

Time	5.00 pm	Public Meeting?	YES	Type of meeting	Executive
Venue	Committee Room 3, Third Floor - Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1SH				

Membership

Chair Cllr Ian Brookfield (Lab)
Vice-Chair Cllr Peter Bilson (Lab)

Labour

Cllr Harman Banger
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Linda Leach
Cllr Louise Miles
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE

Quorum for this meeting is five Councillors.

Information for the Public

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

Contact Philippa Salmon
Tel/Email Tel: 01902 555061 or philippa.salmon@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Address Democratic Services, Civic Centre, 1st floor, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

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Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential or commercial nature. These reports are not available to the public.

Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

MEETING BUSINESS ITEMS

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
- 2 **Declaration of interests**
- 3 **Minutes of the previous meeting** (Pages 5 - 8)
[For approval]
- 4 **Matters arising**
[To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting]

DECISION ITEMS (RED - FOR DECISION BY THE COUNCIL)

- 5 **Senior Management Review - October 2019** (Pages 9 - 14)
[To approve changes to the Senior Management Structure.]

DECISION ITEMS (AMBER - DELEGATED TO THE CABINET)

- 6 **Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2021 - 2023-2024**
(Pages 15 - 32)
[To consider progress made towards identifying additional budget reduction proposals in order to address the projected budget deficit.]
- 7 **City Housing Strategy 2019 - 2024** (Pages 33 - 92)
[To approve a new city, cross tenure housing strategy.]
- 8 **Exclusion of press and public**
[To pass the following resolution:

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information on the grounds shown below.]

PART 2 - EXEMPT ITEMS, CLOSED TO PRESS AND PUBLIC

- | | | | |
|----|--|---|-----|
| 9 | Future Operating Model for Civic Halls
(Pages 93 - 116)
[To consider the Future Operating Model for Civic Halls.] | Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) | (3) |
| 10 | WV Living Business Plan (Pages 117 - 124)
[To approve the addition of various sites into the WV Living Business Plan.] | Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) | (3) |
| 11 | Citywide Housing Revenue Account Investment Programme - Leaseholder Options (Pages 125 - 134)
[To approve the offer of options to leaseholders affected by significant leaseholder charges arising from extensive investment works to Housing Revenue Account properties.] | Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) | (3) |
| 12 | Waste Transformation Programme - Future Service Delivery Arrangements (Pages 135 - 144)
[To approve future service delivery arrangements for the Waste Transformation Programme.] | Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) | (3) |

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CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Meeting of the Cabinet Minutes - 11 September 2019
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Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Ian Brookfield (Chair)
Cllr Harman Banger
Cllr Steve Evans
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Linda Leach
Cllr Louise Miles
Cllr John Reynolds
Cllr Sandra Samuels OBE

Employees

Mark Taylor	Deputy Chief Executive
Tracey Christie	Head of Legal Services
John Denley	Director of Public Health
Ian Fegan	Director of Communications and External Relations
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration
Claire Nye	Director of Finance
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services Manager
Philippa Salmon	Democratic Services Officer

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-----------------|--|
| 1 | Apologies for absence
Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peter Bilson and Councillor Dr Michael Hardacre. |
| 2 | Declaration of interests
There were no declarations of interest submitted. |
| 3 | Minutes of the previous meeting
That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 31 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. |
| 4 | Matters arising
There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting. |

5 **i54 / Western Extension - Phases 4 and 5 Budget Approval**

Councillor Harman Banger presented the public version of the i54 / Western Extension - Phases 4 and 5 Budget Approval report. The report sought approval for the capital budget for the remaining phases of the programme of work. The continuation of the work on the i54 / Western Extension was good news for the City as hundreds of jobs and opportunities would be created for local people and the site would bring in large amounts of private investment. In addition to this, once the lending had been returned, the Council would receive a share of the business rates from the site.

The corresponding private report was discussed at Item 7, that contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of the authority.

Resolved:

Council is recommended to:

1. Approve the capital budget for the remaining phases of the i54 Western Extension programme of £22.75 million and the associated funding strategy outlined in the report.
2. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Members for City Economy and Resources, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Director of Finance, to approve any variations to the i54 Western Extension supplementary budgets in the event of any changes to external funding sources.

