

Minutes of The Cabinet

**Wednesday 24 November 2021 at 3.30pm
in the Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Millard (Chair);
Councillors Ahmed, Carmichael, I Padda and Piper.

Also present: Councillors L Giles and Shackleton.

Officers: Kim Bromley-Derry (Interim Chief Executive), Nicholas Austin (Interim Director of Borough Economy); Neil Cox (Director of Business Strategy and Change); Gillian Douglas (Director of Housing); Simone Hines (Director of Finance) Michael Jarrett (Director of Children and Education); Tony McGovern (Director of Regeneration and Growth); Lisa McNally (Director of Public Health); Sue Stanhope (Interim Director of Human Resources); Surjit Tour (Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer) and Elaine Newsome (Service Manager – Democracy).

206/21 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bostan, Crompton, Hartwell and Simms.

207/21 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared at the meeting.



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208/21 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

209/21 Additional Items of Business

There were no additional items of business to consider.

210/21 Sandwell Health Inequalities Programme

Consideration of this item had been deferred to a future meeting of Cabinet.

211/21 On Street Residential Charging Scheme – Acceptance of Funds

Approval was sought to authorise the Section 151 Officer to sign and return the grant award letter issued by the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles for £300,430 as part of the On Street Residential Charging Scheme (ORCS).

Questions were asked by the Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board regarding how the grant received by Sandwell compared to the other Black Country Boroughs and the basis on which the grant allocations were assessed.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Communities confirmed, on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Environment, that Sandwell received the second largest grant allocation of all the Black Country Boroughs, larger than Wolverhampton and Walsall but smaller than Dudley. The amount of grant funding received depended on the cost of connecting sites to the local power network and in Sandwell the cost of connecting sites to the local power network was generally higher than in the other boroughs.



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Reasons for Decision

The funding would be used by the Council to deliver 37 public dual socket chargepoints (74 sockets) in residential areas where residents did not have access to off street parking and were therefore not able to charge their vehicles on driveways with a private charge point, as was the norm. The funding would therefore deliver approximately 40% of the 7kW chargepoints required by 2025 in order to support Sandwell's transition to electric vehicles in light of the Government's 2030 ban on petrol and diesel vehicles, as outlined in the Black Country ULEV (Ultra Low Emission Vehicles) Strategy.

Alternative Options

An option existed to not install any public on street residential charge points. This would leave residents without off street parking with severely limited options for car charging in light of the 2030 ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars. This would also undermine the borough's transition to electric vehicles in contradiction to policy as stated in the Black Country ULEV Strategy.

Funding public on street residential charge points from existing capital budgets would, given budget constraints, result in significant reduction in the number of charge points delivered (by approximately 75%), leading to a failure to meet the required amount, again undermining the borough's transition to electric vehicles in contradiction to policy as stated in the Black Country ULEV Strategy.

Submitting a smaller bid would reduce the number of charge points delivered leading to a failure to meet the required amount and again undermining the borough's transition to electric vehicles in contradiction to policy as stated in the Black Country ULEV Strategy.



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Submitting a larger bid would deliver more chargepoints in a single batch. However, a larger bid with more charge points would risk placing an unsustainable strain on staffing resources given that this was SMBC's first bid to ORCS. Such a bid would necessitate inclusion of sites which would be more challenging to install infrastructure in. Additionally, a larger bid would face an increased risk of rejection by OZEV as it would place a larger demand on the central funding pot. Securing match funding for a larger grant award would also be more challenging. Instead it would be preferable to submit consecutive bids of a similar size each year.

Agreed:-

- (1) that approval be given to authorise the Section 151 Officer to sign and return the grant award letter issued by the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles, for £300,430 as part of the On Street Residential Charging Scheme;
- (2) that the recommendations contained in the appraisal report as now submitted, be approved to mitigate any risk to the Council.

