

Attendance

Mayor Cllr Phil Page (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Obaida Ahmed
Cllr Ian Angus
Cllr Harbans Bagri
Cllr Harman Banger
Cllr Mary Bateman
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE
Cllr Payal Bedi-Chadha
Cllr Peter Bilson
Cllr Alan Bolshaw
Cllr Greg Brackenridge
Cllr Ian Brookfield
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Alan Butt
Cllr Craig Collingswood
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar

Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Val Gibson
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Celia Hibbert
Cllr Keith Inston
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal
Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur
Cllr Roger Lawrence
Cllr Hazel Malcolm
Cllr Asha Mattu
Cllr Barbara McGarrity
Cllr Louise Miles
Cllr Beverley Momenabadi

Cllr Lynne Moran
Cllr Anwen Muston
Cllr Peter O'Neill
Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Susan Roberts MBE
Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE
Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz
Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Clare Simm
Cllr Mak Singh
Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Martin Waite

Conservative

Cllr Simon Bennett
Cllr Sohail Khan
Cllr Paul Singh
Cllr Udey Singh

Cllr Jane Stevenson
Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Jonathan Yardley

Employees

Tim Johnson
Kevin O'Keefe
Mark Taylor
Claire Nye
Ross Cook
Laura Phillips
Kate Martin
Ian Fegan
Jaswinder Kaur
Dereck Francis

Managing Director
Director of Governance
Strategic Director - People
Director of Finance
Service Director - City Environment
Head of Business Management
Director of City Housing
Head of Communications
Democratic Services Manager
Democratic Services Officer

The proceedings opened with Prayers

Item No. Title

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Claire Darke, Christopher Haynes, Linda Leach, Arun Photay and John Rowley.

2 Declarations of interest

Kevin O’Keefe, Director of Governance advised that the following declarations of interests had been made:

Agenda item 6 – Statement of Gambling Policy:

| Councillor | Interest | Reason |
|------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Ian Angus | Disclosable non-pecuniary | Employee of the Gambling Commission |

Agenda item 8 – Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2019-2010 including Rents and Service Charges:

| Councillor | Interest | Reason |
|----------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Alan Bolshaw | Disclosable non-pecuniary | Wolverhampton Homes Tenant |
| Peter O’Neill | Disclosable non-pecuniary | Wolverhampton Homes Tenant |
| Asha Mattu | Disclosable non-pecuniary | Wolverhampton Homes Board Member |
| Zee Russell | Disclosable non-pecuniary | Wolverhampton Homes Board Member |
| Rita Potter | Disclosable non-pecuniary | Wolverhampton Homes Board Member |
| Ian Brookfield | Disclosable non-pecuniary | Wolverhampton Homes Leaseholder |
| Sohail Khan | Disclosable non-pecuniary | Wolverhampton Homes Leaseholder |
| Paul Singh | Disclosable non-pecuniary | Wolverhampton Homes Board Member |

The following Councillors also declared interests in agenda item 8:

| Councillor | Interest | Reason |
|-------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Payal Bedi-Chadha | Disclosable non-pecuniary | Wolverhampton Homes Landlord |
| Susan Roberts MBE | Disclosable non-pecuniary | Wolverhampton Homes Tenant |

3 Minutes of previous meeting

The Mayor proposed, Councillor Peter Bilson seconded, and it was resolved:

That subject to apologies being recorded from Councillors Alan Butt, Ian Brookfield, Keith Inston, John Rowley and Claire Simm and Councillor Louise Miles being recorded as being present, the minutes of the previous meeting held on 5 December 2018, be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

4 **Communications**

1. **The Queen's New Year's Honours**

The Mayor extended congratulations to the following individuals who received royal recognition in the Queen's New Year's Honours:

- Keith Ireland who was the Council's Managing Director from 2014-2018, received an OBE for services to Local Government in the West Midlands.
- Dr Joshua Johnson received an MBE for services to Karate and the community in Wolverhampton.
- Susan Allen received The BEM for voluntary services to the Heath Town community.

