



Meeting of the Council

Minutes - 5 November 2014

Attendance

Mayor Cllr Michael Heap (LibDem)
Deputy Mayor Cllr Ian Brookfield (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Ian Angus	Cllr Jasbinder Dehar	Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Harbans Bagri	Cllr Steve Evans	Cllr Phil Page
Cllr Harman Banger	Cllr Val Evans	Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Mary Bateman	Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal	Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Philip Bateman	Cllr Val Gibson	Cllr John Rowley
Cllr Payal Bedi	Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre	Cllr Sandra Samuels
Cllr Peter Bilson	Cllr Julie Hodgkiss	Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz
Cllr Alan Bolshaw	Cllr Keith Inston	Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Greg Brackenridge	Cllr Jasbir Jaspal	Cllr Tersaim Singh
Cllr Paula Brookfield	Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal	Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Ian Claymore	Cllr Andrew Johnson	Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Craig Collingswood	Cllr Roger Lawrence	Cllr Martin Waite
Cllr Susan Constable	Cllr Linda Leach	Cllr Daniel Warren
Cllr Claire Darke	Cllr Elias Mattu	
Cllr Bishan Dass	Cllr Lorna McGregor	

Conservative

Cllr Barry Findlay	Cllr Paul Singh
Cllr Christopher Haynes	Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Patricia Patten	Cllr Andrew Wynne
Cllr Arun Photay	Cllr Jonathan Yardley

Liberal Democrat

Cllr Richard Whitehouse

UKIP

Cllr Malcolm Gwinnett

Employees

Ian Fegan	Head of Communications
Keith Ireland	Managing Director
Tim Johnson	Strategic Director, Education and Enterprise
Sarah Norman	Strategic Director, Community
Kevin O'Keefe	Chief Legal Officer
Martyn Sargeant	Head of Democratic Services
Mark Taylor	Assistant Director, Finance
John Wright	Democratic Support Manager

[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

The proceedings opened with Prayers

Item No. *Title*

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mark Evans, Christine Mills, Judith Rowley Zahid Shah and Bert Turner

2 Declarations of interest

Keith Ireland, Kevin O’Keefe and Mark Taylor declared a pecuniary in agenda item 6 “Senior Management Restructure”

3 Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record.

4 Communications

1. Presentation of Resolution of Thanks

The Mayor presented Councillor Milkinder Jaspal with the Council’s Resolution of Thanks as a memento of his year as Mayor in 2013-2014. Councillor Jaspal expressed his thanks and stated how much he had enjoyed his year as Mayor.

2. Points of Order

The Mayor clarified the Constitutional position regarding raising either a point of interest or a point of order during the course of the meeting

3. Dutch War Graves Remembrance Service

The Mayor invited councillors to participate in the annual Service of Remembrance for Dutch soldiers from the Princess Irene Brigade, buried at Jeffcock Road Cemetery. A service would take place on Saturday 8th November at Jeffcock Road Cemetery,

4. Festival of Remembrance and Remembrance Sunday Services

The Mayor paid tribute to all those who had been involved in organising the Festival of Remembrance on 2 November. He paid particular tribute to the work of Councillor Linda Leach.

The Mayor also reminded councillors of the arrangements for the Remembrance Sunday Service which would be held on Sunday, 9th November.

5. Civic Carol Service

The mayor invited councillors to attend the Civic Carol Service which would take place on Thursday, 4th December at Darlington Street Methodist Church.

5 **Petition - E13 - 14 Neighbourhood Wardens**

Rev Sarah Scofield spoke in support of a petition which requested the retention of neighbourhood wardens.

Cllr Mattu, as Cabinet Member for Leisure and Communities responded

It was moved by Councillor Mattu and seconded by Councillor Lawrence that

1. That the terms of the petition and the support for it be noted
2. That the petition should be taken into account as part of the Council's savings proposals 2015-16 consultation exercise.
3. It be noted that the petition had been submitted in response to proposals that have not yet been approved.
4. That the petition be referred for inclusion in the analysis of the outcome of the Council's saving proposals consultation exercise where the concerns of the petitioners will be given due regard alongside any other comments and concerns expressed by all other respondents to the consultation exercise before Cabinet decides on how it wishes to proceed.

The issues raised in the petition were debated

The Rev Scofield suggested that a focus group be established to discuss ways in which some or all the wardens service may be retained. Councillor Mattu indicated that he would happy to participate in such a group.

The Mayor thanked Rev Scofield for her contribution to the meeting

Resolved

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2. That the petition should be taken into account as part of the Council's savings proposals 2015-16 consultation exercise.
3. It be noted that the petition had been submitted in response to proposals that have not yet been approved.
4. That the petition be referred for inclusion in the analysis of the outcome of the Council's saving proposals consultation exercise where the concerns of the petitioners will be given due regard alongside any other comments and concerns expressed by all other respondents to the consultation exercise before Cabinet decides on how it wishes to proceed.