212/21

Supply of Door Furniture and Associated Items

Approval was sought to authorise the Director of Housing to award a contract for the supply of door furniture and associated items to CBS (Midlands) Limited, for the sum of approximately £912,459 (£304,153 per annum) for a period of 3 years, from 1 December 2021 to 30 November 2024.

Reasons for Decision

The current contract was due to expire on 30 November 2021. This contract was for supply of door furniture and associated items used by Sandwell MBC's Asset Management and Maintenance Supplies section and required to maintain Sandwell MBC properties.



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Items purchased on this contract mainly included door furniture. However, a selection of window furniture was included within the contract. The following items were a few of the main items purchased on this contract: door locks and latches, internal and external door handles, door hinges of various sizes, and stair handrail brackets etc.

Alternative Options

This contract was required to allow Sandwell MBC to continue to maintain and upgrade its housing stock as and when required. As such, there were no alternative options.

Agreed:-

- (1) that approval be given to authorise the Director of Housing to award a contract for the Supply of Door Furniture and Associated Items to CBS (Midlands) Limited, for the sum of approximately £912,459 (£304,153 per annum) for a period of 3 years, from 1 December 2021 to 30 November 2024;
- (2) that the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into appropriate contract for the Supply of Door Furniture and Associated Items to CBS (Midlands) Limited.

213/21

Hire of Scaffold and Mobile Towers

Approval was sought to authorise the Director of Housing to award a contract for the hire of scaffold and mobile towers to Independent Scaffolding Services Limited, for the sum of approximately £1,053,000 (£351,000 per annum) for a period of 3 years, from 1 December 2021 to 30 November 2024.



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Reasons for Decision

The current contract was due to expire on 30 November 2021. The contract was for hire of independent scaffold systems and towers and was required to enable the Sandwell MBC's Asset Management and Maintenance Supplies team to undertake repairs to Sandwell MBC properties.

Alternative Options

Sandwell MBC's Asset Management and Maintenance team service did not have trained or qualified employees that could erect and dismantle the scaffold systems which would be required under this contract. As such, this contract was required to undertake such work.

Agreed:-

- (1) that approval be given to authorise the Director of Housing to award a contract for the Hire of Scaffold and Mobile Towers to Independent Scaffolding Services Limited, for the sum of approximately £1,053,000 (£351,000 per annum) for a period of 3 years, from 1 December 2021 to 30 November 2024;
- (2) that the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into appropriate contract for the Hire of Scaffold and Mobile Towers to Independent Scaffolding Services Limited.

214/21

Schools' Model Pay Policies 2021/22

Approval was sought for the September 2021 Pay Award, which was summarised as a consolidated award of £250 to all teachers whose full time equivalent basic earnings were less than £24,000, to be applied to Local Authority Community Schools.



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Approval was also sought for the Unattached Teachers' Pay Policy 2021/22 and implemented by the Council with effect from 1 September 2021, and for the Model Schools' Pay Policy 2021/22 to be approved and recommended to the Governing Bodies of Schools in Sandwell for adoption and implementation with effect from 1 September 2021.

In response to questions by the Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board, the Cabinet Member for Community Safety confirmed, on behalf of Cabinet Member for Children and Education, that:

- the award applied only to Unqualified Teachers pay range and at pay points 1, 2 and 3, who were those earning less than £24,000 per annum. Currently there were four unqualified teachers on point 1, four on point 2, and three on point 3;
- there were 43 unqualified teachers in Sandwell Community Schools;
- the award would be funded from school budgets. Schools and governing bodies would need to ensure that financial impact of the pay award was efficiently managed in order to deal with any budget pressures they might face going forward.

Reasons for Decision

The Department for Education had been issuing the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (the Document) to local authorities on an annual basis. It placed a statutory duty on organisations employing teachers to have a pay policy in place by 1 September each year which set out the basis on which the employer would determine teachers' pay, the date by which it would determine the teacher's annual pay review and would establish procedures for addressing teachers' grievances in relation to their pay.