Cabinet resolved:

1. That it be noted that, in January 2019, Cabinet approved the delivery of Phases 1 – 3 of the i54 Western Extension.
2. That it be noted that this report is a follow up report from the January 2019 Cabinet report from which approval was obtained to progress with the first phases of the i54 Western Extension project with the recommendation that a further report would be presented to Cabinet seeking approval to progress phases 4, 5a, 5b and 5c.
3. That the progress made in delivering the i54 project to date be noted.
4. That the progress made on the i54 Western Extension project including the Access Road contract, progression of design and preparations for the next phases of work and, key outputs and delivery programme, be noted.
5. That the status of the funding strategy, key delivery agreements and governance arrangements including, the Joint Venture Agreement and Business Rate Retention Agreement with Staffordshire County Council and South Staffordshire Council, be noted.
6. That it be noted that delegated authority was approved in the previous January 19 Cabinet Report to the Cabinet Members for City Economy and Resources, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Director of Finance, to approve a series of key agreements required to progress the works in accordance with the agreed funding and delivery strategy.
7. That it be noted that a key constituent of the funding strategy is that any borrowing costs, including interest are paid back from rates generated by the Western Extension site.

6 Exclusion of press and public

Resolved:

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business as they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

7 i54 / Western Extension - Phases 4 and 5 Budget Approval

Councillor Harman Banger presented the private version of the i54 / Western Extension - Phases 4 and 5 Budget Approval report that was exempt as it contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). The corresponding public report was discussed at Item 5.

Resolved:

That the recommendations be approved as detailed in the public report at Item 5.

8 Wolverhampton City Centre Business Improvement District (BID)

Councillor Harman Banger presented the Wolverhampton City Centre Business Improvement District (BID) report that was exempt as it contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Resolved:

1. That the Council's vote be exercised in support of the proposed BID Ballot in respect of the hereditaments in the Council's ownership within the BID area and authority be delegated to the Director of Regeneration to complete and return the voting papers on behalf of the Council.
2. That the Cabinet Member for City Economy be authorised to sit as the Council Board member on the BID Board, should the BID Ballot be successful for another five years.
3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Economy, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and the Director of Finance, to:
 - a. formally approve the BID Business Plan and associated documents
 - b. charge the BID company annual administration and software support charges for the collection of the BID levy which is estimated to be in the region of £17,300. In addition, there would also be an implementation (one-off) cost of £5,500 in year one. These costs are for the first year, with the option to review on an annual basis for the duration of the BID (five years) and to cover the Council's costs associated with collection of the BID levy.
 - c. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for City Economy, in consultation with Chief Legal Officer, to negotiate, agree and complete the necessary legal agreements required for the proposed BID renewal and any other agreements to give effect to the recommendations above.
4. That the Wolverhampton Business Improvement District Business Plan and boundary be noted.
5. That it be noted that formal notice for the Ballot has been received therefore the Returning Officer has been instructed to organise the BID ballot in accordance with the Business Improvement District Regulations (2004).

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CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet 16 October 2019
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Report title	Senior Management Review - October 2019	
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	Tim Johnson, Chief Executive	
Originating service	Chief Executive	
Accountable employee	Tim Johnson	Chief Executive
	Tel	01902 554500
	Email	tim.johnson@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by		

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to recommend that Council:

1. Approve that the Head of Strategy post be redesignated and regraded to Director of Strategy.
2. Approve that the current Head of Strategy be assimilated into the role of Director of Strategy.

Recommendations for noting:

The Cabinet are recommended to note that:

1. The Managing Director was redesignated Chief Executive with effect from 1 September 2019.
2. The Deputy Managing Director was redesignated Deputy Chief Executive with effect from 1 September 2019.

3. A review is to be undertaken regarding the future strategy and positioning of services under the management of the current Director of Education, when the postholder leaves on 30 October 2019.
4. On a temporary basis, the Director of Children's Services has assumed responsibility for the following areas:
 - a. Traded Services for Schools
 - b. School Improvement
 - c. School Organisation
 - d. Special Educational Needs & Disability Commissioning
5. On a temporary basis the Director of Public Health has assumed responsibility for the Public Health Strategy for Learners, Education Partnerships & Commercial Services and the Voluntary Sector relationships.
6. On a temporary basis the Director of Regeneration has assumed responsibility for the following areas:
 - a. Adult Education
 - b. City Skills & Employability
 - c. Wolves at Work
 - d. Apprenticeships
 - e. Black Country Impact
7. The Director of Adults Services has assumed responsibility for the Director Ward Champion role (Penn, Merry Hill, Tettenhall Regis and Tettenhall Wightwick areas).

