

The Cabinet

**Wednesday 22 July 2020 at 15:30
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

- Present:** Councillor Crompton (Chair);
Councillors Allcock, Ali, Hadley, Millard, Padda, Shaeen,
Singh, Taylor and Underhill.
- In attendance:** Councillors L Giles and Preece.
- Officers:** David Stevens (Chief Executive), Alan Caddick (Housing and Communities), Neil Cox (Director – Prevention and Protection), Lesley Hagger (Executive Director – Children’s Services), Elaine Newsome (Service Manager – Democracy), Tammy Stokes (Interim Director – Regeneration and Growth), Sue Stanhope (Interim Director – HR), Suky Suthi-Nagra (Democratic Services Manager) and Surjit Tour (Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer).

53/20 **Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, in particular, Councillors Allcock, Padda and Singh who had recently been appointed to the Cabinet. Changes had also been made to Cabinet portfolios as follows:-

- Councillor Crompton – Statutory Deputy Leader
- Councillor Ali – Cabinet Member for Resources and Core Services
- Councillor Allcock – Cabinet Member for Homes
- Councillor Hadley – Cabinet Member for Safer Communities
- Councillor Millard – Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economic Growth
- Councillor Padda – Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Equality
- Councillor Shaeen – Cabinet Member for Living Healthy Lives
- Councillor Singh – Cabinet Member for Skills and Employment
- Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport
- Councillor Underhill – Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life



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54/20 **Apologies for absence**

Members noted the apologies of Councillor E M Giles, Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board; Councillor Moore, Chair of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board and Councillor Rollins, Chair of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board.

55/20 **Minutes of Meetings**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

56/20 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Singh declared an interest in Minute No 60/20 (Youth Facilities Working Group Report) on the basis that he chaired the Working Group (as the former Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board).

57/20 **2019/20 Financial Outturn**

Members received details of the Council wide financial outturn for the 2019/20 financial year.

It was noted that due to the timing of the COVID19 pandemic, the impact on the financial outturn of the Council for 2019/20 had been minimal. However, there would be a significant financial impact across multiple directorates in 2020/21 (and subsequent years), which would be identified and quantified through quarterly budget monitoring processes and reporting.

Agreed:-

- (1) that the proposals arising from the 2019/20 directorate outturn reports for each directorate/service area (Appendices F to L), Schools Outturn (Appendix N), Housing Revenue Account (Appendix M), the Council's capital outturn (Appendix D), Treasury Management outturn (Appendix O) and Key Performance Indicators (Appendix E) be referred to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board for consideration;

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- (2) that the following surpluses be carried forward as requested:

	(Surplus) / Deficit
	£'000
Corporate Management Resources	0
Adult Social Care	(7)
Regeneration & Growth	(658)
Housing & Communities	13
Children's Services	(567)
	(329)
Total Net Service Expenditure (excluding Public Health)	(1,548)

the Regeneration and Growth deficit of £0.013m will be funded by Housing and Communities, leaving a surplus of £0.554m to be carried forward for that directorate. All carry forwards will be used in financial year 2020/21, other than Adult Social Care, which is to be used in financial year 2021/22;

- (3) that adding the Public Health surplus of £0.292m to the Public Health Grant Reserve be approved;
- (4) that the Revenue Contribution to Capital Outlay (RCCO) of £1.009m be approved from the Resources Directorate for the Technology Modernisation Programme (reflected in the figures above).

58/20

Additional Business - Review of Corporate Office Accommodation Requirements – 1 Providence Place, West Bromwich

An additional item of business was considered in relation to office accommodation at 1 Provide Place, West Bromwich.

It was reported that, in order to make efficiencies across the Council's office accommodation estate and make better utilisation of the opportunities that might exist should assets be made available for alternative use, 1 Providence Place should be declared surplus to operational requirements.

To enable the Council-occupied space within 1 Providence Place to become available, it was proposed to move those services currently based in the building to Sandwell Council House to make use of the workstations potentially available within this asset and reduce the oversupply of office space across the portfolio.

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In order to reduce the Council's overall footprint, consideration had been given to the Council exiting from any lease agreements in order to make rental savings. The release of 1 Providence Place from the operational portfolio would enable the Council to exit a significant proportion of excess office accommodation through a single relocation exercise.

In terms of pure floor space, consideration was given to releasing Sandwell Council House as opposed to 1 Providence Place. However, due to its age and construction, this asset did not lend itself as readily to alternative use and in this scenario the Council would lose the functionality of the Council chamber.