6 **Senior Management Structure**

Having declared an interest Keith Ireland, Kevin O'Keefe and Mark Taylor left the room and took no part in the consideration of this item

It was moved by Cllr Lawrence and seconded by Cllr Thompson and

Resolved

a) Appointment of Managing Director

That Keith Ireland be appointed as Managing Director and Head of Paid Service for the City Council. The appointment to be effective from Thursday 6 November. The appointment to be subject to the Senior Management Terms and Conditions of Employment. The starting salary to be £140,000 per annum (which will not be paid until 1 January 2015).

b) Appointment of Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer and Solicitor to the Council

1. That the following attachments of statutory officer duties be made until further notice:

Section 151 Officer - Mark Taylor

Monitoring Officer – Kevin O'Keefe

Solicitor to the Council – Kevin O'Keefe

2. These duties are attached to the person and not a specific post. There is no additional payment for undertaking these duties.
3. That any future changes to the Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer will be upon recommendation of the Head of Paid Service for the approval of Council.
4. That the Deputy Section 151 Officer(s) and Deputy Monitoring Officer(s) be appointed by the Head of Paid Service.

c) Special Appointment Committees

Council is recommended to approve the formation of a Special Appointments Committee to appoint an interim Strategic Director – Community (or its successor post) and other appointments arising from the forthcoming restructure of the Council's senior management during 2014 and 2015.

The Committee will consist of five Labour members and two Conservative members in accordance with the Constitution, those members to be nominated by the Leader of the Council (Labour members) and the Leader of the Opposition (Conservative members).

The Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition may appoint substitute members for specific appointments should it be necessary to replace a particular nominee.

7 Review of polling stations, places and districts

It was moved by Cllr Sweet and seconded by Cllr Johnson and

Resolved

1. That following the statutory consultation the polling station arrangements for the 2015 elections, be approved
2. That the contingency arrangements for Heath Town and Bushbury South and Low Hill wards be approved to allow for possible non-availability of premises.
3. That St Chad's Youth and Community Centre be replaced by Bantock Primary School as the polling station for polling district NDA in the Graiseley ward.

8 Audit Committee Annual Report - 2013/14

It was moved by Cllr Inston and seconded by Cllr Thompson and

Resolved

That the contents of the 2013/14 Audit Committee Annual Report be approved.

9 Health Scrutiny Arrangements

It was moved by Cllr Ian Brookfield and seconded by Cllr Wynne and

Resolved

1. That the Council discharge its health scrutiny powers as follows:
 - a) Health scrutiny to be delegated to the Health Scrutiny Panel;
 - b) Responses to consultations by relevant NHS bodies and relevant health service providers on substantial reconfiguration proposals to be delegated to the Health Scrutiny Panel, and
 - c) Referral of NHS substantial reconfiguration proposals to the Secretary of State to be retained by full Council.
2. That the composition of the Health Scrutiny Panel to be increased to include three co-opted members from Wolverhampton HealthWatch and that they be accorded full voting rights.
3. That should a joint health scrutiny committee with another local authority be required the arrangements for this should be constituted by full Council on a need-by-need basis.

4. That the process for Wolverhampton HealthWatch or HealthWatch contractors to refer a matter to the local authority to be as follows:
 - a) All referrals should be sent to the Scrutiny Team;
 - b) all referrals to be acknowledged by the Scrutiny team within twenty working days;
 - c) the referral to be considered by the next available Health Scrutiny Panel, and
 - d) a response to the referral to be given to HealthWatch or HealthWatch contractors within five working days after consideration by the Health Scrutiny Panel.

10 **Executive Business**

Cllr Mattu responded to questions relating to the Black Country Growth deal Resolved

That the Summary of Executive Business be noted

11 **Questions**

Car Parking Charges

Councillor Thompson asked Cllr Reynolds, the Cabinet Member for City Services, the following question:-

“Can the Cabinet Member advise Council of when it intends to reduce charges on council-owned car parks serving the City Centre in order to encourage more shoppers there, and to help to reverse the on-going and steady exodus of retailers?”

Cllr Reynolds replied that car parking charges had been reduced in 2011 and 2012 and not increased over the following two years. He stated that it was now cheaper to park in Wolverhampton than any of the twenty five largest conurbations.

Cllr Thompson asked a supplementary question about the popularity of Bentley Bridge shopping centre as it had free parking, the possible introduction of free parking on Sundays and suggested that there was cheaper parking available elsewhere in country.

Cllr Reynolds outlined the experience of Aberystwyth where, at the request of traders free parking had been introduced. Spaces were filled by commuters stopping shoppers visiting the city and payment had to be reintroduced. He referred to a survey carried out by the Association of Town and City Managers which showed that drivers were more concerned about the location of car parks and ease of access to the city centre than with the price of parking. He stated that the council operated 33 car parks many which were free. The biggest issue in the city was provision of additional spaces during busy periods

GCSE Results

Councillor Thompson asked Cllr Page the Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Learning the following question:-

“Can the Cabinet Member explain to Council the reasons that he believes are responsible for Wolverhampton being shown to be the eighth worst local education authority in the country in terms of its GCSE results this year?”

Cllr Page replied that the low attainment levels of two academies had impacted on the overall performance figures for the city.

Cllr Thompson asked a supplementary question about the connection between of poor results, the low number of primary schools rated as good primaries and the city having the 4th highest unemployment in the country. She asked how leadership was being provided to raise the performance level in schools

Cllr Page referred to a press release issued on 29 August which showed that Key Stage 1 and 2 results were the best ever recorded. He referred to the previous decision to delete the post of Director of Education which was about to be reintroduced. Senior schools to which the Council provided support all met or exceeded the levels of attainment set by the Department of Education. The Council was working with working with the Department of Education and Ofsted and the academies to improve standards. Of the 29 inspections carried out by Ofsted five schools required improvement and one was in 1 special measures. Each of those schools had already been working with the Council on improvement. An improvement strategy would be reported in December and Headteachers had been involved in the creation of the strategy.