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1. The report seeks approval from Cabinet to recommend to Full Council that the Head of Strategy post be redesignated and regraded Director of Strategy, as a consequence of assuming responsibility for a number of additional services including ICT & Digital Transformation, in addition to the current responsibilities of the Head of Strategy role.
- 1.2. The report recommends that Cabinet note the temporary arrangements to be made regarding the line management of services within the Education and Skills Portfolio, following the resignation of the current Director of Education.

2.0 Background and Proposals

- 2.1 The Head of Strategy post has evolved to include the responsibility for ICT and Digital Transformation from the Deputy Chief Executive. This role has been continuing to evolve since its creation in April 2019 and with the additional skills, knowledge and significant responsibilities associated with the role, a re-evaluation of the role has concluded it to be redesignated and regraded to Director level.
- 2.2 Additionally, the move will also give the Deputy Chief Executive more time and space to provide additional support to the crucial, strategic, city-wide and regional work undertaken by the Chief Executive.
- 2.3 The Pay Policy sets out, that the establishment of a new Director role requires Full Council approval. The recommendation of Cabinet is to progress this request to Full Council.
- 2.4 As there is a current post holder in the Head of Strategy role and as this post, if the redistribution of duties amongst SEB members takes place, has been evaluated to Director level. The recommendation of Cabinet to Full Council is that the current post holder will need to be assimilated into this role.
- 2.5 The resignation of the Director of Education provided an opportunity to review the Council's senior management structure to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. In April, the Council recommended senior management budget reductions amounting to £300,000. This review is likely to deliver further reductions in a challenging financial environment. It will also better align resources to our key Council Plan outcome of ensuring that children and young people get the best possible start in life.
- 2.6 With very few exceptions, education is part of the Director of Children's Services (DCS) role in comparable councils of our scale. In the West Midlands, all except Coventry and Birmingham (due to size) have Children's social care and education under the responsibility of the statutory DCS.
- 2.7 Education and schools remain a key priority of delivering the Council's and City's vision. Schools are a key partner and the Council will ensure that changes to management arrangements will not undermine this in anyway. Whole system work has taken place

over the last two years to integrate the current structures and priorities of Children and Young People and Education to minimise any potential risk related to the change. This has been developed through both Directors working closely together, joint leadership meetings, shadowing of services and shared priorities, strategies and action plans. Briefings to schools have taken place jointly by the DCS and Director of Education to ensure this has been visible to schools, alongside work to establish good relationships with schools on behalf of both service areas and to deliver the Council priority that children and young people get the best possible start in life.

- 2.8 The Director of Education role has contributed to a focussed and targeted approach to supporting and challenging schools, which in turn has improved the attainment levels across the City, whilst also improving relationships with schools and other education partners. As practice and processes have been developed to embed these improvements through education services, the role of the Director of Education has been less focussed on schools and has expanded to include Skills, Organisational Development and other corporate priorities.
- 2.9 Due to the resignation of the current Director of Education, an opportunity has arisen for the Chief Executive and the rest of the Strategic Executive Board (SEB) to review some of the services and where they are positioned in a future structure. Given the limited notice period of the current Director of Education, it has not been possible to undertake the 'deep dive' review that it is felt is required, before a final decision is made as to whether there is a clear ongoing need for a Director of Education role or whether other management arrangements should be implemented.
- 2.10 Therefore, prior to any permanent decisions, services have 'lifted and shifted' to appropriate Directors, for line management responsibilities, while further reviews and consultation takes place. This will enable time and space to consider proposals for a permanent structure that is absolutely informed by an holistic review of services, priorities and outcomes and what structure is required to delivery these.
- a. The Director of Children's Services has assumed temporary responsibility for the below areas:
- Traded Services for Schools
 - School Improvement
 - School Organisation
 - Special Educational Needs & Disability Commissioning
- b. The Director of Public Health has assumed responsibility for the Public Health Strategy for Learners, Education Partnerships & Commercial Services and the Voluntary Sector relationships.

c. The Director of Regeneration has assumed responsibility for the below areas:

- Adult Education
- City Skills & Employability
- Wolves at Work
- Apprenticeships
- Black Country Impact

- 2.11 The Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service, will be accountable to the Leader to provide assurance that the changes proposed represent the best organisational solution.
- 2.12 Directors already lead on cross-cutting priorities to deliver the Council Plan. This will be an expansion of this approach and will continue to be overseen and challenged by SEB with the aim being that this will ensure a more resilient structure in the future.
- 2.13 Any changes that occur will not have any material impact on residents in the City, as the changes that have underpinned the improvement in Educational performance are well embedded.
- 2.14 During the review process relevant stakeholders including employees, Cabinet Members, schools, and other stakeholders will be able to contribute their views. The reviews are being overseen by a specific group, chaired by Deputy Chief Executive which will report back to the wider SEB and Chief Executive. As part of the review, other structures of Councils similar in size and challenges will be considered although it is acknowledged that the priority needs to be what works for Wolverhampton and our existing structures and priorities.
- 2.15 SEB meets daily and Directors sit alongside each other, as do Heads of Service and many of the priorities under the services are governed by other meetings/boards that enables other relevant Directors or Heads of Service to contribute and challenge. Cabinet Members will continue to be regularly briefed to ensure they are driving priorities and will be able to highlight any potential conflict at the earliest point, if not already addressed by Directors.

3.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 3.1 The amendments to Directors' responsibilities are on a temporary basis whilst a complete evaluation of the alternative options is undertaken. The development of the temporary proposal included consultation with senior management to explore potential options.

4.0 Reasons for decision

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report are designed to strengthen the Council's Senior Management Structure.

5.0 Financial implications

- 5.1 An update on the Draft Budget for 2020-2021 and Medium Term Financial Strategy is also presented to Cabinet at this meeting. In light of the continued significant budget challenge over the medium term, there is a need to continually look for opportunities to reduce the costs of the senior management structure.
- 5.2 As detailed in this report, a review of the services within the Education and Skills Directorate will be undertaken following the resignation of the current Director of Education. Until such time as the review is completed it is not possible to forecast potential savings.
[CN/07102019/K]

6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 These proposals satisfy appropriate legislative requirements and comply with the Council's Constitution.
[TC/07102019/Z]

7.0 Corporate Landlord Implications

- 7.1 There are no Corporate Landlord implications arising from this report.

8.0 Equalities implications

- 8.1 The current equality profiles are not fundamentally changed during this review as these temporary arrangements are redistributing work amongst current SEB members.

9.0 Climate change and environmental implications

- 9.1 There are no direct climate change and environmental implications arising from this report, the post holder will have due regard to climate change and environmental implications whilst carrying out the role.

10.0 Health and Wellbeing implications

- 10.1 There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report. Health and wellbeing remains a key priority for the Council.

11.0 Human resources implications

- 11.1 The human resources implications will be dealt with in line the Council's policies.
- 11.2 Any further restructuring, if required, will be undertaken in accordance with the City of Wolverhampton Council's Restructure Policy and Procedures, including consultation with the trade unions.

CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet 16 October 2019
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Report title	Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2021 to 2023-2024	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Louise Miles Resources	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable director	Tim Johnson, Chief Executive	
Originating service	Strategic Finance	
Accountable employee	Claire Nye	Director of Finance
	Tel	01902 550478
	Email	claire.nye@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Strategic Executive Board	2 October 2019
	Health Scrutiny Panel	7 November 2019
	Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel	7 November 2019
	Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel	12 November 2019
	Our Council Scrutiny Panel	20 November 2019
	Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel	25 November 2019
	Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel	27 November 2019
	Scrutiny Board	10 December 2019

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to approve:

1. The updated draft budget strategy linked to the Five Year Financial Strategy, including the budget reduction and income generation proposals and one-off funding opportunities.
2. That further options are explored between October 2019 and January 2020 to address the updated projected budget deficit of £3.9 million for 2020-2021 and the medium term, based on the Council's Five Year Financial Strategy.

3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to approve the final budget consultation arrangements.