The Mayor had written to all three recipients expressing the Council's congratulations on their well-deserved awards.

2. **Orange Wolverhampton Campaign**

The Mayor reported that the City of Wolverhampton once again supported the United Nations' annual 16-day campaign to "Orange the World" and end gender-based violence.

The Mayor added Councillors were encouraged to support Orange Wolverhampton and raise awareness of the issue of violence against women and girls and to help highlight the support which was available to victims locally.

The Mayor added the campaign, which ran from 25 November to 10 December, encouraged wearing an orange ribbon and sharing key messages, to holding orange-themed events and activities. The event was shared on social media, using the hashtag #orangewolves, and was once again very well supported by the citizens of Wolverhampton.

3. **Christmas Jumper Day**

The Mayor reported that Councillors and officers were invited to wear Christmas jumpers in December to raise money for his chosen charities. He thanked everyone who took part, their generosity raised over £700 pounds.

4. **Literature Festival**

The Mayor informed Council that the full programme for City of Wolverhampton's third Literature Festival in February 2019 had been announced.

The Mayor added that over 100 events were confirmed, the festival would again offer a vast scope of literary-related workshops, readings, presentations and performances, with the majority of events happening over three days from Friday 1 February to Sunday 3 February, at venues across the city.

The full programme of events was available on the Wolverhampton Literature Festival website: www.wolvesliteraturefestival.co.uk

5 **State of City Address**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Roger Lawrence delivered his State of the City address. He highlighted the achievements of the City, actions taken, future significant challenges and opportunities to come. In doing so he informed Council that facing all of these challenges required a longer-term solution and a longer-term plan. That was why he was announcing today that he would not be standing for re-election for the role of Leader of the Council from May 2019. After 17 years as Group Leader and going on for 15 years as Council Leader he believed that he had done his utmost to help support the City. He would remain as Leader until the May 2019 election and would continue to lead the City Council with all the eager energies he had done in the past. He would also remain a councillor for at least the remainder of his office.

At the end of his State of the City address Councillors stood and gave the Leader generous applause.

Councillor Wendy Thompson provided the principle speech in response to the State of the City Address.

6 **Statement of Gambling Policy**

Councillor Alan Bolshaw presented the revised Statement of Gambling Policy for approval. He advised Licensing Authorities were required to prepare and consult upon a Statement of Gambling Policy every three years. As part of the review a local area assessment had also been developed and it was envisaged that this would lead to a higher quality of applications.

Councillor Alan Bolshaw proposed the recommendation and Councillor Steve Evans seconded the recommendation.

In response to Councillor Udey Singh's question on the Gambling policy it was agreed that the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing would provide a written response.

Resolved:

That the revised Statement of Gambling Policy be approved.

7 **Local Council Tax Support Scheme**

Councillor Louise Miles presented the Local Council Tax Scheme for approval. She advised that revisions had been made to the local tax scheme following consultation and the Council would continue to support working age families.

Councillor Louise Miles proposed the recommendations and Councillor Peter Bilson seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That a revision to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme be approved so that changes in entitlement of £3 or less were not applied.

2. That a revision to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme be approved so that the financial and household information used to assess entitlement to Universal Credit was used to calculate council tax support.
3. That a revision to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme be approved so that claims would be accepted from notification of an award of Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance (income-based), Employment and Support Allowance (income-related) or Universal Credit.
4. That the revised scheme be adopted from 1 April 2019.
5. That a scheme of transitional protection be approved for 2019-2020.

8 **Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2019-2020 including Rents and Service Charges**

Councillor Peter Bilson presented the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2019-2020 including Rents and Service Charges for approval. He advised the additional borrowing flexibility provided real opportunities for the Council to increase the provision of new homes for rent, whilst continuing to invest in better and safer homes programmes to the existing stock and improving and redeveloping housing estates.

