Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel

16 July 2019

CITY OF **WOLVERHAMPTON** COUNCIL

Time 6.00 pm	**Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Scrutiny

Venue Committee Room 3 - Civic Centre

Membership

Chair Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman (Lab)
Vice-chair Cllr Udey Singh (Con)

Labour	**Conservative**
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE	Cllr Jonathan Yardley
Cllr Payal Bedi-Chadha	
Cllr Dr Paul John Birch J.P.	
Cllr Craig Collingswood	
Cllr Claire Darke	
Cllr Val Evans	
Cllr Asha Mattu	
Cllr Barbara McGarrity	
Cllr Susan Roberts MBE	

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the Democratic Services team:

Contact	Martin Stevens
Tel/Email	martin.stevens@wolverhampton.gov.uk
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Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No.   Title

1   **Apologies**
           [To receive any apologies for absence].

2   **Declarations of interest**
           [To receive any declarations of interest].

3   **Minutes of previous meeting** (Pages 5 - 10)
           [To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record].

4   **Matters arising**
           [To consider any matters arising from the minutes].

5   **Public Realm, Transport and Linking the City**
           [Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel Members have been invited to
           participate in this item. A presentation from Transport for West Midlands will be given
           on the evening and there will be a presentation from Officers of the Council].

           [For background reading on part of what the item will cover - the West Side Link and
           Public Realm, Members may wish to read the report that was received by Cabinet on
           11 April 2019, titled "West Side Link Public Realm Proposals – Outcome of
           Consultation for Phases 1 and 2 and Potential Delivery Programme for Phase 1." The
           minutes from the meeting are also available for perusal].

6   **Digital Infrastructure Strategy** (Pages 11 - 22)
           [The briefing note presents the draft Digital Infrastructure Strategy for pre-decision
           Scrutiny].

7   **Presentation on items on the Council's Forward Plan in the Remit of the Panel**
           [The Director of Regeneration will give a presentation on items currently on the
           Council's Forward Plan which fall within the remit of the Stronger City Economy
           Scrutiny Panel].

8   **Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Review of the Year 2018/19** (Pages 23 - 26)
           [To consider a briefing note looking back at the Panel's work over the Council year
           2018/19].

9   **Scrutiny Work Plan** (Pages 27 - 30)
           [To consider the Scrutiny Work Plan for the Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel].

Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL

Agenda Item No: 3

Minutes - 12 February 2019

Attendance

Members of the Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Ian Angus
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE
Cllr Payal Bedi-Chadha
Cllr Alan Butt
Cllr Craig Collingswood
Cllr Claire Darke
Cllr Christopher Haynes
Cllr Barbara McGarrity
Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman (Chair)
Cllr Jonathan Yardley (Vice-Chair)

Witnesses
Steve Wright (Plastic Bottles Supplies Ltd)
Philippa Tailor (Ten Point Nine Tailoring)
Mary Tailor (Ten Point Nine Tailoring)
Matt Weston (Stones Throw Media)
Mike Chinn (Stones Throw Media)

Employees
Martin Stevens (Scrutiny Officer) (Minutes)
Richard Lawrence (Director of Regeneration)
Isobel Woods (Head of Enterprise)
Heather Clark (Manager Strategic Project Funding)
Jeff Marlow (Business Development Manager)
Glenn Watts (Black Country Growth Hub Aim Navigator)
Sharan Anmol (Black Country Growth Hub Aim Navigator)

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No.   Title

1   **Apologies**
       Cabinet Member, Cllr John Reynolds sent his apologies, not as a Member of the
       Panel, but as the relevant Portfolio Holder.

2   **Declarations of interest**
       There were no declarations of interest.

3   **Minutes of previous meeting**
       The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2018 were approved as a correct
       record.

4   **Matters arising**
       The Chair asked when the report on the budget consultation would be received by
       the Panel. The Scrutiny Officer responded that it would be received in the new
       municipal year.

5   **Innovation**
       The Head of Enterprise introduced a report on Innovation. The report built on the
       information which had been provided in a report to the Scrutiny Panel in April 2018.
       Since that meeting a paper titled "Business Enterprise Research and Development"
       had been released in November 2018, which presented the current impact of
       research and development on the UKs business sectors. Expenditure on research
       and development was continuing to grow and was predicated to continue on an
       upward trend. The medical sector made the highest contribution to research and
       development, followed by automotive, computer gaming and aerospace, technical
       testing and software development.

