

Individual Executive Decision Notice

Report title	5G Innovation Region funding allocation	
Decision designation	GREEN	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Louise Miles Cabinet Member for Resources	
	Councillor Obaida Ahmed Cabinet Member for Digital and Community Inclusion	
Wards affected	(All Wards);	
Accountable Directors	James Howse, Director of Finance Charlotte Johns, Director of Strategy	
Originating services	External Funding and Digital Projects	
Accountable employee	Author name	Heather Clark
	Tel	01902 555614
	Email	Heather.Clark2@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by		

Summary

To approve entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) in relation to the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) 5G Innovation Region Funded project and to set up supplementary capital budgets as required.

Recommendation for decision:

That the Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital and Inclusion, in consultation with Chief Operating Officer (Monitoring Officer) and Director of Finance approve:

- The acceptance of the grant allocation for the successful WMCA's bid for the 5G Innovation Region fund, managed by WM5G on behalf of WMCA.
- Entering into a Memorandum of Understanding with WM5G as Lead Authority.
- Entering into a grant funding agreement with WM5G as Lead Authority.
- The establishment of capital budgets for monies allocated to City of Wolverhampton Council in line with the Memorandum of Understanding.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Futureproofed digital infrastructure, both fixed and mobile connectivity, is crucial for our residents, businesses and the delivery of services. It is the backbone of a modern thriving economy, driving productivity and spreading growth. It opens the way to achieve our ambition for Wolverhampton as a Gigabit and Smart City using futureproofed digital infrastructure to transform delivery of services and develop new applications to unlock the city's potential. Driven by digital is a cross cutting theme of Our City Our Plan with ambitions outlined in our Strategy and the Digital & IT Roadmap.
- 1.2 The Digital Wolverhampton Strategy approved in 2022 sets out a framework which supports an action orientated partnership approach to achieve the overarching aims:
- Wolverhampton as a gigabit and smart city with a futureproofed digital infrastructure including full fibre and 5G mobile connectivity to transform the delivery of services.
 - 100% digitally included Wolverhampton ensuring all of our citizens have the access to devices, connectivity and digital skills.
 - Growing the digital economy and talent pipeline, building on the digital infrastructure to start and grow business creating jobs for our citizens to meet the skills needs for the future.
- 1.3 To deliver these aims, the strategy sets out five priorities including digital innovation. The digital innovation priority outlines our intention to develop and improve service delivery by using emerging technologies to innovate services including:
- Technology enabled independent living and health to improve quality of life, prevent and manage health conditions.
 - Become a leading Smart City for the future by maximising benefit from West Midlands Smart City Programme.
- 1.4 The constitution allows the Cabinet Member for Resources and Cabinet Member for Digital City in consultation with Director of Finance and Monitoring Officer to approve where new income has been identified but not included in the approved budgets, shall be in agreement from the Section 151 officer.

2.0 5G Innovation Region

- 2.1 The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) secured £3.8 million from the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) £40 million fund for local and regional authorities across the UK to establish themselves at 5G Innovation Regions (5GIR).
- 2.2 5G Innovation Regions aim to promote the development and scale up adoption of 5G and other advanced wireless technologies, in businesses and in the delivery of public services to:

- Drive economic growth by supporting places in adopting wireless connectivity for services based around local opportunities for growth.
- Accelerate commercial investment in 5G and other advanced wireless technologies by aggregating and demonstrating demand.
- Foster the emergent 5G ecosystem by enabling “learning by doing”.

2.3 The WMCA proposal focused on two sectors Advanced Manufacturing, sponsored by Jaguar Landrover and Smart Communities, sponsored by Local Authorities. The proposal focused of trialling adoption hubs within the three cities of West Midlands including Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton with smaller funding available to other councils in the region. The adoption hubs will focus on Adult Social Care, Health and Housing with up to £289,857 available. Funding is available from November 2023 to March 2025.

2.4 These projects will be informed by lessons learned in engaging as part of our smart city aims and objectives. To demonstrate our commitment, we presented investment in Smart Cities including £250,000 proof-of-concept fund to fund use cases including the use of smart bin sensors and fly tipping cameras. We can use the funding to build upon our Smart City use cases, by purchasing more sensors particularly focussing on Adult Social Care, Health and Housing.

2.5 WM5G will programme manage 5GIR as a whole across the region. In Wolverhampton, we will manage 5GIR funding as a workstream supporting the Digital Wolverhampton Programme objectives. A Smart City Programme Board will oversee Wolverhampton’s adoption hub with regular engagements will take place with Adult Social Care, health and housing services.

3.0 Evaluation of alternative options

3.1 Option 1 - Do nothing: CWC will lose the funding which will impact our ability to deliver the digital innovation priority.

3.2 Option 2 – 5G Innovation Region Fund: providing funding and opportunities to support our digital innovation priority, including improving service delivery, working towards our smart city objectives and embedding technology to enable independent living and health to improve quality of life, prevent and manage health conditions.

4.0 Reasons for decision

4.1 Option 2 is recommended in order to use funding to support the digital innovation priority from the Digital Wolverhampton Strategy adopted in 2022.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 The financial implications for the successful 5G Innovation Region are outlined in the table below.

Table 1: 5GIR funding

	2023/24 £000's	2024/25 £000's	TOTAL £000's
CWC allocated capital spend	57	233	290

- 5.2 Funding is available from November 2023 until March 2025, however there is no carry forward between financial years.
- 5.3 Funding can be used to achieve deliverables including staff time to research the markets, building robust business case, purchasing additional sensors (e.g. heat and humidity sensors and fall detection sensors), and hosting engagement events. We will consider engaging with Consultancy Services in terms of what technologies can be embedded to support the delivery of our digital innovation priority. Any funding drawn down from 5GIR for staff time will be allocated to our digital infrastructure budget.
- 5.4 In terms of RIBA stages, the project is currently within the RIBA 1 stage in which the council is developing a project brief and researching the markets to make an informed decision.
- 5.5 The final, signed Memorandum of Understanding and Grant Funding Agreement, once available will be shared with Finance at the earliest opportunity to confirm any grant funding conditions to ensure spend is in line with the Prudential Code for Capital finance.
- 5.6 No spend will be incurred in advance of sign off and approval of the Grant Funding Agreement, in line with Para 1.4 shall be agreed with the S.151 Officer.

[DW/11122023/Y]

6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 The Council will enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the WMCA which outlines the project, profile of spend, outputs and outcomes and also sets out rules and regulations that must be complied with.

[SZ04122023/P]

7.0 Equalities implications

- 7.1 5GIR funding will have positive equalities implications since it is funding a range of sensors that will help people to live at home longer, detect and monitor health and housing conditions. The sensors will monitor their health and wellbeing.

8.0 Schedule of background papers