

Minutes of Cabinet

**Wednesday, 4 December 2024 at 3.30pm
in the Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Carmichael (Leader of the Council and Chair);
Councillors Allcock, S Gill, Hartwell, Hughes, Smith, Taylor
and Uddin.

In attendance: Councillors Fenton, E M Giles, Jeffcoat and Lewis.

Officers: Shokat Lal (Chief Executive); James McLaughlin (Assistant
Chief Executive); Alex Thompson (Executive Director -
Finance and Transformation); Mike Jones (Assistant Director -
Legal and Assurance); Claire Spencer (Acting Assistant
Director – Finance); Ian Dunn (Revenues and Benefits
Service Manager); Alasdair Morrison (Operations Manager –
Environmental Protection & Enforcement/Taxi Licensing);
Justin Haywood (Operations Manager for Commissioning);
Matthew More (Communications and Corporate Affairs
Manager); Owen Roberts (Graduate); Suky Suthi-Nagra
(Democratic and Member Services Manager) and Connor
Robinson (Democratic Services Officer).

120/24 **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Moore.

121/24 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

122/24 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held 13 November 2024 are approved as a correct record.

123/24 **Additional Item of Business**

There were no additional items of business to consider as a matter of urgency.

124/24 **Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring 2024/25**

Cabinet received the financial monitoring position as of 30 September and approval was sought for the increases to fees and charges relating to discretionary services provided by both Registration Services and Development Planning and Building Control, together with chargeable garden waste collections.

The overall projected outturn position for the General Fund was an underspend of £2.128m. This was an underspend of 0.6% when compared with the Council's net budget of £333.008m. This forecasted outturn position excluded variations from budget for the Housing Revenue Account and Dedicated Schools Grant, as these were ringfenced budgets where expenditure matched income without impacting on the General Fund. The forecast underspend also excluded the financial position of the Sandwell Children's Trust, which was a separate legal entity, although wholly owned by the Council.

Reason 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. The reporting and analysis of financial performance versus budget supported the financial sustainability of the council.

Alternative Options Considered

Value for money and vacancy management expenditure controls were in place across the Council. No further cross-council management action was proposed at this stage.

Mitigations would be considered within specific budget areas to address overspends locally.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the financial monitoring position as at 30 September 2024 is received and the report be referred to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board for consideration and comment;
- (2) that approval is given to the increases to fees and charges relating to discretionary services provided by both Registration Services and Development Planning and Building Control, together with chargeable garden waste collections.

125/24

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26

Consideration was given to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26 which would be recommended to Full Council for approval. To support the Council's duty to provide a balanced budget, the Council was proposing to make changes to its working age Council Tax Reduction scheme for the financial year 2025/26 which would reduce the overall cost of the working age scheme.

In response to questions from the Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board, the Leader of the Council confirmed that as the compulsory school age was 5 years, the maximum council tax reduction of 100% was to help parents who may have to provide the childcare and were unable to work or increase their hours worked whilst looking after the child and they were not at school. There were around 5300 single parents claiming council tax reduction. Of the single parents claiming council tax reduction, 2800 had a child 5 years or under which meant 53% of single parents would be awarded council tax reduction based upon 100% liability which was then dependent upon their income. Sandwell maintained one of the most generous Council Tax Reduction schemes in the country.

Reason for Decision

Council Tax Reduction was introduced by the Local Government Finance Act 2012 and placed a duty on all billing authorities to create a local scheme for all working age applicants. Pension age applicants were not affected by the recommendations.

Each year the Council was required to review its Council Tax Reduction Scheme in accordance with the requirements of the schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and to either maintain the scheme or replace it. Any new scheme must be approved by full Council no later than 11 March prior to the new financial year.

Alternative Options Considered

Any changes to Council Tax Reduction were difficult and affected the households with the lowest incomes.

The Council could keep the Council Tax Reduction scheme the same as it was for 2025/26 but it would have to make service reductions or find alternative funding for services from elsewhere.