Recommendations for noting:

The Cabinet is recommended to note:

1. That, a number of assumptions have been made with regards to the level of resources that will be available to the Council as detailed in section 5 of this report. It is important to note that there continues to be a considerable amount of uncertainty with regards to future income streams for local authorities over the forthcoming multi-year Spending Review period. At the point that further information is known it will be incorporated into future reports to Councillors. Any reduction in the Government's allocation of funding to the Council would have a significant detrimental impact and further increase the budget deficit forecast over the medium term.
2. That, due to external factors, budget assumptions remain subject to significant change, which could, therefore, result in alterations to the financial position facing the Council.
3. That the projected remaining budget deficit for 2020-2021 will be in the region of £3.9 million, rising to £20 million over the medium term period to 2023-2024.
4. That it is anticipated that the additional adult and children's social care grant will be sufficient to meet the projected remaining budget deficit in 2020-2021 and therefore enable the Council to set a balanced budget in that year.
5. That due to the uncertainty over the medium term, the overall level of risk associated with the 2020-2021 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2021 to 2023-2024 is assessed as Red.
6. That an element of the high-level strategy for 2020-2021 relate to one-off opportunities that can be achieved in 2020-2021.
7. That the updated projected deficit assumes the achievement of previously approved budget reduction and income generation proposals amounting to £9.6 million over period 2019-2020 to 2023-2024.
8. That the 2020-2021 budget timetable will, as in previous years, include an update on all budget assumptions and the Provisional Local Government Settlement which will be presented to Cabinet in January 2020, with the final budget report due to be approved by Full Council in March 2020.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Councillors with an update on progress towards identifying additional budget reduction proposals in order to address the projected budget deficit of £4.9 million in 2020-2021 and budget challenge over the medium term to 2023-2024.
- 1.2 This is the second report of the financial year on the Draft Budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period of 2020-2021 to 2023-2024.

2.0 Background and Summary

- 2.1 Since 2010-2011 despite the successive cuts in Council resources, which have led to significant financial challenges, the Council has set a balanced budget in order to deliver vital public services and city amenities. Over the last eight years the Council has identified budget reductions in excess of £220 million. The extent of the financial challenge over the medium term continues to represent the most significant challenge that the Council has ever faced, with reducing resources, growing demand for services and significant cost pressures.
- 2.2 In order to respond to this financial challenge and the growing demand for services, the Council has developed a Five Year Financial Strategy to address the projected deficit over the medium term which is detailed in section 3 of this report.
- 2.3 The Council's General Fund Balance stands at £10 million, which is the minimum balance as determined in the Council's Reserves and Balances Policy. In addition, the Council holds specific reserves which are set aside to fund future planned expenditure. It is vital the Council continues to hold these reserves to mitigate the risk of uncertainty of any potential future expenditure and therefore it is not an option to use the funds to meet the budget deficit.
- 2.4 The Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2019-2020 to 2023-2024 was presented to Full Council for approval on 6 March 2019. The Council was able to set a balanced budget for 2019-2020 without the use of General Fund reserves. However, it was projected that the Council would be faced with finding further estimated budget reductions totalling £27.3 million in 2020-2021 rising to £40-£50 million over the medium term to 2023-2024.
- 2.5 It is important to note that the updated projected budget deficit assumes the achievement of previously approved budget reduction and income generation proposals amounting to £9.6 million over the five-year period from 2019-2020 to 2023-2024. Having identified budget reductions in excess of £220 million over the previous eight financial years, the extent of the financial challenge over the medium term continues to represent the most significant challenge that the Council has ever faced.

- 2.6 In March 2019, Full Council approved that work started immediately to identify budget reductions and income generation proposals for 2020-2021 onwards, in line with the Five Year Financial Strategy, and for progress to be reported to Cabinet in July 2019.
- 2.7 It should be noted that due to external factors, budget assumptions remain subject to change. This could therefore result in alterations to the financial position faced by the Council.
- 2.8 An update on the draft budget strategy, linked to the Five Year Financial Strategy, including the budget reduction and income generation targets to address the projected budget challenge of £27.3 million for 2020-2021 and future years was presented to Cabinet on 31 July 2019. At that point, various opportunities including: anticipated grant income arising as a result of a one year spending announcement, council tax income, adult social care precept, capital receipts and other one-off funding streams and budget proposals linked to the Financial Strategy resulted in the identification of £22.4 million towards the projected budget deficit for 2020-2021. Cabinet approved the incorporation of high-level budget strategy for 2020-2021 into the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2021 to 2023-2024. Taking this into account, the remaining budget challenge to be identified for 2020-2021 stood at £4.9 million.
- 2.9 Work has continued during the second quarter of this financial year to identify opportunities in line with the Five Year Financial Strategy to support the budget strategy for 2020-2021 and future years, whilst also analysing the potential resources available to the Council following the Spending Round 2019 announcement on 4 September 2019.
- 2.10 This report provides an update on progress towards the budget strategy for 2020-2021 and future years, whilst also detailing emerging pressures that the Council currently faces.

