

Meeting of the Cabinet

Minutes - 7 September 2022

Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Ian Brookfield (Chair)
Cllr Stephen Simkins (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Obaida Ahmed
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Chris Burden
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Linda Leach
Cllr Beverley Momenabadi

Employees

Mark Taylor	Deputy Chief Executive
Charlotte Johns	Director of Strategy
Claire Nye	Director of Finance
David Pattison	Chief Operating Officer
John Roseblade	Director of City Housing and Environment
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services Manager
Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | Item No. | Title |
|----------|---|
| 1 | Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Jasbir Jaspal. |
| 2 | Declaration of interests
No declarations of interests were made. |
| 3 | Minutes of the previous meeting
Resolved:
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 July 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. |

Performance and Budget Monitoring 2022-2023

Councillor Obaida Ahmed presented the salient points from the report on an integrated finance and performance update against the Our City: Our Plan priorities. It was the first report of the financial year detailing the likely budget outturn projection for 2022/2023. Some of the points highlighted were, the Council had strengthened the links between performance and budget which would ensure that it was robustly monitoring delivery of the Council's priorities and doing the best it could with the resources it had. Of the 61 key performance indicators in the Our City: Our Plan performance framework, almost 70% showed improved or sustained performance in quarter one; 13% were unavailable due to data not being released at this time; and 19% showed a downturn in performance. Where Wolverhampton is in one of the highest quartiles of national performance, the Council was sustaining strong levels of performance and where performance was in the lowest quartiles, two thirds of indicators are improving with improvement actions set out for the others. On the budget, overall the General Fund was currently forecasting an overspend of £5.4 million. This was mainly due to the forecast in year cost implications of the potential pay award, which was currently out for consultation. The Council would continue to work to identify in year efficiencies in order to mitigate the pay award costs and other inflationary pressures being seen across the Council. However, if the forecasted impact of the pay award was excluded, an under spend in the region of £700,000 was currently being forecast. In relation to the Housing Revenue Account, it was forecasting a pressure against the approved budget of £354,000.

Cabinet members welcomed the report and highlighted some of the areas of strong performance across the six overarching priorities within Our City: Our Plan during quarter one of 2022/2023.

Resolved:

1. That the establishment of supplementary expenditure budgets for 2022-2023 as detailed in section 7.0 of the report be approved.
2. That the use of £6,089 from the Schools Arts Service Reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.4 of the report and the establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.
3. That the use of £1.2 million from the Budget Contingency Reserve as detailed in paragraphs 8.5, 8.6 and 8.7 of the report and the establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.
4. That the use of £120,000 from the Budget Efficiency Reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.8 of the report and the establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.
5. That the use of £100,000 from the Regional Adoption Agency Reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.9 of the report and the establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.
6. That the use of £200,000 from the Transformation Reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.10 of the report and the establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.

7. That the use of £721,000 from the Regeneration Reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.11 of the report and the establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.
8. That the write-off of one Council Tax debts totalling £7,005.66 as detailed in Appendix 8 to the report be approved.
9. That the 29 virements totalling £14.4 million, for transfers within directorates, as detailed in Appendix 9 to the report be approved.
10. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City and the responsible Cabinet Member of the relevant service area in question, in consultation with the Director of Finance and the relevant Director to allocate budgets from the Corporate Contingency to support Council Priorities and Growth, once business cases have been completed.
11. That it be noted that the General Fund projected outturn for 2022-2023 is currently forecast to be an overspend of £5.4 million due to the forecast impact of the proposed pay award for 2022-2023 as detailed in section 4 of the report.
12. That it be noted that forecast outturn position for the year for the HRA shows a pressure against the approved budget of £354,000, as shown at Table 2 and in detail at Appendix 5 to the report. This would result in a forecast redemption of debt.
13. That it be noted that 552 council tax accounts totalling £401,879.89, as detailed in Appendix 7 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
14. That it be noted that 56 Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) debts totalling £178,017.01, as detailed in Appendix 7 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
15. That it be noted that 12 housing benefit overpayments totalling £4,286.96 as detailed in paragraph 11.2 and Appendix 7 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
16. That it be noted that 5 sundry debt accounts totalling £9,001.76, as detailed in paragraph 11.2 and Appendix 7 to the report, have been approved for write-off by the Director of Finance in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules.
17. That the Strategic Risk Register as at Appendix 3 to the report be noted.
18. That the performance against the key indicators as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be noted.

5 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 of business as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any person (including the authority holding that information).

Part 2 - exempt item, closed to press and public

The Chair reported that as stated previously the meeting was in confidential session as the information included in the report could, if released into the public domain, prejudice the financial position of the Council or its partners. As such all present are under a legal duty of confidentiality and must not disclose any confidential information - to do so would not only be a breach of the Council's codes (for councillors and employees) but also a breach of the legal duty of confidentiality.

6 Amendment to Capital Programme

The intention to make a key decision on the report 'Amendment to Capital Programme' at the meeting was not published in advance as required by the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. The decision was urgent and could not be reasonably delayed for the following reason:

- To enable the Council to proceed with project and maintain programme delivery.

In light of the above, consent had been obtained for the key decision to be made at the meeting under the Special Urgency provisions.

Councillor Obaida Ahmed presented for approval the report on Amendment to Capital Programme.

Resolved:

1. That the virement from the Capital Corporate Provision for Future Programmes to the Civic Halls Refurbishment programme as outlined in the report be approved.
2. That the use of the Covid contingency for Civic Halls Refurbishment for general project purposes be approved.
3. That the Council be authorised to enter into a Deed of Variation with AEG Presents to incorporate the additional works outlined in the report.