Resolved:-

(1) that approval is given to introduce the following changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2025/26 for working age residents:-

- a) residents on the lowest income currently receive up to a maximum of 100% Local Council Tax Reduction. From 1 April 2025 it is recommended that working age applicants will fall into two categories:
 - where the working age applicant had a dependant child aged 5 years or under who resides with them, the maximum support will remain at 100% subject to their income;
 - all other working age applicants will only be able to receive a maximum of 85%;
- b) that the current maximum Council Tax band to calculate Local Council Tax Reduction is Band C. This will reduce to Band B for all applicants;

(2) that the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2025/26 be recommended to Council for approval.

Council Tax Base 2025/26

Consideration was given to the Council Tax Base 2025/26 which would be recommended to Full Council for approval. The Council Tax Base was an assessment by each billing authority of the number of chargeable dwellings, converted to Band D equivalents, allowing for discounts, exemptions, non-collection, and new properties. This information was used when setting the Council's budget as it determined the amount of Council Tax that was expected to be billed.

To finalise the calculation of the Council Tax Base the number of properties in each Council Tax band on the valuation list was also adjusted for the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. In addition, assumptions were made for changes in the number of properties in each band between December 2024 and 31 March 2026 to factor in new builds and demolitions. The adjusted numbers in each band were then converted to the equivalent number of Band D properties.

Reason for Decision

The Council Tax Base had to be calculated in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012. It was used to determine the annual amount of collectable Council Tax. The regulations set out the methodology to be used by authorities when calculating their Council Tax Base. They further dictated that the Council Tax Base should be set between 1 December and 31 January prior to the financial year to which it referred.

Alternative Options Considered

The Council Tax base represented technical calculations guided by statute. Senior officers analyse up to date Council Tax data alongside forecasts based on trends and planning data to provide appropriate assumptions for this report and there were therefore no alternative options to consider.

Resolved:-

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) that the Council be recommended to approve the Council Tax Base for 2025/2026 of 80,364.3;(2) that the Executive Director of Finance and Transformation be authorised to adjust the Council Tax Base if required following decision on the |
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127/24

Renewal of the West Bromwich Town Centre Public Space Protection Order

Approval was sought for the renewal of the West Bromwich Town Centre Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). The West Bromwich Town Centre PSPO was first introduced in August 2018 in response to significant public concerns about anti-social behaviour, including alcohol-related disorder, begging, and threatening behaviour. The Order had been a key tool in addressing these behaviours and ensuring public safety. It complemented the Boroughwide Alcohol PSPO, forming a broader strategy for tackling anti-social behaviour across Sandwell.

The PSPO was designed to deter persistent anti-social behaviours that had a detrimental effect on the quality of life for residents, visitors, and businesses, as well as provide enforcement powers to address unacceptable behaviour and support engagement with individuals involved in anti-social behaviour, including offering support to vulnerable people, such as rough sleepers.

The Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 allowed for PSPOs to be renewed every three years, following a review and public consultation. The current PSPO was due to expire and renewal of the PSPO for three years would maintain the improvements in public safety and ensure continued enforcement capability.

The existing PSPOs had continued to be used extensively during the last three years, specifically by providing opportunities for engagement but where necessary enforcement. Both the Police and the outcome of public consultation had demonstrated support for the extension of the existing West Bromwich Town Centre PSPO.

Reason for Decision

The Order had been a key tool in addressing anti social behaviour and ensuring public safety. It was renewed in 2021 for a further three years and was due for consideration for a further three years. Based upon the assessment of the continued need for such powers and the outcome of public consultation, the recommendations were

required to ensure the continued operation of the Public Space Protection Order.

These issues were a concern in Sandwell with a public consultation showing 91% support for the West Bromwich Town Centre Public Space Protection Order. The Public Space Protection Order proposals demonstrated the Council's commitment to listening to its residents, partners, and communities and to take action to address issues that were important to them.

Alternative Options Considered

Option 1: Do Not Renew the Public Space Protection Order

The Council could choose not to renew the Public Space Protection Order for West Bromwich Town Centre. This option was not recommended, given the ongoing need to address Anti Social Behaviour in West Bromwich Town Centre and the strong public support for the PSPO's renewal.