Councillor Peter Bilson, added the report also provided, as an integral part of that Business Plan, a proposed HRA budget for 2019-2020, including proposed rents and service charges to take effect from 1 April 2019, and a proposed HRA Capital Programme for the period 2019-2020 to 2022-2023 for approval.

Councillor Peter Bilson proposed the recommendations and Councillor Louise Miles seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That the 1% reduction in social housing rents be implemented in accordance with the Welfare Reform and Work Act and 28 days' notice be given to all secure and introductory tenants of the rent reduction from 1 April 2019 be approved.
2. That the Business Plan set out at Appendix 1 to this report be adopted as the approved Housing Revenue Account Business Plan including:
 - a. The revenue budget for 2019-2020 at Appendix 1B to this report
 - b. The Capital Programme for 2019-2020 to 2023-2024 at Appendix 1C to this report to include the following;
 - Provision of £24.0 million for estate remodelling
 - An increase to the budget for the refurbishment of Heath Town Estate of £10.1 million
 - An addition of £15.0 million to the budget for High Rise mechanical and electrical infrastructure
 - Total new build programme provision of £157.3 million with £5.0 million for community housing development at Bushbury Hill, £4.0 million for phase 5 of the small sites programme and £60.0 million set aside for future development.

3. That the rates for garage rents and service charges set out in Appendix 2 to the report be approved, and tenants be notified formally. There was a one stepped increase to approve, all other charges remained the same.

9 **i54 Western Extension**

Councillor John Reynolds presented the i54 Western Extension for approval. He advised the report provided an update on the current position of i54 and the resulting outcomes and economic benefits. It also set out the current status of i54 Western Extension and the funding and delivery strategy for delivery of the City's 60 acres through to realisation of outputs.

Councillor John Reynolds proposed the recommendations and Councillor Roger Lawrence seconded the recommendations.

Resolved:

1. That it be agreed, to be a 50:50 investment partner for the i54 Western Extension which was to be funded through the funding strategy and driving principles.
2. That a phased budget approach working on the principles of working with the partners to secure and maximise grant funding and contributions, use of capital receipts generated from the site and any with borrowing being repaid from future business rates generated from the site be approved.
3. That it be approved, that the use of the capital receipts generated from the site form part of the funding package.
4. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Economy and Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Director of Finance, to:
 - a. approve supplementary capital budgets for Phase 1, 2 and 3 on the basis that budgets are fully funded through external funding, existing borrowing approvals and contributions from Staffordshire County Council.
 - b. approve Phase 1, 2 and 3 capital budgets to cover the potential transfer of Staffordshire County Council's 50% share of grants and contributions in accordance with the funding strategy.

10 **Motions on Notice**

a. Black Country Flag

Councillor Paul Singh moved the following motion:

'That this Council recognises that the people of Wolverhampton are immensely proud of their Black Country heritage. It is at the heart of our community and has brought people together for generations. This Council therefore embraces the Black Country flag and agrees to fly it outside the Civic Centre building every day as a reminder of the pride we have in our wonderful City'.

Councillor Paul Singh outlined the rationale for the motion. Councillor Udey Singh seconded the motion.

Councillor Roger Lawrence moved the following amendment to the motion:

‘That the motion be referred to the Governance Committee who would be requested to carry out a full review of the Council’s flag flying protocol.’

Councillor Roger Lawrence outlined the rationale for the proposed amendment. Councillor Beverley Momenabadi seconded the amendment to the motion.

The amended motion was debated by Council.

Resolved:

That the motion be referred to the Governance Committee who would be requested to carry out a full review of the Council’s flag flying protocol.’

b. Tettenhall Pool

Councillor Jonathan Yardley moved the following motion:

‘That this Council notes the overwhelming support from residents for keeping Tettenhall Pool open; agrees to start repair works immediately so that the pool can open as usual on the Spring Bank Holiday; and regrets that the future of the pool was ever called into question’.