3.0 Five Year Financial Strategy

- 3.1 The Council's strategic approach to address the budget deficit continues to be to align resources to Our Council Plan 2019-2024 which was approved by Full Council on 3 April 2019.
- 3.2 Our Council Plan 2019-2024 sets out how we will deliver our contribution to Vision 2030 and how we will work with our partners and communities to be a city of opportunity. The plan includes six strategic priorities which come together to deliver the overall Council Plan outcome of 'Wulfrunians will live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives.' Over the medium term, resources will continue to be aligned to enable the realisation of the Council's priorities of achieving:
- Children and Young People get the best possible start in life
 - Well skilled people working in an inclusive economy
 - More good jobs and investment in our city
 - Better homes for all
 - Strong, resilient and healthy communities
 - A vibrant, green city we can all be proud of.

3.3 The Financial Strategy, approved by Council in March 2019, consists of five core principles underpinned by eight core workstreams. Using the Core Workstreams as the framework for the Financial Strategy detailed delivery plans are being developed all with a lead director. The Core principles and workstreams are:

- **Core Principles:**

- **Focusing on Core Business.** Focus will be given to those activities that deliver the outcomes local people need and which align to our Council Plan and Financial Strategy.
- **Promoting Independence and Wellbeing.** We will enable local people to live independently by unlocking capacity within communities to provide an effective and supportive environment.
- **Delivering Inclusive Economic Growth.** We will continue to drive investment in the City to create future economic and employment opportunities.
- **Balancing Risk.** We will ensure we base decisions on evidence, data and customer insight.
- **Commercialising our Approach.** We will boost social value in our City by maximising local procurement spend with people and businesses.

- **Core Workstreams:**

- **Promoting Digital Innovation.** Improve access to digital services to empower local people to self-serve at a time and place that suits them whilst reducing 'traditional' operating costs.
- **Reducing demand.** Through early intervention and closer collaboration with local people we aim to reduce demand for services and support greater independence and resilience.
- **Targeted Service Delivery.** Our efforts will be focused in the areas and places that need us the most and where we can deliver the best possible outcomes within the resources available.
- **Sustainable Business Models.** We will develop the most efficient and effective services possible, within the significant financial constraints we face, to meet the needs of local people.
- **Prioritising Capital Investment.** Aligned to our strategic plan, investment will focus on the priorities that deliver the best possible return and outcomes for local people.
- **Generating Income.** Better understanding the markets we operate in will enable us to develop new, innovative income generation opportunities with partners where appropriate.
- **Delivering Efficiencies.** By reviewing our resources, business processes and better using technology, we will deliver services which meet customer needs efficiently and cost-effectively.
- **Maximising Partnerships and External Income.** We will take a much more strategic role, working with our partners, to identify opportunities to collaborate, share resources, reduce costs and seize funding opportunities.

4.0 Budget Strategy 2020-2021 to 2023-2024

Spending Round 2019

- 4.1 On 31 July 2019, Cabinet were asked to note the uncertainty regarding future funding streams for local authorities over the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review period. At that point, it was unclear as to whether the Comprehensive Spending Review 2020, and the corresponding reforms to the Fair Funding Formula and Business Rates Retention, would be announced in this financial year in order to provide greater certainty for 2020-2021 and the medium term.
- 4.2 Cabinet were also informed that the Local Government Association and financial research organisations envisaged that the Comprehensive Spending Review 2020 would be delayed due to the extension of ongoing negotiations surrounding Brexit and the Leadership election process for a new Prime Minister, and therefore local authorities would be likely to receive a one-year settlement for 2020-2021 only.
- 4.3 On 4 September 2019, the Government announced the Spending Round 2019 which set out the Government's spending plans for 2020-2021 only.
- 4.4 As anticipated, it was confirmed that the full multi-year Spending Review will take place in 2020 for funding post 2020-2021. The review will take into account the nature of Brexit and set out further plans for long term reform. It is envisaged that the Fair Funding Review and Business Rates Retention reforms will be addressed as part of the multi-year Spending Review.
- 4.5 The report to Cabinet on 31 July 2019 clarified that a number of assumptions had been made with regards to the level of resources that will be available to the Council. Whilst there continues to be a considerable amount of uncertainty regarding future funding streams for local authorities over the medium term, the following paragraphs detail the Spending Round 2019 announcements which impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