       The Head of Enterprise stated that Officers in the Council's Enterprise department
       were engaging with businesses in the City. The intelligence obtained from
       engagement was helping to shape and influence the activities the Council undertook.
       It was also identifying areas which the Council could support businesses and
       highlighting the overall benefits that the businesses were bringing to the City. The
       work undertaken had been captured in the Council's, Strategic Economic Plan
       (SEP). The SEP outlined how innovation was supporting broader wider economic
       growth in the City.

       The Head of Enterprise commented that there had been some very successful work
       completed by the Business Engagement Team. In addition to the Council's work with
       Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs) they also had a targeted approach with the
       strategic companies in the City. There had been a particular focus on innovation with
       the aerospace companies in the City. Technological innovation and research and
       development were key to the strategic companies. Steering those companies was
       Industry 4.0, an accreditation which captured automation, manufacturing
       technologies, cloud technologies, the internet of things which led to the creation of
       'smart factories'.

       The Head of Enterprise highlighted that the Business Engagement Team was largely
       funded by European funding. The funding they had secured ended at the end of
       2019. They had submitted a bid to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local
       Government (MHCLG) for further funding until 2021 and were awaiting to hear if they
       had been successful. The MHCLG had already secured the European funding
       regardless of Brexit.

       The Chair invited, Mr Steve Wright (Plastic Bottles Supplies Ltd) to present to the
       Panel. He stated that he had setup the company over twenty years ago. Its first
       year's turnover had been £12,000. He was now manufacturing 6 to 6.8 million
       bottles per month. The company turned over in excess of £15 million last year and
       was employing 105 people.

Mr Wright commented that if the Government introduced a rule that migrant workers had to be earning £30,000 or more to be permitted to work in the country, he would struggle to find the staff to work in his company. Approximately 50% of his workforce were non-UK Nationality. The Head of Enterprise commented that the Wolves at Work Initiative could help prepare people for work at Mr Wright's company. The initiative could also help find suitable staff.

Mr Wright remarked that the ever-increasing energy costs were also a challenge. New greener technology helped but there was still a need for electricity. Travel disruption had an adverse effect on his company because of the amount of deliveries to and from the site. It had been particularly bad in the last two years because of the extensive road works. The M6 was problematic from a haulage perspective. Any improvements the Council could make to improve traffic flow in the City and the wider region would benefit his company.

Mr Wright commented that he was extremely grateful for the support from the Business Engagement Team Officers. Their help had enabled him to secure several grants which had played a large part in making his products more sustainable. He believed his plastic bottle company to be the most innovative in the world, in that particular market. The success of the company had been down to innovation. They were now producing one plastic bottle, which was 100% recyclable and was able to be purchased commercially.

Mr Wright stated that one of his frustrations was when the Council sold large amounts of land direct to developers. The developers would then add 30% to the price. He asked if the Council as part of their long-term strategy would consider selling land direct to businesses, who were considering a new headquarters or factory. It was too expensive for him to buy a suitable building from developers, but it would be more affordable if the land was sold direct from the Council to the business. He believed pockets of land should be ring-fenced for current local businesses. The Director for Regeneration commented that he had met a Local Agent the previous afternoon about local industrial land availability. There was clearly a need for quality industrial space, but there wasn't much available at the present time. There were a lot of interested developers and investors, in particular as the market in Birmingham became overheated. There was clearly some work to be done in the future regarding how to unlock land for industrial use.

The Chair invited, Philippa Tailor (Ten Point Nine Tailoring) and Mary Tailor (Ten Point Nine Tailoring) to present to the Panel. Their company made clothing and accessories for the shooting community. Many of their clients were Olympic and Commonwealth games medallists and they had recently developed two products, a padded rifle case and a padded shooting mat.

The Business Engagement Team had been most helpful in finding them suitable accommodation for their business. They had also helped them source a local supplier, Ramsay Cellular products of Bilston, for the foam required in their protective cases. They were concerned about the impact Brexit would have on the sport of shooting and their local business. They imported considerable materials to make their products. They had a large amount of questions, where there was uncertainty over the answers, because the arrangements for Brexit were still unclear.

