre.

Resolved:

That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Housing and Assets in consultation with the Director of Finance to:

1. Agree the Heads of Terms for the disposal of the former Ettingshall Primary School site and land at Sweetbriar Road to WV Living.
2. Transfer the freehold of both sites only to WV Living for the development of housing to WV Living.
3. Agree the Heads of Terms for lease of part of the former Ettingshall Primary School site to the NHS.

28 **Disposal of former Bilston Leisure Centre Site and Bilston Day Nursery**

Cllr Peter Bilson presented the report which sought approval to dispose of the former Bilston Leisure Centre site together with part of the site of the former Day Centre in Prouds Lane to WV Living. Approval was also sought to agree the Heads of Terms with the Bilston Scout Group for disposal of land on which their existing building was located together with the garden area of the former Day Centre and the area of Public Open Space adjacent to their existing premises; and to commence the process of formally advertising the re-designation of the current open space adjacent to the Scout Hall under the Public Open Spaces Act 1906.

Resolved:

That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Housing and Assets in consultation with the Director of Finance to:

1. Agree the Heads of Terms for the disposal of the former Bilston Leisure Centre Site and Bilston Day Nursery site shown at Appendix A to the report to WV Living.
2. Transfer the freehold of the site at Appendix A to WV Living for the development of housing.
3. Agree the Heads of Terms for disposal of the land shown at Appendix B to the report to the Scout Association.
4. Agree the process of formally advertising the re-designation of the current open space adjacent to the Scout Hall shown at Appendix C to the report under the Public Open Spaces Act 1906.

29

Land Adjacent to Bilston Town Football Club

Cllr Peter Bilson presented the report on a proposal to repurchase the land adjacent to Bilston Town Football Club from the current owners. The state of the land had been the subject of complaints to the Council. Following the involvement from Public Protection action had been taken by the owner in summer 2016 to ensure the site was cleared of waste and overgrown vegetation.

Resolved:

That the repurchase of the land adjacent to Bilston Town Football Club from the current owners be approved.