

Attendance

Mayor Cllr Claire Darke (Lab)
Deputy Mayor Cllr Greg Brackenridge (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Obaida Ahmed	Cllr Val Evans	Cllr Phil Page
Cllr Harman Banger	Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre	Cllr Rita Potter
Cllr Mary Bateman	Cllr Keith Inston	Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE	Cllr Jasbir Jaspal	Cllr Susan Roberts MBE
Cllr Olivia Birch	Cllr Milkinderpal Jaspal	Cllr Zee Russell
Cllr Dr Paul John Birch J.P.	Cllr Rashpal Kaur	Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE
Cllr Alan Bolshaw	Cllr Rupinderjit Kaur	Cllr Stephen Simkins
Cllr Ian Brookfield	Cllr Roger Lawrence	Cllr Clare Simm
Cllr Paula Brookfield	Cllr Linda Leach	Cllr Mak Singh
Cllr Alan Butt	Cllr Hazel Malcolm	Cllr Paul Sweet
Cllr Craig Collingswood	Cllr Barbara McGarrity QN	Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman
Cllr Jacqui Coogan	Cllr Beverley Momenabadi	Cllr Martin Waite
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar	Cllr Lynne Moran	
Cllr Steve Evans	Cllr Anwen Muston	

Conservative

Cllr Payal Bedi-Chadha	Cllr Paul Singh
Cllr Simon Bennett	Cllr Udey Singh
Cllr Jonathan Crofts	Cllr Wendy Thompson
Cllr Christopher Haynes	Cllr Jonathan Yardley
Cllr Sohail Khan	

Employees

Tim Johnson	Chief Executive
Tracey Christie	Head of Legal Services
Mark Taylor	Deputy Chief Executive
Ross Cook	Director of City Environment
Charlotte Johns	Director of Strategy
Claire Nye	Director of Finance
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services Manager
Fabrica Hastings	Democratic Services Assistant

The proceedings opened with Prayers

Item No. Title

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Paul Appleby, Peter Bilson, Bhupinder Gakhal, Asha Mattu, John Rowley and Jane Stevenson.

2 Declarations of interest

Tracey Christie, Monitoring Officer advised that that the following interests had been made:

Agenda Item 5 - Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2020-2021 including Rents and Service Charges:

Councillor	Interest	Reason
Ian Brookfield	Disclosable non-pecuniary interest	Wolverhampton Homes' leaseholder
Payal Bedi-Chadha	Disclosable non-pecuniary interest	Landlord of a Wolverhampton Homes property
Sohail Khan	Disclosable non-pecuniary interest	Wolverhampton Homes' leaseholder
Linda Leach	Disclosable non-pecuniary interest	Wolverhampton Homes' leaseholder
Lynne Moran	Disclosable non-pecuniary interest	Wolverhampton Homes Board Member
Rita Potter	Disclosable non-pecuniary interest	Wolverhampton Homes Board Member
Zee Russell	Disclosable non-pecuniary interest	Wolverhampton Homes Board Member
Sue Roberts MBE	Disclosable non-pecuniary interest	Co-opted Board Member of Dovecotes TMO
Paul Singh	Disclosable non-pecuniary interest	Wolverhampton Homes Board Member and leaseholder of property

There were no other declarations of interest made.

3 Minutes of previous meeting

The Mayor proposed, the Deputy Mayor seconded, and it was resolved:

That the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 18 December 2019 be agreed as a correct record and signed accordingly by the Mayor.

4 Communications

1. New Year's Honours

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

- Vanessa Brown from Bilston was awarded an OBE for her voluntary work on the Windrush Reform Programme.
- Barry Picken was awarded an MBE for services to the community in Wolverhampton and the West Midlands.
- Aziza Chaudry who works in Adult Education in Wolverhampton received an MBE for services to Education.

The Mayor had written to Vanessa, Barry and Aziza on behalf of the City Council to extend the Council's sincere congratulations.

2. Wolverhampton Literature Festival

The Mayor informed Council that the Literature Festival was now entering its fourth year, thanks to funding from the Art Council. The festival would offer a great variety of entertainment with over 70 different events across many venues. Visitors would be able to listen to talks, watch performances and take part in practical workshops.

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

3. Kate Martin

The Mayor reported that Kate Martin, Director of City Assets and Housing, had left the Council. Kate had been appointed Executive Director – Place, at Southampton City Council.

The Mayor thanked Kate on behalf of the City Council for the work she had undertaken to move the Housing agenda forward in the city and for her work setting up WV Living, the Council's Housing Company.