Option 2: Renew the Public Space Protection Order with Amendments

The Council could consider renewing the Public Space Protection Order but reduce the scope of behaviours included within the Order. The areas within the Public Space Protection Order remained of concern within the Town Centre and all targeted behaviours within the Public Space Protection Order were supported in the public consultation. The consultation did not identify any behaviours to be removed from the proposed Public Space Protection Order. This option was therefore not recommended.

Resolved:-

- (1) that approval is given to extend the existing West Bromwich Town Centre Public Space Protection Order for a period of three years commencing 4 December 2024;
- (2) that the Public Space Protection Order continues to prohibit the following activities at all times:
 - Harassment, alarm, or distress: Acting in a manner, or inciting others to act in a manner, that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm, or distress to any person;
 - Threatening behaviour or violence: Threatening or using violence or being verbally abusive towards any person;

- Begging or loitering for the purpose of begging: Begging or asking members of the public for money or loitering with the intent of begging or asking for money;
 - Obstructing roads and footpaths: Causing a motor vehicle or trailer to stand on a road or footpath, creating unnecessary obstruction;
- (3) that approval is given to authorise the Executive Director of Place to implement, monitor, and enforce the Public Space Protection Order.

128/24

Housing Asset Management and Compliance Strategy 2025 - 2030

Approval was sought for the Housing Asset Management and Compliance Strategy 2025 – 2030. The Strategy was an important document in setting out the Council’s priorities and objectives for meeting the housing asset needs of our communities. The document was a key strategy in articulating what actions the Council would take to work towards maintaining and improving Sandwell’s own Housing Revenue Account stock.

The key objective of the Council’s Housing Asset Management and Compliance Strategy was to ensure that the Council utilised its assets in the most effective way for the benefit of both its existing and potential tenants and leaseholders and would help meet the needs identified in the Council’s Housing Strategy, Housing Revenue Account 30 year Business Plan, Climate Change Strategy and Property Compliance Policy but also other emerging strategies and plans where housing had a part to play in meeting the needs and aspirations of our communities.

Reason for Decision

The aim of strategy was to guide the future shape and direction of the property assets to ensure that they met corporate objectives and customer expectations.

The strategy set out how the Council intended to address the key asset management and property compliance challenges affecting communities over the next five years. It set out the Council’s priorities and objectives for meeting housing need and working with tenants and residents to build sustainable and cohesive communities across the borough.

Alternative Options Considered

No alternative options were presented.

Resolved that approval is given to the Sandwell Council Housing Asset Management and Compliance Strategy 2025 – 2030.

129/24 **Stock Condition Surveys**

Approval was sought for the procurement of stock condition surveys to the remaining 50% of Council housing stock.

The Regulator of Social Housing had published new Consumer Standards in April 2024, which included the requirement to meet the Safety and Quality Standard.

One of the key elements of the Safety and Quality Standard required councils to have an accurate, up to date and evidenced understanding of the condition of their homes that reliably informed the provision of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for tenants and to ensure that their tenants' homes met the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard.

Reason for Decision

The recommendations would enable the Council to be able to expedite stock condition surveys on the remaining circa 14,000 council properties and to comply with the deadline provided by the Regulator of Social Housing for the collection of such data of December 2026.

Alternative Options Considered

Three alternative options were evaluated but not recommended:

- Recruitment of an in-house surveying team
- Engaging a framework for a full tender process
- Direct award to another company

These alternatives had not been recommended as the continuity of service, cost certainty, and proven performance significantly outweighed the potential benefits of the other options. The established processes and familiarity with the Council's requirements provided the highest likelihood of completing the surveys within the target deadlines.

Resolved:-

- (1) that approval is given to enter a direct award contract with Ridge and Partners LLP to conduct Stock Condition Surveys for the remaining 14,000 council housing properties;
- (2) that any necessary exemption be made to the council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules to enable the course of action referred to in Resolution (1) above to proceed;
- (3) that the Executive Director Place and the Monitoring Officer, Assistant Director – Legal and Assurance be authorised to enter into a formal contract with Ridge and Partners LLP and execute under seal any documentation related to the award of the contract.