Councillor Jonathan Yardley outlined the rationale for the motion. Councillor Jane Stevenson seconded the motion.

Councillor Steve Evans moved the following amendment to the motion:

‘This Council thanks and recognises the response to our consultation on how best to spend the Section 106 monies from the developer. The Council further recognises the outcome and would procure the appropriate specialist contractor to carry out the necessary works to ensure that Tettenhall Pool was safe to use and be enjoyed by residents for many years to come’.

Councillor Steve Evans outlined the rationale for the proposed amendment. Councillor Roger Lawrence seconded the amendment to the motion.

The amended motion was debated by Council.

Resolved:

That this Council thanks and recognises the response to our consultation on how best to spend the Section 106 monies from the developer. The Council further recognises the outcome and would procure the appropriate specialist contractor to carry out the necessary works to ensure that Tettenhall Pool was safe to use and be enjoyed by residents for many years to come’.

Questions to Cabinet Members

a. Pupils' achievement and progress

Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre asked the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills:

'Would the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills care to comment upon the following; the improvement curve at Key Stage 2 in Wolverhampton pupils' achievement, Continuing progress at Key Stage 4 and the improvement in OFSTED outcomes between 2009 and 2018.'

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Councillor Lynne Moran responded that she could confirm the improvement curve at Key Stage 2 for our 10 and 11 year olds, followed by continuing progress to Key Stage 4. Between 2009 and 2018 there was a distinct improvement in OFSTED outcomes. This City stands for investing in long life learning to ensure that all our residents, very young and older can engage with education and training to prepare them for quality lives and real sustained employment opportunities. The performance of Wolverhampton pupils at Key Stage 2 had shown steady improvement since 2009. Validated results for 2018, against the new and more challenging curriculum and assessment system, indicated that 65% of pupils have reached the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Maths. This was an increase of 5 percentage points from 2017 and was the first time that Wolverhampton had been above the national averages with a ranking of 72 (out of 151) in the country. Specifically there had been great improvement in reading for Wolverhampton pupils at Key Stage 2. Validated results for 2018 indicated that 77% of pupils have reached the expected standard. This was an increase of 12 percentage points from 2016 and again the first time that Wolverhampton had been above national with a ranking of 52 (of 151) in the country.

She added in respect of continuing progress at Key Stage 4, the 2018 outcomes indicated that pupils achieving a strong 9-5 pass in English and Maths had increased and was 36.4% compared to 40% nationally. This ranked Wolverhampton 133 in the country. There was still work to do but our secondary schools progress was in exactly the right direction. Currently 69% of secondary schools were judged by OFSTED to be Good or Outstanding with sure signs of improvement in the other schools.

She added in December 2018, 81% of all schools (primary and secondary) in Wolverhampton were good or outstanding with nearly 40,000 pupils attending good schools in the last year. The great news was that 98% (53 out of 54) Local Authority maintained schools in Wolverhampton were judged good or outstanding by OFSTED.

She added the measure of a good or outstanding school was much more about leadership and governance than about academy or local authority maintained status. She congratulated students, school teachers, the local authority support improvement staff and parents for all of their hard work and on these ever improving results notwithstanding dwindling resources from central government.'

Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre asked the Cabinet Member the following supplementary question:

‘Does the Cabinet Member agree that the Tory policy of Austerity means that Wolverhampton children and families have been incredibly successful given the cut backs caused by the Tory Government and the Austerity they have put forward.’

The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills responded she believed there was a connection between childrens’ ability to succeed and their backgrounds and opportunities at home. The Conservative Government austerity does undermine public services. If we were not careful we could be on the brink of only delivering statutory services because there would not be any money to do anything else, and education had of course borne its share of funding cuts.