A further report on options for 1 Providence Place would be submitted to Cabinet in due course.

The Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economic Growth moved an amendment to the recommendation to declare 1 Providence Place surplus to the Council's office accommodation requirements and it was subsequently **Agreed:-**

- (1) that 1 Providence Place, West Bromwich be declared surplus to the Council's office accommodation requirements;
- (2) that the Executive Director - Neighbourhoods and the Acting Section 151 Officer undertake further investigations to identify the most suitable future use of the 1 Providence Place, West Bromwich and submit a further report to Cabinet in due course.

59/20

Schools Capital Programme 2020/21-22/23

Approval was sought to allocate a total of £19.46m from the Council's balances of Basic Need and School Condition allocations received from the Department for Education's (DfE), to fund the next phase of the Schools Capital Programme 2019/20-2021/22.

Planned works would enable the completion of building works at Bristnall Hall Academy, Q3 Academy Langley and West Bromwich Collegiate Academy, as well as ongoing cyclical maintenance at maintained schools. If works were not completed on time, there would be an insufficient number of secondary school places to meet demand in September 2021.

Projects at Q3 Academy Langley and Bristnall Hall Academy were further supported by the investment of a total of £1.3m investment from each Academy's sponsor.

Agreed that, pending the outcome of the capital appraisal process:

- (1) approval is given to the allocation of £9,762,376 from the Department of Education's (DfE) Basic Need allocation to fund the following proposed projects as part of the Schools Capital Programme 2020/21-2022/23:-

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- Bristnall Hall Academy, Bristnall Hall Lane, Oldbury B68 9PA (150 places)
 - Q3 Academy Langley, Moat Road, Oldbury, B68 8ED (390 places)
 - West Bromwich Collegiate Academy, Kelvin Way, West Bromwich, B70 7LE (450 places).
- (2) in connection with Resolution (1), approval is given to the allocation of £8,192,624 from the Council's School Condition balances to enable works to be completed;
- (3) approval is given to the use of a further £1.5m of the School Condition allocation to support cyclical maintenance;
- (4) in connection with Resolutions (1), (2), (3) and (6), the Director – Education, Skills and Employment awards a contract to Willmott Dixon Construction Limited to deliver the construction works, following a compliant procurement exercise, in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer, and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life, subject to meeting the criteria as set out in the report;
- (5) in connection with Resolution (1), (2), (3), (4) and (6), the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer enter into any legal agreements on terms agreed by the Director – Education, Skills and Employment as required, to allow building works to be completed on all proposed sites;
- (6) in connection with Resolution (1) and (2) above, that the following actions are implemented to reduce any risk to the Council:-
- maintain project programmes for each scheme within the Schools Capital Programme to ensure that effective project monitoring can be undertaken to aid the timely delivery of each project;
 - ensure that corporate Risk Registers are maintained for all projects and ensure all risks are identified and can be adequately mitigated;
 - regular financial monitoring updates on individual projects should be provided to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Core Services, highlighting variations of spend against original estimated costs. Remaining funds should be returned to the unallocated Schools Capital Programme;
 - ensure that the Council enters into such form of legal agreements as required to allow extension works on all proposed sites;

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- in connection with School Condition, ensure that repair / maintenance work for schools is undertaken following an analysis of pre-determined criteria and that records are maintained to demonstrate the priority need of each school; and
- post project evaluation should include specific outcomes, along with benchmarking of final costs to ensure value for money is achieved.

60/20

Youth Facilities Working Group Report

The Vice Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board presented the findings of the Board's review of Youth Services.

The Youth Facilities Working Group had been established by the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board consisting of Councillors Singh (Chair), Chidley, McVittie and Preece. Members had worked independently, and as a group, to gather evidence, supported by a core officer group.

Youth Facilities across the country had been significantly depleted over the last ten-years, however, the Council had managed to maintain some important services for children and young people that many other local authorities had not managed to protect.

The Youth Facilities Working Group considered current local youth provision and the role and sufficiency of youth work in line with the statutory guidance for local authorities. The report provided a snap shot of youth facilities in Sandwell, based on the evidence gathered from January to March 2020 which aimed to inform service shaping, resource requirements and future youth facilities provision.

Consideration was now given to the recommendation of the Working Group, set out in Appendix 1.

Members of the Cabinet thanked the Working Group for its work on the review and acknowledged and thanked youth workers for the hard work and dedication during this difficult time, and with ever decreasing budgets.