Mary Taylor commented that there were many retails spaces available to rent in Wolverhampton, but the rental rates were too high. They thought that schools teaching shooting as a sport and the establishment of local leagues would benefit their business. There were plans for a shooting league at Aldersley. They were also hopeful that the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham would have shooting as an event.

The Chair invited, Matt Weston (Stones Throw Media) and Mike Chinn (Stones Throw Media) to present to the Panel. They were based at the Science Park. The funding they had obtained from the Speed Plus programme had meant they had operated rent free for a year and a half. They were hoping to soon hit a turnover of one million pounds and were actively searching for a new unit. They wanted to expand to be able to offer a world class recording studio. They had been fortunate to benefit from funding from Black Country Transformation Gold (BCT Gold) and AIM (Advice Investment Markets). Their drones had been half paid for by grant funding. They had learnt valuable information by networking with other businesses in the local area. They had been delighted to receive the 2018 Micro Business of the Year - Express & Star Award.

The Chair commented that there had been two important common themes from the evidence given by the witnesses. The first being the importance of having the right facilities and premises available locally at an affordable cost and the second the importance and value of the Council engaging local businesses. The work that the Business Engagement Team had completed had clearly had a valuable positive impact on the local economy. There was much to learn with engaging in local businesses, which could be beneficial to the Council and the wider local economy.

Members of the Panel thanked the Business Engagement Team for their excellent work which had been detailed in the report and described during the witness evidence given during the meeting.

6 **Strategic Economic Plan**
The Manager for Strategic Project Funding introduced a report on the Council's Strategic Economic Plan. The plan was now out for consultation, which would close on the 22 February 2019.

7 **City Commission**
The Director of Regeneration introduced a briefing note on the City Centre Commission. Last summer, Members had announced their intention to setup a City Centre Commission. There had been subsequently two meetings with Mr Bill Grimsey, who was the author of two influential reports on the state of the High Street. These reports had subsequently interlinked with the Government commissioned report on the High Street written by Sir John Timpson, commonly referred to as the "Timpson Report". A workshop had been held with the help of the West Midlands Growth Company. A number of options had been put forward in what was a challenging agenda. The Government had recently announced the Future High Street Fund and were expecting expressions of interest towards the end of March 2019. It was intended to submit an expression of interest for the City of Wolverhampton. The preparation work for the expression of interest was taking up significant resources and time. When it had been completed they would be able to focus more on the progression of the City Centre Commission.

The Chair recommended that the Chair of the City Centre Commission should be someone from the organisations that the Council approaches. Strategic purpose was most important when working collaboratively across organisations. She wanted to see how the City Centre Commission fitted in with all the other forums and strategies the Council had for selling Wolverhampton as a City. She did not want the City Centre Commission to act in silo.

Resolved: That the briefing note on the City Centre Commission be agreed.

8   **Work Plan**

Resolved: That the Scrutiny Work Programme be agreed.

9   **Future Meeting Dates**
The future meeting dates of the Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel were detailed.

The meeting closed at 7:35pm.

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Briefing Note

CITY OF
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Title:	**Digital Infrastructure Strategy**
Prepared by:	**Heather Clark** **Date: 17 July 2019**
Intended Audience:	Internal ☐ Partner organisation ☐ Public ☒ Confidential ☐

Purpose or recommendation

To review the draft Wolverhampton's Digital Infrastructure Strategy prior to it going forward to Cabinet on 5 September 2019.

Overview

This briefing note presents the draft Digital Infrastructure Strategy for pre-decision Scrutiny.

Background and context

Having future proofed digital infrastructure is crucial to making Wolverhampton a more attractive place to live, run a business and invest. Currently 97% of Wolverhampton is connected to superfast broadband (fibre to the cabinet and copper to the premise) but the future is full fibre. The Government has committed to full fibre coverage by 2033, however if the City of Wolverhampton is ahead of the game, this makes us more attractive for investment and supports economic growth. The benefits of full fibre broadband are significant: over 15 years, full fibre broadband in Wolverhampton would lead to £27million direct impact, £64 million business impact and £58 million of benefits to households (Economic Impact of full fibre infrastructure Regeneris January 2018).