She added it was not clear to her that academisation had been helpful, although at least the funding formula now treated academies and local authority-maintained schools just the same and that was an improvement. To be factual, 4.1 million children were living in poverty by the end of 2017. That was 30% of nine children in every class of 30. There may be inner cities that bear a disproportionate amount of children who were actually disadvantaged. The UK was the fifth largest economy and yet we preside over this shameful state of affairs. She had now visited nearly half of Wolverhampton’s schools and seen for herself the extent to which less fortunate children do cause concern. The home school liaison work, family engagement and the focus upon the attendance. Schools staff invest in this work because they know that children cannot learn effectively if they were worried, if they live in cramped circumstances or if they were uncomfortable. Both food and items of uniform are secured for children in need in our schools today and tomorrow and the next day. It is to their credit the children in schools exceed ever better notwithstanding the penny pushing, bean counting political climate. The Council should feel proud of them all.’

b. Fly tipping funding

Councillor Udey Singh asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment:

‘Fly tipping in Wolverhampton continues to increase, particularly since opening hours at the City’s rubbish tips were reduced. Can the Cabinet Member for City Environment please disclose how much had been spent by the Council in each of the last five years to tackle this serious problem?’

The Cabinet Member for City Environment, Councillor Steve Evans responded that fly tipping had not increased over the last five years. The following table sets out the picture:

| Financial Year | Reported incidents | Estimated costs |
|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 2014/15 | 2,250 | 338k |
| 2015/16 | 2,611 | 392k |
| 2016/17 | 1,864 | 280k |
| 2017/18 | 2,088 | 313k |
| 2018/19 | 1,799 | 270k* (*April -Dec) |

He added it was anticipated that the estimated cost in 2018/19 would rise slightly by the end of the financial year. From a peak in 2015/16 to this year and over subsequent years we have seen a 25% reduction in the spend. That was

testament to the work of the officers and their team who attacked what was a national issue. We have also seen a reduction of 31% in reported incidents and we have renewed, re-energised and relaunched a new and radical campaign, to add to the excellent work that had been carried out. Already we have seen a 50% reduction in fly tipping incidents.

Councillor Udey Singh asked the Cabinet Member the following supplementary question:

After reducing household waste collection services, garden waste collection services, household recycling services and rubbish tip opening hours, the Cabinet Member now wants to hand out rewards to people who report fly tippers despite only 30 people being fined from 17,000 separate incidents. Will the Cabinet Member now finally see sense and open up the rubbish tips seven days a week and totally scrap the restrictive tip permit.

The Cabinet Member for City Environment responded that he had already reported on the Council's plans to open a new supersite seven days a week, with longer operating hours. The Labour Group was the only side who, within the budget restraints, have increased the opening hours. It was the only side to put forward sensible solutions. The Conservative Group want to get rid of the permits and allow waste traders to use the tip for nothing, whereas we want to get the waste traders into the bigger site. In addition, with the 'Shop a Tipper' campaign the £100 reward comes out of the £400 fine. If you report someone that leads to a conviction and the issue of the fixed penalty notice of £400 you would receive the £100 reward.

c. Westside project

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the Cabinet Member for City Economy:

"In April 2016, Urban & Civic were selected as the development partner for the Westside project. Nearly three years on, not a single brick has been laid. Can the Cabinet Member for City Economy inform us when we will finally see building works commencing?"

The Cabinet Member for City Economy, Councillor John Reynolds responded that the Council entered into contract with Urban&Civic (U&C) in April 2017 for the delivery of a leisure-led scheme anchored by a multi-screen cinema, ancillary leisure uses and restaurants. This followed a period of exclusivity (which commenced in July 2016) with the developer as the Council's *preferred* delivery partner. Since entering into contract, U&C secured outline planning approval in January 2018 and with the benefit of planning consent, the developer had been negotiating with prospective operators for the scheme.