5.0 Corporate Resources

Council Tax assumptions

- 5.1 The Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2020-2021 to 2023-2024 report presented to Cabinet on 31 July 2019 indicated that additional funds in the region of £1.0 million could be realised in 2020-2021 if council tax were to be raised by an additional 1% to 2.99%. Furthermore, if the adult social care precept were to be increased by 2% in 2020-2021 additional funds in the region of £2.1 million would be available to support the delivery of key Adult Services.
- 5.2 In the Spending Round 2019, the Government announced that they will consult on providing local authorities with adult social care responsibilities the power to raise an additional 2% via the adult social care precept in 2020-2021. Should this power be granted, it would enable councils to raise further funding to support adult social care. As

detailed in paragraph 5.1, the additional 2% adult social care precept is in line with the Council's assumptions.

- 5.3 In addition to this, the Government are consulting on a core council tax referendum limit of 2% for 2020-2021. As detailed in paragraph 5.1, the MTFS currently assumes that total council tax income in the region of £100.1 million would be available to the Council if a 2.99% council tax increase were approved for 2020-2021. In order to be prudent, it is proposed that the Council's MTFS assumptions be revised downwards to reflect a 1.99% increase in council tax in 2020-2021; therefore, resulting in a budget pressure totalling £1.0 million in 2020-2021.
- 5.4 In line with Cabinet approval of the draft budget strategy in July 2019, the Council will continue to consult with residents on increasing council tax up to 2.99% and increasing the adult social care precept by 2% in 2020-2021. This will therefore enable the Council to consider increasing council tax and adult social care precept should additional flexibility be granted during the 2020-2021 Local Government Finance Settlement. A review of the council tax base, that is the number of properties in the city, will be presented to Cabinet as part of the 'Council Tax Base and Business Rates Net Rate Yield' report in January 2020.

Social Care Grants

- 5.5 The Government announced that additional grant funding totalling £1 billion would be made available to local authorities in 2020-2021 for adults and children's social care, to support the rising demand on the social care system. At this stage, the proposed formula for distribution of the grant and indicative funding allocations have been released for consultation by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). The outcome of the consultation will be confirmed in the provisional settlement in December.
- 5.6 This additional funding is in addition to the existing adults and children's social care grants that have been received in 2019-2020; which the Government have now confirmed will be rolled forward into 2020-2021.
- 5.7 The Government have stated that they remain committed to putting adult social care on a fairer and more sustainable footing and will bring forward proposals in due course.
- 5.8 The Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2021 to 2023-2024 presented to Cabinet on 31 July 2019 assumed that the Government would announce that local authorities receive adult social care winter pressures grant funding in 2020-2021 and each year over the medium term totalling £1.4 million annually.
- 5.9 The incorporation of the roll forward of one-off grants that have been received in 2019-2020 but not previously assumed in the MTFS for 2020-2021 totals £4.3 million.

Public Health Grant

- 5.10 The Government have confirmed a real term increase to the Public Health grant budget in 2020-2021 to ensure local authorities can continue to provide prevention and public health interventions. The additional funds will support the provision of public health and wellbeing across the City.

Business Rates

- 5.11 Furthermore, the Government have also confirmed that business rate baseline funding levels will increase in line with inflation, which is in line with our assumptions in the MTFs. The September consumer price inflation rate has not yet been released, however it is forecast that the business rates multipliers will increase by 2%.