From this document the Council prepared Model Pay Policies:

- for teachers in schools, which it recommended School Governing Bodies to adopt; and



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- for unattached teachers who were employed by the Council but who did not work in a school location.

These Model Policies were revised annually and had been subject to consultation with all appropriate trade unions in Sandwell.

The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document contained limited changes for 2021 and as such the Pay Policy was a general refresh only rather than representing wholesale changes.

Both policies were compliant with all appropriate employment legislation and with the 2021 School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and accompanying statutory guidance.

The September 2021 Pay Award had been informed by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2021 and had been agreed nationally and the recommendation for Sandwell MBC, in keeping with regional comparators for all teachers, was summarised as:

- a consolidated award of £250 to all teachers whose full-time equivalent basic earnings are less than £24,000.

The pay policies would reflect these pay changes.

Alternative Options

The Department for Education issued the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document. It placed a statutory duty on organisations employing teachers to have a pay policy in place by 1 September each year which set out the basis on which the employer would determine teachers' pay. This annual review ensured that any proposals were affordable and sustainable pending the next review. As such there were no any alternative courses of action available that would otherwise satisfy these requirements.

Historical feedback had always suggested that the majority of schools were in favour of a consistent pay spine produced by the Local Government Association (LGA) for them across all the pay ranges.



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Agreed:-

- (1) that the September 2021 Pay Award, summarised as follows - a consolidated award of £250 to all teachers whose full time equivalent basic earnings are less than £24,000 – be approved and applied to Local Authority Community Schools in Sandwell;
- (2) that the Unattached Teachers' Pay Policy 2021/22, as now submitted, be approved and implemented by the Council with effect from 1 September 2021;
- (3) that the Model Schools' Pay Policy 2021/22, as now submitted, be approved and recommended to the Governing Bodies of Schools in Sandwell for adoption and implementation with effect from 1 September 2021.

215/21

Refurbishment of Darley House, Alston House, Radnall House, Birchley House, Century House and Selby House, Wallace Close, Oldbury

Approval was sought to award a contract for the refurbishment of Darley House and surrounding low rise flats at Wallace Close, Oldbury to Lovell Partnerships Limited, for the sum of £20,531,855, for a period of 34 months, from January 2022 to November 2024.

The contract would be to undertake the Refurbishment of Darley House and the surrounding low-rise blocks of flats at Wallace Close, Oldbury to continue the substantial investment in the Council's housing stock. The contracted works would deliver an upgrade to the 1 x 19 storey block of flats, 2 x 3 storey blocks of flats, 3 x 2 storey blocks of flats. 3 new units of social housing would also be created by converting the current ground floor of Darley House.

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety commented that inclusion of heat pumps within the refurbishment works was a



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positive development given discussions around climate change. Another positive was that 100% of the workforce for the refurbishment would come from within 25 miles of Sandwell and 45% from within the Borough of Sandwell itself. The Cabinet Member for Housing responded that the addition of sprinklers was also included within the refurbishment works, which accounted for a significant part of the cost of the works, and would provide much needed safety for the residents of these blocks .

Reasons for Decision

In accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules (Rule 15) an exemption from any rule for a contract above £250,000 must be approved by Cabinet.

Officers had reviewed the submitted tender document from Lovell Partnerships Limited and had concluded that the majority of the submission was in line with current similar submissions for similar works and coupled with feedback that officers received from the industry with regards to current price rises.

The work would comprise new pitched roof to Darley House, new entrance porches, replacement windows, replacement front doors and balcony doors, fire precaution works, rainscreen cladding, mechanical and electrical service installations including the installation of a district heat pump system, hard and soft landscaping and contractor designed work.

A district heat pump system had been incorporated into the works as part of the Council's focus on climate change and would contribute to the current built environment action plan contained within the Council's Climate Change Strategy 2020-2041.

Alternative Options

The alternative was to not invest in our Council Housing Stock which in turn might lead to dissatisfaction from existing and potential new tenants as well as disrepair and additional burden on the Housing Revenue Account.

