



Meeting of the Cabinet

Minutes - 14 January 2015

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Roger Lawrence (Chair)
Cllr Peter Bilson (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Val Gibson
Cllr Andrew Johnson
Cllr Elias Mattu
Cllr Phil Page
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Sandra Samuels
Cllr Paul Sweet

Employees

| | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| Dereck Francis | Democratic Support Officer |
| Keith Ireland | Managing Director |
| Mark Taylor | Director of Finance |
| Tony Ivko | Service Director - Older People |
| Kevin O'Keefe | Director of Governance |
| Tim Johnson | Strategic Director - Place |

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 (10 December 2014)**
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 December 2014 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 **Housing Revenue Account Business Plan (including 2015/16 budget rents and service charges)**

Cllr Peter Bilson presented a report on an updated Housing Revenue Account business plan. The report also provided, as an integral part of that business plan, a proposed HRA budget for 2015/16, including proposed rents and service charges to take effect from 6 April 2015, and a proposed HRA capital programme for the period 2014/15 to 2019/20, for recommendation to full Council.

Cllr Bilson informed Cabinet that consultations on the 2015/16 budget had been carried out by Wolverhampton Homes on behalf of the Council. It was proposed to recommend to Full Council average rent increases of 3.11% with effect from 6 April 2015. This was neither the lowest or highest rent that could have been recommended, but was below the limit rent the in accordance with Government guidelines. The HRA would also fund an investment programme of £2.0 billion of capital works that would be required to the Council's houses over the next 30 years.

Resolved:

A. That Full Council be recommended to:

1. Adopt the business plan set out at appendix A as the approved Housing Revenue Account (HRA) business plan, including:
 - (a) The revenue budget for 2015/16 set out in the plan;
 - (b) The capital programme for 2014/15 to 2019/20 set out in the plan.
2. Approve an increase in rents for HRA dwellings of an average of 3.11% with effect from 6 April 2015.
3. Increase rents for HRA garages by 3.11%, with effect from 1 April 2015.
4. Approve that HRA service charges and district heating charges are set at the levels detailed in appendix B3, with effect from 1 April 2015.
5. Approve that Hostel charges are set at the levels detailed in appendix B4, with effect from 1 April 2015.
6. Note the charges to be levied on tenants and leaseholders by Wolverhampton Homes set out in appendix B5 are noted.

B. That Full Council is asked to note:

1. The forecast outturn against the 2014/15 revenue budget is a surplus before allocations of £18.9 million compared to a budgeted surplus of £11.9 million.
2. That carelink charges are currently under review.
3. That the Council places on record its sincere thanks to all those tenants' representatives and all other stakeholders and partners who put forward views and comments during the consultation process

6 **2015/16 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 - 2018/19 - Provisional Local Government Settlement Update**

Cllr Andrew Johnson presented a report which updated Cabinet on the 2015/16 provisional local government settlement. He informed Cabinet that there had been little change with the illustrative 2015/16 settlement which the Council received as part of its 2014/15 settlement in January 2014. Its impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy was £400,000.

He drew Cabinet's attention to comparative data for the 2014/15 settlement to 2015/16 that illustrated year on year how Wolverhampton had seen a substantial reduction in its spending power. He also informed Cabinet that he had met the Local Government Minister yesterday when the issue of funding had been raised. There was no signal of more resources going into local government because of the national picture but the point had been made that the Council had been badly treated in terms of its settlements.

Resolved:

1. That the outcome of the 2015/16 provisional local government finance settlement be noted.
2. That it be noted that the update to Cabinet on 4 February 2015 would reflect the outcome of budget consultation, which is due to be complete on 15 January 2015. That report would also include the outcome of detailed budget work for 2015/16 including a review of all savings and the risks associated with their delivery.

7 **Council Tax Taxbase 2015/16 and Approval of NNDR (Business Rates) Net Rate Yield 2015/16**

Cllr Andrew Johnson presented a report seeking Cabinet approval to set the Collection Fund for 2015/16, which the council manages on behalf of precepting bodies and central government.