5G is mobile internet as fast as fibre with speeds up to 1GB, five-ten times faster than current home broadband connectivity currently. 5G benefits include huge capacity with the ability to connect thousands of users and devices at the same time at consistently ultrafast speeds and ultra-reliable, secure and low latency (doesn't drop connections) which will be transformational for industry. Without intervention, deployment will be in phases with the ambition for the majority of the population to have 5G coverage by 2027, however Wolverhampton's involvement in the WMCA 5G project could enable us to be one of the first areas with 5G connectivity.
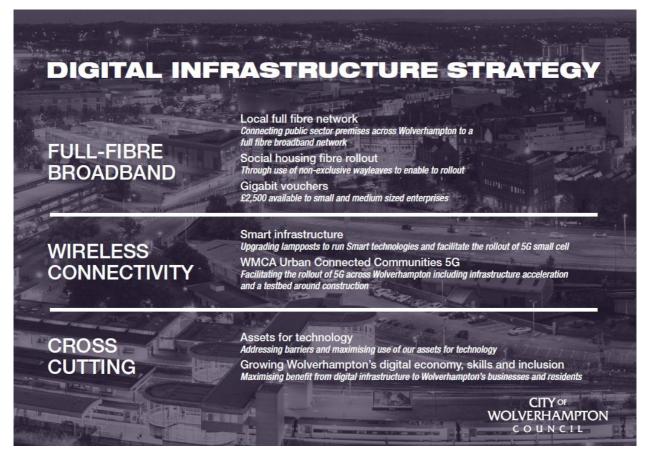
In recent correspondence to West Midlands local authority chief executives, West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) recommended that local authorities should:

- Develop a Digital Infrastructure Strategy
- Identify a Digital Infrastructure Champion
- Make available your assets
- Work with the Code Operators to accelerate deployment whilst negotiating changes brought about by the Electronic Communications Code
- Ensure that planning policies support the Digital Infrastructure Strategy
- Coordinate Street Works effectively

Briefing Note

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL

Digital Infrastructure Strategy

Digital infrastructure is the backbone of a modern thriving economy driving up productivity and spreading growth and in delivering effective and efficient public services. The council has developed a detailed Digital Infrastructure Strategy and Programme centred around three themes:

DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

FULL-FIBRE BROADBAND

Local full fibre network
Connecting public sector premises across Wolverhampton to a full fibre broadband network

Social housing fibre rollout
Through use of non-exclusive wayleaves to enable to rollout

Gigabit vouchers
£2,500 available to small and medium sized enterprises

WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY

Smart infrastructure
Upgrading lampposts to run Smart technologies and facilitate the rollout of 5G small cell

WMCA Urban Connected Communities 5G
Facilitating the rollout of 5G across Wolverhampton including infrastructure acceleration and a testbed around construction

CROSS CUTTING

Assets for technology
Addressing barriers and maximising use of our assets for technology

Growing Wolverhampton's digital economy, skills and inclusion
Maximising benefit from digital infrastructure to Wolverhampton's businesses and residents

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL

FULL FIBRE ROLLOUT will be supported through the implementation of the DCMS funded Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) project which will connect public sector premises to full fibre broadband. Supporting the rollout of full fibre broadband across residential estates through the use of non-exclusive wayleave agreements (see assets for technology below). Lastly, we are promoting take-up of Gigabit Vouchers by businesses to enable full fibre to the premise through the Growth Hub and Enterprise teams.

WIRELESS CONNECTIVITY covers a wide range of technology including wireless technology on rooftop and high rise aerials, small cell technology and Wi-Fi meshes. Our European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) **Smart Infrastructure** project embeds smart enabled technology within street lighting including facilitating network capability including 5G. As part of WMCA **Urban Connected Communities (UCC) 5G** programme, Wolverhampton is to host the Black Country's first 5G testbed focusing initially around

Briefing Note

Construction with potential to develop into public service delivery use cases. In addition, we are working with Mobile Network Operators (MNO) to facilitate the rollout 5G through use of our assets and removing barriers.

A key requirement for enabling digital infrastructure rollout is to facilitate access to local authority owned assets and street furniture to support the rollout of digital infrastructure. Our **Assets for Technology** project aims to put systems in place to enable commercial rollout based on good practice guidance from www.gov.uk/guidance/access-to-public-sector-assets and removal of barriers. This will include identifying suitable assets that are viable for telecoms uses, agree a commercial model to facilitate the rollout and improving access arrangements including wayleaves and leases.