It was felt that owing to the current uncertainty around material prices within the industry, the tender of Lovell Partnerships Limited



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provided the best value option and outweighed the cost of re-tendering, which would create the risk of receiving higher bids.

Agreed:-

- (1) that approval be given to authorise the Director of Housing to award a contract for the refurbishment of Darley House and surrounding low rise flats at Wallace Close, Oldbury to Lovell Partnerships Limited, for the sum of £20,531,855, for a period of 34 months, from January 2022 to November 2024;
- (2) that the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into appropriate contract for the Refurbishment of Darley House and surrounding low rise flats at Wallace Close, Oldbury with Lovell Partnerships Limited;
- (3) that any necessary exemptions be made to the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules to enable the course of action referred to in (1) above to proceed.

216/21

The Redevelopment of the Carrington Road/ School Road Area, Friar Park - Acceptance of Tender and Change of Funding Source

Approval was sought to the tender from Deeley Construction Ltd, in the sum of £7,128,724.00, in relation to the redevelopment of the Carrington Road/School Road area, and for allocation of a further budget of £1,400,000 above the contract sum to accommodate, if required, future costs relating to project management and associated fees and possible increased market inflation on construction materials.

This would result in allocation of resources totalling £8,528,724 from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme,



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including an allocation of £3,411,889 from the unallocated balance of 1-4-1 replacement receipts.

Approval was sought to change the funding source for this scheme from the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme administered by Homes England, as approved at Cabinet meeting on 16 May 2018 (see Minute No.75/18) to Right to Buy 1-for-1 Capital receipts.

Approval was sought to bring forward the development of Phase 4 of the scheme, 0.158 hectares with council owned homes, in accordance with the approval at Cabinet 4 March 2020 (see Minute 60/20) as part of a single contract.

Given the complexities around the phasing of the construction of this site and other abnormal costs, approval was finally sought for application to be made, if applicable, to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to determine whether any additional gap funding could be secured to deliver this scheme. An application would be made in line with the WMCA's single commissioning framework.

Reasons for Decision

The Carrington Road/School Road area of Friar Park had been in decline for many years and any intervention by the Council needed to be very comprehensive to deal with a number of very complex and inter related circumstances specific to the area. The area could be broken down into two bespoke areas – a cleared vacant site and a shopping parade/commercial area which each presented different obstacles that need to be overcome.

This scheme was to provide 10 x 2 bed bungalows in Friardale Road, 20 x 2 bed flats at Carrington Road/School Road and the retail block in School Road. The new council-owned affordable homes would meet Building Regulations and current housing requirements.

The funding sources for all schemes within the Council New Build programme were constantly monitored to ensure that the most beneficial funding source is selected, that all Homes England grant



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commitments were achieved and that all RTB capital receipts were allocated to prevent any loss of the receipts due to not expending them within the designated time periods. There had been no loss of Homes England grant funding and all current grant funding had been allocated to other schemes.

Alternative Options

Adding this site to the Homes England funding programme to accord with the previous recommendation of Cabinet was considered, however, all current Homes England funding was allocated to other sites. It was deemed more financially advantageous for the Council to use to the Right to Buy Receipts to deliver this scheme.

There was an option to not proceed with this scheme. However, given the considerable pre-construction work that had already been completed, this was not deemed viable. In addition, the demolition of the recently acquired properties must be completed for health and safety reasons. Following demolition, if works were not to proceed, the Council would be left with the management of an underutilised vacant site. The site was capable of being developed and there was public expectation that a scheme would proceed.