He added U&C report good progress on the uptake from operators and we were confident of finalising arrangements with U&C shortly for the commencement of the scheme. However, this was a commercially led scheme so inevitably the programme was always going to be influenced by prevailing market conditions which were outside the direct control of the Council. We know from having engaged many other local authorities delivering similar schemes that these challenges were not unique to Wolverhampton. A full update report was proposed for Cabinet 20 February 2019.'

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the Cabinet Member the following supplementary question:

‘Is the Cabinet Member aware the Westside link that is being proposed is already being described as the road to nowhere’.

The Cabinet Member for City Economy responded that he had two quotes from people to share. The Council would have seen in the last few days a boss of a national chain saying Wolverhampton is on the up. Tim Martin, the boss of Wetherspoon’s, the pub chain when he was announcing a hotel development and a national museum to be based in Wolverhampton. The second quote was on Twitter from Mr Anderson, Conservative candidate for Wolverhampton south-west, who responding to a council story about the council being on the up said it certainly was. The Cabinet Member concluded by saying the Council was going to make sure that the scheme happens. It was doing its utmost to make sure that it happens and we needed to be positive about Urban&Civic to make it happen rather than being negative.

d. Cash reward for fly tipping

Councillor Simon Bennett asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment:

‘Can the Cabinet Member for City Environment explain what evidence there is that a cash reward for reporting fly tipping will lead to a reduction in the crime, and not just an increase in cost to the Council?’

The Cabinet Member for City Environment, Councillor Steve Evans responded that there are dozens of academic studies. *Skinner (1976)*, who identified that incentivising positive behaviour can be an effective tool in promoting behavioural change. *Draca M, and Machin, S (2015 revised)*, in *Crime and Economic Incentives*, complete annual review of research papers looking at the relationship between economic incentives on both reporting crime, and the participation of individuals in criminal behaviour.

He added Crimestoppers offer a reward because it was conducive for people in the community coming forward and wanting to do the right thing. That was why the Council was mirroring what Crimestoppers do. We know from the academic studies that rewards do lead to more people coming forward. Sometimes anonymous reports work but cash incentives and rewards work even better. That was why if a bank is robbed they offer a reward leading to a conviction, otherwise no one would come forward with information. If you offer a reward people come forward and do the right thing. So there were plenty of studies and evidence that say rewards work. The Council was not just throwing money around.

Councillor Simon Bennett asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment the following supplementary question:

‘If fly tipping is reducing please explain why much-needed funds are being spent on slick city and not clean city, because that is all our residents want or in fact worthy of the purple bins.’

The Cabinet Member for City Environment, Councillor Steve Evans responded that he was not sure that the Council was spending funds on purple bins. The reality was the Council was not giving away money. As Cabinet Member he was

getting on with the business of trying to support Wolverhampton and make it cleaner, greener, and better. He had said previously that the reductions in fly tipping was testament to the hard work employees put in. There would be further reductions going forward and this could already be seen. The Council had already seized one vehicle and had another ten under investigation. We would be seeking custodial sentences for people who fly tip waste. There were a number of investigations and a number of prosecutions already in the Courts. We would continue with this approach because it was the right policies to pursue. Regarding comments being made about the tip, the tip is not closed. People were using the service. Fly tippers, a small minority of them were criminals because it was a criminal activity. In a lot of cases we have evidence that they were being paid by businesses and they were not doing the trade waste. Therefore, it was not a good idea to withdraw the permits scheme because they would come here and just abuse the tip. The Council was also carrying out operations covertly and it had the support of the public. The Council's policies on changes to the waste strategy would protect it for a further ten years. Lots of other councils provide a three weekly collections service or even a monthly collections service and over 55% were charging for a garden waste service. However, they were not offering any reductions for people on low incomes, disabled or pensioners and they were charging more than we are. We were being fair and getting on with the job. Any monies that come in would be reinvested into our waste strategy, and our cleaner greener strategies keeping Wolverhampton and our streets neat and tidy.

Resolved:

That the responses to the written questions be noted.