Progress towards implementing WMCA recommendations are set out below:

WMCA recommendations	
Develop a Digital Infrastructure Strategy	Attached
Identify a Digital Infrastructure Champion.	Digital Infrastructure Champion - Charlotte Johns, Head of Strategy Digital Infrastructure Co-ordinator – Heather Clark, Service Development Manager
Make available your assets	As part of Our Assets in the Corporate Plan, an Assets for Technology workstream has been established. Assets have been mapped in terms of their suitability for technology.
Work with the Code Operators to accelerate deployment whilst negotiating changes brought about by the Electronic Communications Code	Initial discussions are underway with Mobile Network Operator (MNO)s. The asset mapping will be shared with other MNOs and charging agreed in line with the code.
Ensure that planning policies support the Digital Infrastructure Strategy	Planning is represented on the Assets for Technology group. Joint work with WM5G Infrastructure Acceleration team is underway.
Coordinate Street Works effectively	Highways are represented on the Digital Programme Board and Assets for Technology workstream. Co-ordination of street works of the various activities could minimise impact and disruption.

A copy of the digital infrastructure strategy is included at appendix 1.

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Wolverhampton Digital Infrastructure Strategy

Introduction and Context

Having future proofed digital infrastructure is crucial to making Wolverhampton a more attractive place to live, run a business and invest. Currently 97% of Wolverhampton is connected to superfast broadband (fibre to the cabinet and copper to the premise with speeds up to 30 MB) but the future is full fibre (1GB equivalent to 1000 MB). The Government has committed to full fibre coverage by 2033, however if the City of Wolverhampton is ahead of the game, this makes us more attractive for investment and supports economic growth.

The benefits of **full fibre broadband** are significant – doubling the connection speed would result in an additional 0.3 percentage points to annual GDP growth (Study of OECD countries 2012) and accelerated deployment of FTTP infrastructure which resulted in 55% of households using FTTP by 2025 could result in GDP levels 0.54% higher than the status quo. Over 15 years, full fibre broadband in Wolverhampton would lead to £27million direct impact, £64 million business impact and £58 million of benefits to households (Economic Impact of full fibre infrastructure Regeneris January 2018).

Wireless connectivity covers a wide range of technology including wireless technology on rooftops, high rise aerials, small cell technology and Wi-Fi meshes. The City currently has good coverage of 4G and 4G+ but our Strategy aims to support early rollout of 5G. **5G** is mobile internet as fast as fibre with speeds up to 1GB, five-ten times faster than current home broadband connectivity. 5G benefits include:

- Huge capacity with the ability to connect thousands of users and devices at the same time at consistently ultra-fast speeds e.g. mobile phones, cars, ambulances, machines, medical devices, CCTV, buildings, and environmental sensors monitoring and controlling intelligent infrastructure - all without needing a fibre broadband connection;

- Ultra-reliable, secure and low latency (doesn't drop connections) – which will be transformational for industry. 5G will create indoor and outdoor networks within businesses, factories and warehouses to support industries and critical communications like medical devices, guided vehicles, machine-to-machine communication, remote control and monitoring of stationary and mobile equipment, and augmented reality support in design, maintenance, repair and construction.

Wolverhampton Digital Infrastructure Strategy

Wolverhampton Digital Infrastructure Strategy

Support the rollout of full fibre broadband

Our aim is to support the rollout of full fibre broadband to public sector premises, across housing areas and businesses.

Priorities
Support the rollout of full fibre broadband to public sector premises through implementation of the Department of Digital Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) funded Local Full Fibre Network project. The project will roll out full fibre to public sector premises across Wolverhampton, including Council premises such as libraries, Wolverhampton Homes offices, schools and the City of Wolverhampton College. Full fibre will open up opportunities for more innovative ways of delivery, efficiency and cost savings.
Support the rollout of full fibre broadband on housing estates through developing non-exclusive wayleave agreements covering whole residential estates. This approach, based on best practice from elsewhere, includes guidance and principles commercial providers must sign up. Removing barriers to rollout and standardising procedures is essential to facilitate the rollout of full fibre broadband across the city.
Support the take-up of Gigabit Vouchers by Wolverhampton Businesses including raising awareness. Gigabit Vouchers can be used by small and medium sized businesses to contribute to the installation cost of a gigabit capable connection. Businesses can claim up to £2,500 against the cost of connection either individually or as part of a group project aggregating vouchers to fibre up a multi-tenant building or estate.