130/24

The Review of Council Housing Rents and Housing Related Property Charges

Consideration was given to the Review of Council Housing Rents and Housing Related Property Charges and its recommendation to Full Council. In line with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, the Council reduced housing rents by 1% per year for four years, between 2016/2017 and 2019/20.

In 2019, the government set a rent policy for social housing that would permit rents to increase by up to CPI+1% per annum and made clear its intention to leave this policy in place until 2025.

From 2020, the Council had control over its own rent setting in line with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Rent Standard, and Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing.

In 2023, CPI was 10.1%, which would have permitted social landlords to increase rents by 11.1% (CPI+1%). However, the government amended the rent policy for 2023/2024 and imposed a rent cap of 7% for social housing. The Council made the decision to set the rent increase at 5% to help support residents during the exceptional time of inflationary pressures and cost of living. Due to the rising supplier costs, most other stock owning local authorities and social landlords took the decision to increase rents by the maximum 7%.

In 2024, CPI was 6.7%, which permitted social landlords to increase rents by 7.7% (CPI+1%). The Council made the decision to increase rents by 7.7%.

There was a regulatory requirement for the Council to maintain the existing housing stock to a good standard and cover operational costs and to achieve the right balance between protecting our tenants, protecting taxpayers and ensuring the Council could deliver on its commitments to build new social homes, as well as ensure all homes achieve the 'Decent Homes' standard.

For 2025/26, the government had confirmed that social landlords were permitted to increase rents by CPI+1% in line with the Rent Standard and Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing issued annually in April.

Reason for Decision

Each year council tenants; leaseholders and other residents were notified of the rent and other related housing charges to be set from the following April.

There was a regulatory requirement for the Council to maintain the existing housing stock to a good standard and cover operational costs and to achieve the right balance between protecting tenants, protecting taxpayers and ensuring the Council could deliver on its commitments to build new social homes, as well as ensure all homes achieved the 'Decent Homes' standard.

Alternative Options Considered

It had been recommended from April 2025 to increase rents by 2.7% for tenants within the Riverside managed PFI estate of Wednesbury. The Council did have the discretion to set PFI rent. It would be unfair and inconsistent for customers in council properties if PFI tenants did not receive the same increase.

Increasing rents below the cap of CPI+1% created financial pressures for the Council to deliver key services. The provision of good quality Housing and Neighbourhoods were key to improving lives and life chances for residents. Reducing the level of income to the HRA would seriously impact the 30-year HRA business plan and less funding for maintenance of Council stock and funding for new homes.

An alternative would be to increase rents by a lower percentage. The budgetary pressures from this would significantly impact the ability to deliver key services and may result in reduced services where costs can't be met through operational budgets. The challenges presented through the Consumer Regulation Act and the Building Safety Act put financial pressures on the HRA to reshape services to meet the requirements.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the Council be recommended to approve the following council rents and housing related charges with effect from 7 April 2025 and to authorise the Executive Director of Place to adjust council rents and housing related charges:-
 - (a) that the housing rental charges is increased by 2.7% which is the consumer price index 1.7% (September 2024) plus 1%, which is equivalent to a 2.7% increase;
 - (b) that the housing service charges increase by the consumer price index (CPI)+ 1%, equivalent to a 2.7% increase;
 - (c) that a weekly service charge of £2.26 is implemented from April 2025 in blocks that have retained provision of laundry facilities for temporary accommodation, supported housing and extra care facilities;
 - (d) that the weekly heating charge is increased by 20% from April 2025 to properties that received heating and hot water through a shared scheme;
 - (e) that subject to consultation with the residents of the site, to increase fees at the traveller's pitch in Hills View, Tipton at CPI (announced in month proceeding variation notices being issued), in line with Legislation on Mobile Homes (Pitch Fees Act 2023);

- (f) that rental charges for garage sites be increased in line with other council fees and charges agreed by Cabinet and Council;
- (g) that properties managed by Riverside under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) agreement receive a 2.7% rental increase and a 2.7% increase in service charges to match the council's rent and service charge increase;
- (h) that properties that sit outside the Housing Revenue Account (including service tenants for Parks, Sandwell Valley, and Caretaking) receive a 5% increase on rent and 2.7% for service charges;
- (i) that the leaseholder annual management fee be increased in 2025/26 from £124.57 to £167.13;
- (j) that rent and housing related service charges in subsequent years, will be set in line with the Rent Standard and Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing as published by the Regulator of Social Housing. This will be for at least five years from 1 April 2026 to 31 March 2031.