Agreed:-

- (1) that approval be given to change the funding source for this scheme from the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme administered by Homes England as approved at Cabinet meeting on 16 May 2018 (Minute No. 75/18) to Right to Buy 1-for-1 Capital receipts;
- (2) that approval be given to bring forward the development of Phase 4 of the scheme, 0.158 hectares with council owned homes in accordance with the approval at Cabinet 4th March 2020 – The Redevelopment of Carrington Road School Road Area, Friar Park (Minute 60/20 refers) as part of a single contract;



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- (3) that the Director Regeneration and Growth be authorised to accept the tender of Deeley Construction Ltd, in the sum of £7,128,724.00, for the Construction of 10 x 2 bed bungalows, 20 x 2 bed flats and the retail block at Carrington road, Friardale Road and School Road, Friar Park, which includes Phases 2- 4 of the scheme as tendered using the Homes England DPP3 Framework;
- (4) that a further budget of £1,400,000 be allocated above the contract sum to accommodate (if required):
 - project management and associated fees
 - possible future increased market inflation on construction materials that may arise during the project programme;
- (5) that the Director of Finance and the Director of Housing be authorised to allocate resources totalling £8,528,724 from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme, including an allocation of £3,411,889 from the unallocated balance of 1-4-1 replacement receipts;
- (6) that the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into or execute under seal any documentation in relation to award of the contract and/or other agreements as may be deemed necessary;
- (7) that the Director of Regeneration and Growth, in consultation with the Director of Finance, subject to confirmation of the funding rules applicable, be authorised to submit an application for funding to the West Midlands Combined Authority with a further report submitted to Cabinet before accepting any grant award.



217/21 Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring

Consideration was given to the forecast budget position of individual directorates as at 30 September 2021 (Quarter 2 2021/22).

Services were projecting an overspend of £10.337m against allocated budgets, however, after adjusting for reserves, corporate resources, revenue to fund capital costs (RCCO) and the application of centrally held Covid-19 grant funding, the adjusted projected outturn was an underspend of £4.490m.

Services continued to experience the financial impact of Covid, most significantly a loss of income due to suspended or significantly reduced services. Pressures of £12.133m were expected to be managed through the centrally held Covid funding which was from the unused balance of grants received in 2020/21 and additional grants received or anticipated for part of 2021/22.

In addition to the Covid related issues, services were reporting a number of significant ongoing operational pressures which would need to be incorporated into the next refresh of the Corporate Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

The main change in budget position was noted in Adult Social Care budget, which had changed from a projected underspend of approximately £2m at Quarter 1 to a projected overspend of £0.409m. The main reason for this related to placements costs, in particular placements for people with mental health concerns, which had shown a 4% increase (139 placements) between Q1 and Q6. Also, the number of older people homecare placement numbers had increased by over 3,115 hours per week since April 2021 and this was likely to generate an overspend at year-end. These budget pressures were being offset by vacancies across the directorate along with brought forward balances from previous years. Staffing costs relating to Covid-19 were being offset by the use of Covid-19 grant income.



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There were also cost pressures relating to Children's Services. Delays in implementing the Oracle Fusion project were also causing cost pressures but these were offset by the use of reserves.

Expenditure on the Council's Capital Programme was forecast to be £169,276m. There was a decrease of £1.103m in the Adults Social Care budget mainly in respect of slippage of Adult Social Care Grant resources into 2022/23. This slippage would now be used to fund improvements to the Walker Grange facility as agreed by Cabinet on 18 November 2021.

Approval was sought for the revised treatment of earmarked balances and earmarked reserves and the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review, which confirmed that the Council was meeting the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice and Treasury Management and the Prudential Code.

Reasons for Decision

Section 151 of the 1972 Local Government Act required the Chief Financial Officer to ensure the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs. Budgetary control, which included the regular monitoring and reporting of budgets was an essential element in discharging this statutory responsibility.

Alternative Options

Cabinet could vary the proposed transfer of Covid funding to the Sandwell Children's Trust or the requested virements within Public Health which reflected increases in the available resources since the 2021/22 budgets were approved.