Wolverhampton Digital Infrastructure Strategy

Wireless Connectivity

Our aim is to support the rollout of wireless technology, in particular 5G, on rooftops and high rise aerials, small cell technology and Wi-Fi meshes.

Priorities
Support the rollout of 5G: West Midlands Combined Authority secured DCMS funding for an Urban Connected Communities 5G programme to support the rollout of 5G infrastructure. We will work closely with WM5G to: • Remove barriers to rollout by providing access to our assets, facilitating Mobile Network Operators to upgrade existing masts to enable coverage and invest in new 5G infrastructure including small cell technology for capacity to facilitate the rollout. • Demonstrate the potential for 5G through testbeds and application accelerators that develop new applications and services using 5G to demonstrate the financial case for investment. • Explore innovative uses of 5G in the delivery of services through a series of 5G imagine events.
Upgrade to Smart Infrastructure. Funding from the European Regional Development Fund has been secured to introduce smart enabled technology on street furniture. Funding will upgrade street lamp columns to facilitate the rollout of 5G, add smart data collection sensors to enable environment and traffic monitoring and smarter delivery through light and temperature sensors resulting in cost and energy efficiencies. The project will also pilot electric vehicle charging points and solar lighting along the canal to encourage walking and cycling and collect data to inform behaviour change.
Identify future Smart and IOT opportunities seeking external funding for projects resulting in efficiency savings and improved quality of life.

Wolverhampton Digital Infrastructure Strategy

Barrier busting

Wolverhampton has committed to developing our local approach to highways, planning, wayleaves that optimises the environment to improve digital infrastructure enabling full fibre broadband and 5G, removing barriers to commercial rollout based on good practice guidance from www.gov.uk/guidance/access-to-public-sector-assets. Going forward, our approach will be in line with the Electronic Communication Code.

Priorities
Maximise the use of public assets and street furniture to facilitate the rollout of digital infrastructure: **Stage 1: identifying suitable assets** that meet relevant regulatory requirements, are viable for telecoms use and factors that may impact deployment. **Stage 2: commercial model**: agree a model to facilitate the rollout. National guidance recommends an open model through a simple agreement offering access to one or more sites/locations on standard non-discriminatory terms. This approach is favoured by network providers as it minimises complexity and therefore cost. **Stage 3: Access agreements:** • **Wayleave** for deployment of fixed-line broadband infrastructure providing right to access land and/or property to install and maintain electronic communication apparatus. • **Lease agreements** for mobile masts on land and rooftops giving right to use the property for a specified period of time in return for periodic payments.
Influence stakeholders to support the rollout of digital infrastructure through the planning process to ensure that fibre broadband and connectivity is considered the fourth utility: • Discussions with developers to encourage installing ducting/ full fibre at the same time as other utilities. • Make available city development plans, showing where new housing, commercial and transport infrastructure will go and when, to encourage rollout of full fibre at build stage encouraging infrastructure providers. • Review of the Black Country Joint Core Strategy (Wolverhampton's statutory development plan) to encourage full fibre infrastructure and building design for high bandwidth and high availability wireless access technologies. An infrastructure study is currently underway.

Wolverhampton Digital Infrastructure Strategy

Cross cutting

Growing the Digital Economy through supporting the growth of the digital and tech economy (nationally this sector is growing twice as fast as the economy as a whole and its workers more productive) and the digital transformation of businesses in other sectors which can make them more productive and support economic growth. In Wolverhampton, this builds on a growing knowledge economy, cluster of creative tech businesses contributing £201.5m GVA and employing 4,527 people and an increase in digital startups of 422% dominated by companies in the "scale up" phase suggesting potential for significant growth[1].

Digital Skills: in order to fully benefit from a growing digital economy, we must ensure our residents have the skills. Employers indicate that one-third of difficult to fill vacancies are to a degree due to a lack of digital skills. Digital and non-digital companies are increasingly more reliant on workers with digital skills (essential requirement for over two-thirds of UK occupations). Jobs with a digital skill requirement also carry with them a wage differential. To address this, we need to develop, retain and attract digital skills.