Agreed that the findings and recommendations of the Youth Review Working Group be noted and the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Best Start in Life, respond to the findings to a meeting of the Children and Education Scrutiny Board in September 2020.

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61/20

Towns Fund Governance and Member Appointments

Consideration was given to the governance arrangements for the Towns Fund Programme and proposed member appointments to the Super Board and Local Boards.

In September 2019, it had been announced that 101 towns had been identified by the Government to benefit from the Town Fund. In Sandwell, West Bromwich, Smethwick, and Rowley Regis had been identified.

The objective of the fund was to drive the economic regeneration in towns to deliver long term economic and productive growth. The Town Fund comprised of £3.6b of funding across 101 towns. A maximum investment of up to £25m in each town was available. The amount of funding allocated to each town would be based on the Town Deal agreed with Government.

The Towns Fund Prospectus published in November 2019 outlined that Sandwell Council was required to lead on the development of Town Deal Boards and that the Town Deal Boards should comprise a wide range of key stakeholders from community, business, voluntary, public-sector and faith organisations. The Boards were also to be chaired by someone from the private sector.

To co-ordinate the three Towns Fund bids in Sandwell, an overarching Towns Fund Super Board had been established with three town-level boards reporting into it.

Agreed:-

- (1) that the Sandwell Towns Fund Super Board be authorised to approve the Town Investment Plans for West Bromwich, Smethwick and Rowley Regis for submission to Government;
- (2) that the member appointments to the Super Board and Local Boards as set out in Appendix 1 of the report now submitted be approved;
- (3) that the governance requirements of the Towns Fund Guidance as set out in Appendix B of the report now submitted be approved;
- (4) that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, the Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, and the Monitoring Officer, agree arrangements for the Governance of the Towns Fund Programme in accordance with the Government's Towns Funds Guidance.

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Meeting ended at 16:19 following an adjournment between 16:05 and 16:10 due to technical issues.

This meeting was webcast live and is available to view [here](#).

Youth Services Working Group recommendations:

- R1 A Partnership Framework (to include a Communications Plan and Multi-agency approach)** is developed with young people, for young people and is specifically targeted to promote current activities and future opportunities using the experts within the council to provide a joined-up plan that compliments services across the local authority.
This should consider how we currently communicate, what we currently communicate and the most effective platforms to use across a range of media.
- A **Youth Symposium** should be held in early 2021 for all partners in the borough to help build a clear picture of what is available, build upon key themes arising from the Scrutiny Review, the multi-agency approach and develop closer partnership working for a joined-up offer for Sandwell. The youth symposium should draw together a joined-up approval to youth work and young people in Sandwell.
- R2** Young people should be afforded **safe, flexible, space of their own, with 'Wi-fi & Dry' as the basic offer in Sandwell**. The council should take a strategic approach and consider modelling 'space options' across the Borough's 6 towns, these could test:
- a) Use of libraries within extended opening times – rethinking their use in the community
 - b) Mobile provision (through a bus or support vehicle).
 - c) Pop up shops and underused town centre units.
 - d) Leisure & Activity Centres.
 - e) Other council properties and schools.
 - f) New build, where no existing options are deemed suitable.
- R3** The council explores the option of providing **free or concessionary public transport for young people to enable better access to local youth activities, opening up Sandwell and all it offers**. Targeted provision should be considered in relation to vulnerable young people and those with Special Educational Needs (SEN).
- R4** The council should **take a more strategic approach to funding** and explore existing funding pots through a better use of regional partnerships and directories. Better alignment could be made **to complimentary activity within the voluntary sector** (such as SVCO's community grants) and **to the corporate social responsibility objectives** of local businesses.
- R5** The Council should **develop a renewed 'Youth Offer'** which clearly identifies the very positive activities that are currently on offer and addresses those gaps which would enable a more bespoke approach. The **National Youth Agency's Standard Quality Mark Framework** should be used to measure the capacity, quality and sufficiency of youth facilities in Sandwell.
- R6** A renewed youth offer would aim to close the gaps in provision and ensure sufficiency of youth facilities, but in order to do would require an increase in

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capacity and therefore the resources required to deliver the provision would need to be reviewed.

- R7** Following the success of the **Question Time session** held during the review, it is recommended that quarterly Question Time sessions be scheduled into the Scrutiny Work Programme, with Shape forum the Cabinet Member / Champion for Children and Young People.