131/24

Designation of Nature Conservation Sites

Approval was sought for the Designation of Nature Conservation Sites. The identified sites all had existing Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINC) designations or the higher ranking Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) designations. Following resurvey to update or confirm their status, recommendations had been endorsed in principle by the Local Sites Partnership.

Reason for Decision

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINCs) were designations identified in the Site and Delivery Development Plan Document and the emerging Sandwell Local Plan. They formed part of the Borough's environmental infrastructure. Potential Sites of Interest were not identified in the Local Plan as they had not been

subject to survey but had been highlighted as sites that may be worthy of designation and potential follow up surveys in the future.

SINCs and SLINCs were not subject to statutory protection. The Government envisaged that sites were protected from development through the Local Plan process. The identification and allocation of SINCs and SLINCs within the Site and Delivery Development Plan Document and emerging Sandwell Local Plan was therefore important in maintaining and enhancing the Borough's environmental infrastructure.

Alternative Options Considered

The alternative was to not commission survey work, which would result in an out-of-date evidence base and the potential for SINCs and SLINCs to be at greater risk of being lost.

The potential for planning decisions to be challenged increased where it could be shown that Local Plan allocations were based on out-of-date or incomplete information. Ensuring there was current information relating to the borough's inventory of nature conservation sites, including SINCs and SLINCs, reduces this risk.

Resolved:-

- (1) that approval is given to the following Nature Conservation designations:-
 - (a) Land at Victory Avenue - Extension and part deletion to existing SLINC boundary as shown on the plan 1 at Appendix A;
 - (b) Shaw Street – Extension to existing SINC boundary and part deletion of SINC as shown on the plan 2 at Appendix A;
 - (c) Princes End Disused Railway - Extension to existing SLINC boundary as shown on the plan 3 at Appendix A;
 - (d) Darby End Disused Railway - Part deletion of existing SLINC boundary as shown on the plan 4 at Appendix A;

- (e) Balls Hill Branch Canal- Extension to and part deletion of existing SLINC boundary as shown on the plans 5.1 to 5.8 at Appendix A;
 - (f) M5 Embankment – Reconfirm existing SLINC evaluation as shown on the plan 6 at Appendix A;
 - (g) Waterfall Lane – Extension & part deletion of existing SINC boundary as shown on the plan 7 at Appendix A;
 - (h) Land off Factory Road - Reconfirm existing SLINC evaluation as shown on the plan 8 at Appendix A;
- (2) that the Executive Director of Place be authorised to make the necessary changes to the Sandwell Local Plan Proposals Map to reflect the designations identified in Resolution (1) above.

132/24 **Regeneration Performance Report**

Cabinet received the performance of the Regeneration Programme and approval was sought for the additions to the Regeneration Pipeline. The Regeneration project pipeline comprised of 67 live projects, in addition to the 16 projects that were now complete, bringing the estimated total investment value to £3bn by 2027 and the total number of projects to 83.

Reason for Decision

On the 23 March 2022, Cabinet approved the Regeneration Strategy, Regeneration Project Pipeline, setting out the corporate regeneration priorities for the period 2022 to 2027. The pipeline was a live document, and Cabinet resolved for it to be monitored via a report submitted to Cabinet every 6 months. The last report was considered on the 17 July 2024.

In addition, Cabinet resolved that approval be sought to make additions to the project pipeline and for updated pipelines to be published on the council website and the Regenerating Sandwell website.

On 15 November 2023, Cabinet approved the Sandwell Business Growth Plan, setting out the priorities for supporting Sandwell's economy and business community over 2023/24 and 2024/25, and

resolved performance for it to be monitored via a report to Cabinet every 6 months. The first report to Cabinet was considered on 17 July 2024.

Alternative Options Considered

No alternative options were presented.