Agreed:-

- (1) that financial monitoring for individual directorates as at 30 September 2021 (Quarter 2 2021/22) be received and referred to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board for consideration and comment;
- (2) that the projected financial position of services projecting an overspend of £10.337m against allocated



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budgets and an underspend of £4.490m after adjusting for the movement on reserves, use of corporate resources and the application of centrally held Covid-19 grant funding, be noted;

- (3) that the following budget virements above the higher of £0.250m or 1% of the Gross Budget of the service area be approved:

Virements above £0.250m or 1% of Gross Budget for approval by Cabinet	£'000	£'000
<u>Adult Social Care</u>		
Redirection of unallocated placement budget to reduce target savings	415	
Redirection of unallocated placement budget to reduce target savings		415
Redirection of unutilised inflation budget to reduce target savings	455	
Redirection of unutilised inflation budget to reduce target savings		455
<u>Public Health</u>		
Wider Determinants - Prevention & Promotion Better Mental Health		371
Grant funded expenditure for Prevention & Promotion Better Mental Health	371	
<u>Central Items</u>		
Transfer of Waste budget to Borough Economy		29,489
<u>Borough Economy</u>		
Transfer of Waste budget from Central Items	29,489	
TOTAL	30,730	30,730

- (4) that an allocation be approved of £0.112m to Sandwell Children's Trust to fund Covid-19 pressures which would be funded from the Covid-19 emergency funding which would be an addition to the £0.514m that was approved at quarter 2;



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- (5) that the revised treatment of Earmarked Balances as Earmarked Reserves, be approved;
- (6) that a Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay of £0.318m from the ICT revenue budget to support and progress ongoing capital projects be approved;
- (7) that the proposed spend against the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (ICOMF) totalling £680,812, be approved;
- (8) that the Treasury Management Report be approved.

218/21 Towns Fund Tranche 3 Programme and Assurance Panel

Tranche 3 of the Towns Fund Programme comprised the remaining 14 projects, which represented, in total, £63.5m of investment in Sandwell.

To date, 3 of the 17 projects within tranche 1 and tranche 2 of the Towns Fund Programme had successfully followed this process. The remaining 14 projects in tranche 3 of the Towns Fund Programme were due to have Project Summary Documents submitted to Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) by 24 March 2022. The projects within tranche 3 represented the most complex within the programme and as such, each of the projects had experienced unforeseen challenges and thus delays to the preparation of the Full Business Cases (FBCs). To meet the Government deadline of 24 March 2022, Cabinet was presented with recommendations to streamline the process of preparing the FBCs.

Approval was sought to authorise the Section 151 Officer and the Director for Regeneration and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth, to approve all Towns Fund tranche 3 project FBCs and associated documentation for submission to the DLUHC by 24 March 2022.



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Approval was also sought for an Assurance Panel to be established so that the Council accorded with its responsibility as an Accountable Body, could undertake business case assurance and sign off in line with local processes.

Reasons for Decision

To meet the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) submission deadline of 24 March 2022, it was proposed to build-in efficiencies to the process to give more time for tranche 3 projects FBC development. Currently there were two main constraints to the tranche 3 project Full Business Cases (FBCs) programme, both of which were having a detrimental impact on the Council and partners' ability to complete the FBCs and submit the cases to DLUHC by the submission deadline.

The first constraint was the requirement for all FBCs to be appraised by the Council's Strategic Investment Unit. A regeneration programme, of this scale, had not been in scope for the Borough of Sandwell for many years and as such the unit did not possess sufficient resource to appraise all 14 projects to meet the DLUHC submission deadline. The second constraint related to the requirement for Cabinet to approve the FBCs ahead of DLUHC submission, which would entail lengthy lead-in periods for report preparation and submission.

Alternative Options

The alternative option would be to keep the existing governance arrangements, but this would create a risk that not all Tranche 3 business cases could be approved by the submission deadline of 24 March 2022, which could then lead to a loss of Towns Fund allocations. The Towns Fund investments were critical to addressing a range of issues and delivering tangible improvements in the Borough.

