

The Cabinet

**Wednesday 26 August 2020 at 15:30
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

- Present:** Councillor Crompton (Chair);
Councillors Ali, Allcock, Hadley, Millard, Padda,
Shaeen, Singh, Taylor and Underhill.
- In attendance:** Councillor Moore.
- Officers:** David Stevens (Chief Executive), Lesley Hagger
(Executive Director – Children’s Services),
Rebecca Maher (Acting Section 151 Officer),
Tammy Stokes (Interim Director – Regeneration
and Growth), Sue Stanhope (Interim Director –
HR), Stephnie Hancock (Senior Democratic
Services Officer) and Chris Ward (Director -
Education, Skills and Employment).

67/20 **Apologies for absence**

Members noted the apologies of Councillor E M Giles, Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board and Councillor L Giles, Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board, Councillor Rollins Chair of the Environment, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board.

68/20 **Future use of 1 Providence Place and other assets in West Bromwich Town Centre**

Consideration was given to the options for the future use of 1 Providence Place, including leasing the building for private office accommodation, converting the building to residential, or sale of the asset.

The preferred future use of the asset as set out within the report, was disposal of the property and the adjacent development plot for



The Cabinet – 26 August, 2020

best consideration and to enable the Department for Education to develop a new 750 place Free School on these sites, sponsored by Shireland Collegiate Academy Trust in partnership with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Additional reference was made to the requirement from the Department for Education for occasional use of West Bromwich Town Hall.

On 22 July 2020, the Cabinet had determined that 1 Providence Place was surplus to the Council's office accommodation requirements (Minute No. 58/20 (1) refers).

It was understood that the commercial tenant currently occupying 1 Providence Place, BT, was planning to relocate to Birmingham as soon as its new offices were ready for occupation. Assuming relocation of the Council office teams based in 1 Providence Place to Oldbury, Providence Place would likely be empty in early 2021.

The proposal had been considered and welcomed by the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board on 20 August 2020. The Board had recommended however that feedback be sought from the Council's external auditors on the proposal and this was currently in progress.

Members of the Cabinet felt that this was an exceptional opportunity for Sandwell that would bring wider strategic benefits, as well as enhancing the cultural offer in West Bromwich.

Agreed:-

1. that 1 Providence Place, West Bromwich and the remaining Providence Place development plot be declared surplus to the Council's requirements;
2. that subject to 1 above, approval is given to dispose of 1 Providence Place building, West Bromwich and the remaining Providence Place development plot for sale to the Department for Education on negotiated terms for the purpose of developing a new 750 place free school;
3. that the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Executive Director – Neighbourhoods, be authorised to enter into or execute under seal, if necessary, the associated sale and transfer

The Cabinet – 26 August, 2020

agreements relative to the disposal of 1 Providence Place and the development plot on terms and conditions to be negotiated between the Executive Director – Neighbourhoods and the Department for Education;

4. that the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Executive Director – Neighbourhoods, be authorised to enter into or execute under seal, if necessary, the associated lease or licence agreement for the occasional use of West Bromwich Town Hall on terms and conditions to be negotiated between the Executive Director – Neighbourhoods and the Department for Education;
5. that the transfer agreements can proceed whilst acknowledging the departure from the Capital Approval Process and the outcome of the Strategic Investment Unit Appraisal.

The meeting ended at 15.47.

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