Resolved:

1. That the Collection Fund Council Tax Base for 2015/16 be set at 59,103.95 Band D equivalents.
2. That the Collection Fund Business Rates (NDR) Net Rate Yield for 2015/16 be set at £75.8 million.
3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources in consultation with the Director of Finance to approve amendments to:
 - a) the final NDR net rate yield as required as a result of changes to the NNDR1 form (national non-domestic rates return) by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) or data revisions and changes in projections;
 - b) the Council Tax Base as a result of any data revisions and changes in projections.

8 **Collection Fund Estimated Outturn 2014/15**

Cllr Andrew Johnson presented the report on the estimated outturn for council tax and NDR (business rate) transactions on the Collection Fund in 2014/15. He informed Cabinet of a surplus on both council tax and business rates on the Collection Fund. The council tax surplus had been achieved despite the challenges that were presented by the council tax reduction scheme. He paid tribute to employees within the Council's Revenues Team for their efforts in achieving the surplus against the background of the revise council tax reduction scheme.

Resolved:

1. That the payments to the precepting authorities of their share of the council tax surplus in equal instalments be approved.

The estimated outturn in 2014/15 is a cumulative surplus of £1.1 million. Based on their proportion of the 2014/15 council tax bill, as approved by Council in March 2014 the amounts are as follows:

- Wolverhampton City Council £980,000
- West Midlands Police £76,000
- West Midlands Fire Service £39,000

2. That the payments to central government and the precepting authority of their share of the business rates (NDR) surplus in equal instalments be approved.

The estimated outturn in 2014/15 is a cumulative surplus of £124,000. As prescribed by legislation the amounts are as follows:

- Wolverhampton City Council £61,000
- Central Government £62,000
- West Midlands Fire Service £1,000

3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to confirm any final changes to the forecast outturn reflecting any further information received ahead of the statutory deadline of 31 January 2015

9 **Introduction of Local Controls Regarding the use of Sky Lanterns**

Cllr Roger Lawrence presented the report on a proposal to introduce local controls regarding the use of sky lanterns at council run events and private events that are undertaken on Council owned land and to seek to use licensing controls to curtail the use of sky lanterns on private sites.

Whilst there was little evidence to suggest that sky lanterns had caused problems within Wolverhampton, on occasions they had been the cause of serious fires with devastating effects on property, assets and lives.

Resolved:

1. That the review of the Statement of Licensing Policy to allow the Licensing Authority to restrict the use of sky lanterns at licensed premises under the public safety licensing objective be approved .

2. That the use of licensing controls to restrict the use of sky lanterns at approved marriage venues be approved.
3. That the inclusion of a condition in the terms of use for Council owned land (highways, parks, the piazza, etc.) that restricts the release of sky lanterns when land is hired for events be approved.
4. That the implementation of a local policy prohibiting/ limiting the use of sky lanterns at all Council organised events be approved.
5. That Government be lobbied to introduce national controls on the use of sky lanterns

10 **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 item(s) of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within the paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Act set out below:

| <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> | <i>Applicable paragraph</i> |
|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 11 | Outcome of consultation on proposals for the Old Tree Nursery | 3 |
| 12 | Outcome of consultation on the future of the Supported Employment Service | 3 |

11 **Outcome of consultation on proposals for the Old Tree Nursery**

Cabinet received a report on the consultation process that has been undertaken about the future of Old Tree Nursery, which is part of the All Age Disability service and works with adults with a learning disability. Cllr Steve Evans requested Cabinet approval to proceed with further discussions with Heantun Housing Association/ The Accord Group in relation to their expression of interest of Old Tree Nursery.

Resolved:

That the proposal to proceed with further discussions with Heantun Housing Association/ The Accord Group in relation to their expression of interest of Old Tree Nursery be approved.

12 **Outcome of consultation on the future of the Supported Employment Service**

Cllr Steve Evans asked Cabinet to receive the report on feedback from the consultation on future options for the Supported Employment Service which was designed to support people with a learning disability into paid employment. He also sought approval to proceed with further discussions with Shropshire Council in relation to their expression of interest to take over the Supported Employment Service.

Resolved:

That the proposal to proceed with further discussions with Shropshire Council in relation to their expression of interest to take over the Supported Employment Service be approved.