4. Former Mayor Mike Heap

The Mayor was saddened to announce the death of former Mayor and Councillor Mike Heap, for Springvale ward from 1999 until 2015. He had served as Mayor from 2014 – 2015. He also served on many committees such as Audit, Superannuation, Licensing and numerous Scrutiny Panels.

The Mayor extended the deepest sympathies of the Council to Mike Heap's family at this very sad time.

The Council stood in silent tribute to the late Mike Heap.

5 Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2020-2021 including Rents and Service Charges

Councillor Louise Miles presented the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2020-2021 including Rents and Service Charges for approval. The report also provides, as an integral part of that Business Plan, a proposed HRA budget for 2020-2021, including proposed rents and service charges to take effect from 1 April 2020, and a proposed HRA Capital Investment Programme for the period 2020- 2021 to 2024-2025 for approval.

Councillor Louise Miles advised provision had been made for the new build programme, as well as provision to purchase affordable housing developed by WV Living, whilst also improving and developing existing housing stock such as the Heath Town Estate. She added the increase in budgetary provision was for new fire safety measures.

Councillor Louise Miles advised there was a 2.7% increase to social housing rents in accordance with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, the rent increases would be used to underpin the housing improvement programme.

Councillor Louise Miles advised there were no changes to service charges other than a review of charges relating to temporary accommodation.

Councillor Louise Miles thanked the Housing Management Agents for the work they undertake and the participants of the consultation.

Councillor Louise Miles proposed the recommendations and the Leader of the Council, Councillor Ian Brookfield seconded the recommendations.

The report was debated by Council.

Resolved:

1. That the Business Plan set out at Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report on 22 January 2020 be adopted as the approved Housing Revenue Account Business Plan including:
 - a. The revenue budget for 2020-2021 at Appendix 1 to the Cabinet report
 - b. The Capital programme for 2020-2021 to 2024-2025 at Appendix 2 to the Cabinet report that includes the following among the proposed investment plans:
 - Continued investment in the New Build Programme
 - Further investment for the Heath Town Estate refurbishment programme
 - Plans for estate remodelling
 - Resources for a programme of planned Medium and Low-Rise Fire Safety Improvements.
2. That the implementation of an increase of 2.7% to social housing rents in accordance with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 be approved and 28 days' notice be given to all secure and introductory tenants of the rent increase from 1 April 2020.
3. That the rates for garage rents and service charges set out in Appendix 3 to the Cabinet report be approved and tenants be normally notified.
4. That Management Allowances for Managing Agents be approved as follows:
 - Wolverhampton Homes - £40,090,000
 - Bushbury Hill Estate Management Board - £1,460,000
 - New Park Village Tenant Management Co-operative - £383,000
 - Springfield Horseshoe Housing Co-operative - £360,000
 - Dovecotes Tenants Management Organisation - £1,113,000
5. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing in consultation with the Director of City Assets and Housing to approve an adjustment of allowances relating to the management of 162 properties currently managed by Wolverhampton Homes that have been elected to be managed by Bushbury Hill Estate Management Board.

6 Motions on Notice

Flying the Union Flag

Councillor Simon Bennett moved the following motion:

‘That this Council agrees to mark the historic occasion of the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union on 31 January in a spirit of unity by flying the Union Flag outside the Civic Centre for the duration of that day.’

Councillor Simon Bennett outlined the rationale for the motion. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Ian Brookfield seconded the motion and outlined his rationale for supporting the motion.

Resolved:

That the motion on flying the Union Flag be agreed.

7 Questions to Cabinet Members

Gorsebrook Road

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment:

‘Could the Cabinet Member for City Environment inform the Council what is the full cost of the work required to convert the land east of Gorsebrook Road into a travellers’ site?’

The Cabinet Member for City Environment, Councillor Steve Evans responded £370,000.

Councillor Wendy Thompson asked the Cabinet Member for City Environment the following supplementary question:

‘What was the cost for preparing the other sites?’

The Cabinet Member for City Environment, Councillor Steve Evans responded that when the planning application was considered at Planning Committee, it was clarified that the site was a transit site and not a traveller site. He added that a transit site was required to retain the High Court injunction.

He added that as part of the planning conditions permanent welfare facilities, ducting for permanent power supply was not required as part of developing the temporary consent and therefore there was a huge reduction in costs.

He added that Planning Committee had agreed to the conditions detailed within the report for a year. A further £200,000 of building work would be required to make the development permanent.

He stated that the cost of cleaning up sites after an unauthorised encampment was around £300,000 a year, and the process of dealing unauthorised encampments would take a couple of weeks. Therefore, a high court injunction was sought to improve the quality of life for the residents of Wolverhampton.

Resolved:

That the response to the written question be noted.