Digital Inclusion: in recognition that not all residents have access to the internet at home whilst others lack the skills and confidence to get online. Digital inclusion is increasingly essential to access benefits, services and work opportunities, for education, training and improving children's educational performance, boosting total lifetime earnings and increasing chances of employment.

Priorities
Growing the Digital Economy by supporting the growth of the knowledge economy and the digital sector in Wolverhampton through digital upskilling of existing businesses through schemes such as E-bays Retail Revival scheme and workshops through the Black Country Growth Hub, Digital Passport and AIM for GOLD. Complemented by encourage take-up of Gigabit Vouchers.
Increasing digital skills by developing, retaining and attracting digital skills into Wolverhampton through development and implementation of a digital skills plan developing skills throughout education and in the workplace and maximising ensuring local delivery of the WMCA digital skills retraining fund to benefit both our residents and .
Support access to computers and digital connectivity (public access points and WiFi) and ensuring support is available to improve confidence and skills to get online, working closely with the Voluntary Community Sector.

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[1] Tech Nation Report

Wolverhampton Digital Infrastructure Strategy

Resourcing the Digital Infrastructure Programme:

Digital Infrastructure deployment requires involvement from a number of departments within each local authority - such as corporate landlord, highways, planning, legal and so on. The following roles will support implementation of the Digital Infrastructure Strategy:

The **Digital Champion** will help disseminate the council's overarching strategy, bring colleagues together and coordinate pan-council solutions to support infrastructure deployment. The Champion has the authority to ensure that departments across the organisation work together to achieve the policy goals and support effective engagement between local authority and network operators. A **Digital Infrastructure Councillor Champion** is also being considered.

The role of the **Digital Infrastructure Team** will include developing our local approach to highways, planning, wayleaves, use of assets such as street lights and rooftops that optimises the environment to improve digital infrastructure enabling full fibre broadband and removing barriers to commercial rollout including:

- Removing barriers to rapid delivery of digital infrastructure
- Enabling and encouraging investment
- Reducing delays and costs, simplifying processes and encouraging best practice
- Develop relationships with providers and Mobile network operators
- Central point to facilitate and co-ordinate wayleaves, street works licences and planning as well as making public sector assets
- Rollout best practice around barrier busting

The Team is made up of:

- **Digital Infrastructure Co-ordinator** acting as the single point of contact within the council, they will work in partnership with network operators to help them navigate through the areas of the organisation with which they need to engage.
- **LFFN Project Manager** will project manages the £4.9 million Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) project rolling out full fibre broadband infrastructure. The project is currently out for procurement with planning of rollout anticipated to start Summer 2019.
- **Smart Infrastructure (street lighting) Project Manager** – funded by ERDF, this role will manage the delivery of the Smart Infrastructure project including dealing with compliance with EU rules and regulations and aligning with the wider digital infrastructure programme.

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Briefing Note

CITY OF
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C O U N C I L

Title:	**Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Review of the Year 2018/19**
Prepared by:	**Heather Clark** **Date: 16 July 2019**
Intended Audience:	Internal ☒ Partner organisation ☐ Public ☐ Confidential ☐

Purpose or recommendation

To provide an update on recommendations made by the Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel during 2018-19.

Overview

The Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel aims to scrutinise activities of the Stronger City Economy service within the Council. During 2018-19, the Panel looked at the following areas:

- Enabling a Vibrant City Centre
- Apprenticeships
- Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy
- Portfolio Holder Q&A
- Innovation
- Strategic Economic Plan
- City Commission

Review of the year 2018-19

The following action plan outlines progress against recommendations from Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel.

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Date and Theme	Panel Resolutions	Progress
26 June 2018 Enabling a Vibrant City Centre	Endorses the current approach to diversify the City Centre's role and focusing on making the centre a desirable place to visit and spend time.\n\nEndorse the action group approach to continue to proactively respond to the repurposing of the City Centre.	Update on City Centre Commission provided at meeting on 12 February 2019.\n\nThe Council has submitted an expression of interest to the Future High Streets Fund to take forward its vision for the City Centre. A further expression of interest is being developed for a High Streets Heritage Action Zone.
18 September 2019 Apprenticeships	Agreed to receive an update review report on apprenticeships in twelve months time.\n\nThat a Headteacher be invited to the meeting so that the Panel can receive witness evidence from a further prospective on the subject of apprenticeships.	Apprenticeships are on the work plan for 14 November 2019.\n\nThe lead for Apprenticeships is Paula Warrilow, Head of OD and Apprenticeships. A new refreshed website showcasing City offer through the Wolvesworkbox
20 November Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy	Feedback be forwarded to Scrutiny Board for consideration.\n\nFor a future report on how the Council monitors the effectiveness of budget consultation, how it is promoted and who it chooses to consult with.	Feedback taken into account at Cabinet.\n\nReport circulated previously by e-mail.
20 November Portfolio Holder Q&A session	No formal resolution	A successful session was held with agreement that separate informal meetings be held following the session to address issues raised.

Briefing Note

12 February Innovation	Panel acknowledge recommendations made by the witnesses: • Directed MD of Plastic Bottles Supplies Ltd to wolves@work to support recruitment. • Improving traffic flow to the city and wider region to support deliveries. • Local industrial land availability – how to unlock land for industrial use • Uncertainty following Brexit. • Schools teaching shooting as sport/local shooting lead at Aldersley • Communication of funding available. Right facilities and premises at affordable cost and importance and value of the Council engaging local businesses would be beneficial to the Council and the wider local economy	Wolves@Work Employer Work Coaches are working with a number of Wolverhampton employers including Plastic Bottles Supplies Ltd to support recruitment. The WMCA Brexit Commission has earmarked £170,000 of MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) Capacity Building funding to supporting businesses, communications, resilience planning, product safety and environmental health. A number of Business Development Officers in the Enterprise team have access to Grantfinder and inform businesses of opportunities. Engagement activity is a key part of the Enterprise service. Referrals and engagement with property owners feature in this work.
Strategic Economic Plan		Agreed by Cabinet 27 March 2019
City Commission	Agreed the briefing note. Recommended Chair of City Centre Commission be from an organisation the Council approaches. Strategic purpose. Fit with other strategies and forums.	Future updates can be provided

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Scrutiny Work Programme

Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel Work Programme

The Panel will have responsibility for Scrutiny functions as they relate to - Enterprise and Skills, City Development, Visitor Economy, Adult and Cultural Learning, Economic Inclusion and Service Development.

Date of Meeting	Item Description	Lead Report Author	Notes
16 July 2019	• Improving the Public Realm, linking the City and Transport - to invite the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel - Include outcome of Westside Link Phases 1 and 2 - outcome of consultation (June 2019)	John Roseblade (Presentation)	Joint item with the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel • Outcome of Consultation • Westside Link • Business Plan • Costings and making back the cost - timeframes • Marketing/Commercial intelligence in current plans • Transport Plans for the City • Research done elsewhere – defining parameters of success i.e. footfall increase.
	• Annual Review of the work of the Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel • Presentation on Forward Plans for the year	Heather Clark Richard Lawrence	• To include update on – Southside Regeneration Strategy, former Sainsbury's St. George's Site, Westside development, Wolverhampton External Funding Strategy and Black Country Plan Draft for Consultation.

	• Digital Infrastructure	Heather Clark	• Broadband plans for the City and efficient use of implementing the infrastructure required.
2 September 2019	• Branding and Marketing Strategy for the City of Wolverhampton • Civic Halls Business Development Plan and Generic Update on Project	Isobel Woods / Ian Fegan Richard Lawrence	• City Centre and wider Wolverhampton branding and marketing strategy. Ian Fegan request to attend. How is Wolverhampton sold to encourage investment. • Cabinet are receiving a report on the Business Development Plan in July. Also include generic update on building progress including, Fire Safety. Members to be asked for questions on the Civic Hall in advance of the meeting from the Chair of the Panel.
25 November 2019	• Apprenticeships Update • Skills, Employment, Enterprise • Draft Budget	Angela McKeever	• Update as resolved at the Panel last year. Particular focus on uptake numbers, effectiveness and overall career pathways. Data analysis.

January/ February 2020	• Inward Investment		• To include communications angle.
March 2020	• Review of recommendations throughout the year.	Heather Clark	

Potential Future items: -

1. Policy implications from West Midlands Combined Authority/Regional/National or International Sources
2. How do we monitor our communications?

Work Plan Version: 08/07/19 09:48

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