Agreed:-

- (1) that the Section 151 Officer and the Director for Regeneration & Growth be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth, to approve all Towns Fund tranche 3 project



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Full Business Cases (FBCs) and associated documentation for submission to the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) by 24 March 2022;

- (2) that in connection with Resolution (1) above, an Assurance Panel be established to accord with the council's responsibility as Accountable Body, to undertake business case assurance and sign off in line with local processes;
- (3) that approval be given for an Exemption from 19.1 and 19.2 of the Council's Financial Regulations to action Resolution (1) above.

219/21 **Minutes of Cabinet Petitions Committee**

The minutes of the Cabinet Petitions Committee meetings held on 28 July and 1 September 2021 were noted.

220/21 **Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Resolved that the public and press be excluded from the rest of the meeting to avoid the possible disclosure of exempt information under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, relating to the financial and business affairs of any person, including the authority holding that information.



West Bromwich Towns Fund - Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering Centre Full Business Case Approval

Approval was sought to authorise the Council's Director for Regeneration and Growth and the Council's Section 151 Officer to approve the Full Business Case and associated reports for the West Bromwich Towns Fund Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering Project, and to submit the Project Summary to The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for approval.

Reasons for Decision

The Towns Fund Business Case Guidance, December 2020, set out that local assurance processes were to be followed for Towns Fund business case appraisal and approval was to be led by the Council as the Accountable Body for the Towns Fund. In Sandwell, the process was for Full Business Cases to be reviewed by the Council's Strategic Finance Team and put to Cabinet for approval once an appraisal threshold is met.

The Town Deal Superboard approved this Full Business Case at its meeting on 22 July 2021 (see Minute No. 50/21). The Full Business Case was submitted to the Council's Strategic Finance Team (Strategic Investment Unit) for appraisal and scored 69%, meaning it met the required threshold to proceed to Cabinet for decision and there had been satisfactory assurance that objectives could be met, but further actions were required to adequately mitigate the risk to the Council. These would be actioned by the Programme Management Office.

The Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering project value was £3,030,000, comprising £2,700,000 from Towns Fund and match funding of £330,000 from Sandwell College.

Alternative Options

The alternative would be to not approve the Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering Centre Full Business Case. However, this would result in the loss of £1,030,000 investment to West Bromwich from the Towns Fund and project benefits not being achieved.



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Agreed that approval be given to authorise the Council's Director for Regeneration and Growth and Section 151 Officer to approve the Full Business Case and associated reports for the West Bromwich Towns Fund Sandwell Civil and Mechanical Engineering Project and submit the Project Summary to The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for approval.

222/21

West Bromwich Towns Fund - Urban Greening Full Business Case Approval

Approval was sought to authorise the Council's Director for Regeneration and Growth and Section 151 Officer to approve the West Bromwich Towns Fund Urban Greening Project Full Business Case and associated reports and submit the Project Summary application to the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Reasons for Decision

The Town Deal Superboard approved this Full Business Case at its meeting on 23 September 2021 (see Minute No. 5/21).

The Urban Greening Project Full Business Case scored 67% and therefore met the Council's assurance threshold for the project to proceed to Cabinet for decision, and there was satisfactory assurance that objectives could be met. Further actions were required, however, to adequately mitigate the risk to the Council. These would be actioned by the Programme Management Office.

The Urban Greening project value was £1,220,000, funded by Towns Fund. An Expression of Interest would be submitted to Arts Council Capital Development Programme in due course, seeking £95,000 match funding to enhance the scope of the project and increase the cultural value of the scheme in line with Arts Council principles and the Council's emerging Cultural Action Zone in West Bromwich. If successful, the project value would total £1,315,000.



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Alternative Options

The alternative option would be to not approve the Urban Greening Full Business Case. However, this would result in the loss of £1,220,000 investment to West Bromwich from the Towns Fund and project benefits not being achieved.

Agreed that approval be given to authorise the Council's Director for Regeneration and Growth and Section 151 Officer to approve the West Bromwich Towns Fund Urban Greening Project Full Business Case and associated reports, and submit the Project Summary application to the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC).

Meeting ended at 4.06 pm.

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