Resolved:-

- (1) that Cabinet receive the performance of the Regeneration Programme;
- (2) that approval be given to authorise the Executive Director of Place to make the recommended additions to the Regeneration Pipeline: -
 - add three sites identified for development via the Wednesbury Levelling Up Programme to the project pipeline (Former Outdoor Market, Union Street; High Bullen Car Park; and Spires Health Centre).

133/24

Authority to Procure a Sandwell Carers Support Service

Approval was sought to procure a Sandwell Carers Support Service that would provide a visible and accessible place where carers could access information, advice, and support in line with the Care Act 2014.

The new service would enable carers to live well and enable support to be easily accessible, thus improving outcomes for Sandwell carers.

The flow for carers was mainly self-referral through enquiry and this tended to result in a Carers Assessment and approval of a Carers Direct Payment of up to £400 a year. The number of people, and the costs of these Direct Payments had increased every year since 2015.

It was intended that the new Carers Support Service would be a single point of contact for carers, and triage carers to the right support prior to, or instead of, the Carers Assessment process. No one would be refused a Carers Assessment if they requested one. A 'No wrong door' approach would be used.

If a carer was not in crisis, the Carers Support Service would assess and plan appropriate support before referring the carer to the relevant community-based services, until an assessment was required. Thus, utilising all the carer support that was on offer.

This approach would support the Council to fulfil its statutory duty and enable people to access quality information, advice, and guidance as opposed to a waiting list as the first option. The proposed service would improve the customer journey for carers ensuring practical advice and support was made available in a timely manner. This revised approach would significantly improve the offer for carers. Carers would be directed to the support required that would help them to continue in their caring role whilst also enabling them to continue with their own life goals.

Reason for Decision

The Care Act 2014 placed a duty on all councils to consider the needs of carers on equal footing to the person receiving care and support.

There was a clear focus in the Act on promoting carers' wellbeing, taking account of the impact caring had on all aspects of their lives. It was therefore a statutory requirement that every Council had a robust offer to identify carers and support them appropriately.

Each Council's carers offer was central to the Care Quality Commission's Review, they were tasked with assessing the customer journey via implementation of the Care Act 2014.

Sandwell Trends reported that 30,000 usual residents aged 5 and upwards provided more than 50 hours of care a week. It was estimated by ADASS that the cost to provide this care nationally would be over £1billion to the Government in their latest survey.

Alternative Options Considered

Option 1 - Do nothing could not be considered as an option due to the Council's obligation to meet carers needs under the Care Act 2014.

Option 2 - was to deliver the services in-house. The Council did not have the specialist knowledge or capacity needed. This may have required more training, recruitment and costs and a delay in sourcing provision. Option 2 was therefore discounted.

Option 3 - was to retain the current commissioned community-based carers services and develop an overarching carers support

service that would operate across the six towns of Sandwell. The service would support delivery of the Joint Carers Strategy and Care Act 2014, and an improved customer journey to support better outcomes for Sandwell carers. This was the preferred option.

Resolved:-

- (1) that approval is given to commence a legally compliant tendering process to procure an all-age Carer Support Service in Sandwell;
- (2) that the Director for Adult Social Care is authorised to award a contract for an all-age Carer Support Service in Sandwell, for a 5-year period;
- (3) that authorisation is given for the Council to award and enter a new contract with the successful bidder, on terms agreed with the Director of Adult Social Care, for the provision of a Carer Support Service;
- (4) that the Monitoring Officer, Assistant Director – Legal and Assurance, or their designated representative, is given authority to execute any documents necessary to give effect to the proposals for the provision of a Carer Support Service;
- (5) that approval is given for an exemption to rules 8.10 and 8.11 of the Council’s Contract Procedure Rules 2022/23, or subsequent amendment, to allow the Director of Adult Social Care to award contracts to the successful tenderer if the required minimum number of tenders are not received; and
- (6) that Cabinet approve Variations to the Contract up to a maximum of 10% of the contract value, should they be necessitated, and that authority to approve such Variations be delegated to the appropriate Chief Officer in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.

(Councillor Hughes declared a personal interest in the item on the basis that he was a carer, he subsequently left the meeting and did not take part in the discussion)

Meeting ended at 3.58pm

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk