

Report title	Our City: Our Plan Refresh 2023/2024	
Decision designation	RED	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Ian Brookfield Leader of the Council	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Charlotte Johns, Director of Strategy	
Originating service	Policy and Strategy	
Accountable employee	Laura Collings Tel Email	Head of Policy and Strategy 01902550414 laura.collings@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board Scrutiny Board	10 January 2023 7 February 2023

Recommendations for decision:

That Cabinet recommends that Council:

1. Approves the Our City: Our Plan refresh, the City of Wolverhampton Council Plan.
2. Seeks cross party engagement to deliver the priorities set out in Our City: Our Plan the strategic framework to level up our city.

Recommendations for noting:

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. That the priorities of Our City: Our Plan have been developed through a continuous conversation with our communities and partners.
2. That a presentation and draft Our City: Our Plan was received by Scrutiny Board on the 7 February 2023.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve the refreshed Council Plan, Our City: Our Plan for the 2023/2024 municipal year. This report will also provide an update on the Council performance framework and how we will continue to monitor our progress towards delivering our city priorities.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Our City: Our Plan was approved by Full Council on the 2 March 2022. To ensure that the Council's resource continues to be aligned to the needs and priorities of local people the plan has been refreshed. Our City: Our Plan sets out how the Council will continue to work alongside local, regional, and national partners to improve outcomes for local people. It is good practice to review and refresh the Council Plan on annual basis.
- 2.2 Since the previous iteration of the plan the cost-of-living crisis has followed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and is now impacting local people through higher energy and food prices. The plan sets out our support to local people through our Financial Wellbeing package as well as activity to build family resilience by growing the local economy, providing more opportunities for young people and good quality jobs.
- 2.3 The 'Levelling Up' white paper (February 2022) identified Wolverhampton as an area of strong local leadership. The Council continues to work with Government to secure the vital investment the city needs to regenerate and level up. This plan sets out a framework for how through a shared strategy we can level up our city together.
- 2.4 This item was considered as pre-decision scrutiny on 7 February 2023 by Scrutiny Board and will therefore not be available to call in once a decision is made by Cabinet. Scrutiny Board scrutinised the content of the strategy, which included commentary on the key priorities, outcomes and planned performance framework contained within Our City: Our Plan. The outcome of Scrutiny Board included a request for further information in relation to a continuous conversation with communities which has been included at section 5 of this report, alongside a number of other comments. This included the importance of the voluntary and community sector which is referenced in Our City: Our Plan, and a number of specific issues which will be picked up in the relevant Scrutiny Panel.

3.0 Our City: Our Plan

- 3.1 The plan sets out an ambition that 'Wulfrunians will live longer, healthier lives.' Delivery of this ambition will be supported by six overarching priorities.
 - Strong families where children grow up well and achieve their full potential
 - Fulfilled lives for all with quality care for those that need it
 - Healthy, inclusive communities
 - Good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods

- More local people into good jobs and training
- Thriving economy in all parts of the city

3.2 These priorities together with the associated key outcomes, objectives and activity form a framework to improve outcomes for local people and deliver our levelling up ambitions. Supporting the six overarching priorities are three cross cutting principles.

- **Climate Conscious:** The plan is aligned to the Council's climate change strategy 'Future Generations' and our target to make the Council net carbon zero by 2028. Reducing carbon emissions will continue to be a local and national priority.
- **Driven by Digital:** Wolverhampton is at the forefront of digital infrastructure and innovation, and now more than ever we have seen the importance of digital skills and connectivity to social and economic participation for the City's residents.
- **Fair and Equal:** The Council will continue to tackle the inequalities in our city which impact on the opportunities of local people. The plan is aligned to our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy which is underpinned by directorate level action plans.

4.0 Strategic Framework

4.1 The plan continues to focus on aligning our strategic objectives with operational delivery and performance. Each of the six overarching priorities includes:

- A policy position outlining the Council's key areas of focus, challenge, and opportunity under the priority.
- Outcomes which are clear about the impact the Council is seeking to achieve.
- Objectives which are measurable, specific, and achievable to support delivery of the outcomes.
- Key activity highlighting planned projects, investment and activity which will support delivery of the priority areas.

5.0 Continuous Conversation with Communities

5.1 The refreshed plan has been developed through regular, continued engagement with key stakeholders and communities. It builds on the previous engagement as reported when Our City: Our Plan was first approved, including relighting our city engagement programme (2500 people), young people design jams and residents surveys (470 responses).

5.2 Further consultation has been undertaken as part of the 2023/24 refresh as part our city budget consultation which ran from the 20 December 2022 to 18 January 2023. The 'Delivering your Priorities for Wolverhampton' consultation received 56 responses with key themes including education, employment and skills, housing, and children and young people.

- 5.3 Throughout the year there are opportunities for local people to help shape future service delivery and feedback their priorities for the city. There is a continuous process to ensure these views are fed into the annual refresh of Our City: Our Plan. A key example of this is the recent 'Customer Experience Strategy' consultation which received over 650 responses and included a series of focus groups with representatives from the city's equality groups. Key themes from the consultation including the future use of digital technology to deliver services were fed into the refreshed Our City: Our Plan.
- 5.4 It is vital that we continue to engage with communities and city partners as we deliver our Council Plan. This will be taken forward as a continuous conversation with our communities and targeted opportunities to co-produce innovative solutions to the City's challenges.

6.0 Council Performance Framework

- 6.1 The Council continues to use a variety of means in which to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of operations against organisational strategic priorities and statutory requirements. Using data and analysis across all areas of the business, the Council actively encourages a golden thread of performance monitoring throughout all parts of every service.
- 6.2 A new performance framework has been developed to reflect how the Council is performing against the refreshed Council Plan and is reported to Cabinet quarterly alongside financial monitoring. This performance framework provides high-level city data on key priorities, benchmark city performance against national and regional data, highlight the impact of targeted interventions and inform strategic decision-making.
- 6.3 Our City: Our Plan incorporates clear performance indicators against each of the six overarching priorities and Our Council, including the missions as set out by government in the Levelling Up White Paper (February 2022), and key system and council measures.
- 6.4 These measures show performance against the outcomes of the council plan and are based on national indicators to enable benchmarking where possible, and other best practice.
- 6.5 In addition to quarterly reports to Cabinet on performance against these measures, regular reporting on performance is also taken to Scrutiny Board and relevant Scrutiny panels. This process helps to embed the golden thread of data flowing between all levels of Council activity ensuring data driven decision making and that an understanding of performance is evident in everything we do.

7.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 7.1 Option 1 would be to not refresh Our City: Our Plan. This would mean that the Council's main strategic framework may not reflect key priorities of local people which have emerged over the last 12 months.

7.2 Option 2 and the chosen option is to refresh Our City: Our Plan which will enable the city to address key challenges and capitalise on new opportunities as we transition to a new normal and level up our city.

8.0 Reasons for decision(s)

8.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the refreshed Our City: Our Plan to ensure the Council's strategic framework continues to reflect the needs and priorities of local people.

9.0 Financial implications

9.1 There are no direct financial implications to the plan itself although the actions outline projects and programmes that will have financial implications; these will be subject to individual reports as appropriate.

9.2 All costs associated with engagement and the preparation of the plan will be accommodated within existing budgets.

[AS/13022023/G]

10.0 Legal implications

10.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The approval of the Council Plan is a function reserved to Council under the constitution and that includes a refresh of the Plan and as such Cabinet can make a recommendation but ultimately the decision must be taken by Council.

[DP30012023/B]

11.0 Equalities implications

11.1 An equalities analysis for Our City: Our Plan has been undertaken and mitigations to any negative impacts identified. Fair and Equal is one of the three cross cutting principles of the refreshed plan. All activity noted in the plan will also be subject to individual equalities analysis.

12.0 All other implications

12.1 Our City: Our Plan has implications across the Council, including climate change, health, and wellbeing and digital which will continue to be considered and managed as part of the delivery of this plan.

12.2 Health and wellbeing is an important part of everyday life. It is integral to leading a happy and healthy lifestyle. As only 20% of a person's health outcomes are attributed to the ability to access good quality health care, the wider determinants of health, made up of the diverse range of social, economic, and environmental factors which impact on people's health, play a crucial role in the health and wellbeing of communities and local people. Through its focus on these wider determinants the delivery of the Our City: Our Plan priorities recognises the role of the council in contributing to ensuring that our communities are stronger, healthier, and thriving places to live.

- 12.3 We will continue to contribute to the delivery of the council's climate change action plan to meet our commitment to be next carbon neutral as a Council by 2028, with regular progress reports to Cabinet.
- 12.4 The plan is aligned to the Digital Wolves strategy approved by Cabinet in March 2022, setting out how as a city and as a council we can harness the benefits of digital and technology for local people.
- 12.5 The performance framework for each thematic area of the plan will enable continued oversight of the indicators that underpin the central commitment to Wulfrunians living longer, healthier lives.

13.0 Schedule of background papers

- 13.1 N/A

14.0 Appendices

- 14.1 Appendix 1: Our City: Our Plan Document