Other funding announcements

- 5.12 In addition to the funding announcements detailed above which have a direct impact on the Council's MTFs, there were other Spending Round 2019 announcements which will provide benefits to the residents of Wolverhampton.
- 5.13 The Government has committed to increase funding for education and skills nationally over the period to 2022-2023 by £7.1 billion, when compared to 2019-2020 funding levels. The additional funding includes an allocation to support children and young people with special educational needs and further education funding. At this stage, the announcement has been made at a national level and we are therefore not aware of the specific grant allocation that will be made available for Wolverhampton.
- 5.14 Furthermore, the Government have also announced an increase in funding to help reduce homelessness and rough sleeping. Similarly, this has been announced at a national level and therefore we are not currently aware of the allocation for Wolverhampton.
- 5.15 Whilst the Spending Round 2019 announcement has provided some clarity for 2020-2021, it is important to note that the Council continues to face significant uncertainty over the medium term and it is particularly challenging to project the potential resources that will be available to the Council over the forthcoming multi-year Spending Review period. It is important to note that, any reduction in the Government's allocation of funding to the Council would have a significant detrimental impact and further increase the budget deficit forecast over the medium term.

6.0 One-off funding sources

- 6.1 Work has continued during the second quarter of this financial year to identify one-off funding opportunities to support the budget strategy for 2020-2021 and future years. The various opportunities are detailed in the paragraphs below.
- 6.2 On 18 June 2019, Cabinet (Resources) Panel received a report detailing the final outturn on the Collection Fund for 2018-2019 which consisted of a cumulative surplus in the region of £1.4 million on Council Tax and a cumulative deficit in the region of £539,000 on Business Rates. Of the accumulated surplus on the Collection Fund, the Council will

retain a surplus of £960,000. When forecasting the estimated outturn on the Collection Fund for 2018-2019, it was projected that the Council would retain a deficit of £34,000. It is therefore proposed that the additional benefit arising from the positive outturn on the Collection Fund be recognised in the MTFS.

- 6.3 In addition to this, it is proposed that one-off funds totalling £1 million be released from the Job Evaluation reserve in 2020-2021. This reserve was created to fund legal costs associated with Job Evaluation. A review of the anticipated future costs indicates that this reserve can be reduced.
- 6.4 Furthermore, following the review of the anticipated costs of Job Evaluation, it is also proposed that £500,000 be released from the Equal Pay Provision in 2020-2021. The Equal Pay Provision was created to provide for any potential Equal Pay claims that could arise in the six year period post implementation of Single Status; which was on 1 April 2013. Whilst there are some claims which are yet to be resolved, it is anticipated that the remaining provision will not be required in its entirety.

7.0 Update on Emerging Factors and the Budget Challenge for 2020-2021

- 7.1 The assumptions used in the preparation of the budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) remain under constant review and update.
- 7.2 In July 2019, Cabinet were informed of emerging pressures within Adult Services following a fee review and demographic pressures in 2019-2020.
- 7.3 In addition to this, potential cost pressures within the Waste and Recycling Service were highlighted if a restructure within the service were to take place where employees not currently on NJC terms and conditions of employment could result in them being employed on this basis; item 12 - 'Waste Transformation Programme - Future Service Delivery Arrangements' on the agenda for this meeting provides further details on the proposals.
- 7.4 These service areas continue to be kept under review, however in order to be prudent, it is proposed that budget pressures in the region of £4.7 million prevalent in 2020-2021 are recognised, therefore increasing the projected budget deficit in that year as detailed in Table 1 overleaf.
- 7.5 In July, Cabinet approved that alternative funding sources would be sought to fund the Wolves at Work Programme to reduce the cost to the Council whilst protecting this successful initiative. At this time alternative funding has not been secured however work will continue and updates will be brought to Cabinet in the next budget report. If alternative funding is not found this will increase the deficit position for 2020-2021.
- 7.6 Taking into account the forecast changes to corporate resources and emerging pressures, detailed in the paragraphs above, it is anticipated that the projected remaining budget deficit for 2020-2021 will be in the region of £3.9 million, rising to £20 million over the medium term period to 2023-2024.

Table 1 – Draft Budget Strategy 2020-2021

	2020-2021 £000
Projected Budget Challenge as at July 2019	4,897
Changes to Corporate Resources	
Council Tax – reduced to 1.99%	1,045
Adult Social Care Grant (Improved Better Care Fund)	(1,947)
Additional Adult and Children’s Social Care Grant	(2,351)
Collection Fund Surplus	(960)
Use of Job Evaluation Reserve	(1,000)
Release of Equal Pay Provision	(500)
Potential Pressures	4,700
Revised Budget Challenge as at October 2019	3,884

7.7 As detailed in paragraph 5.5, the Government have announced that additional grant funding totalling £1 billion will be made available to local authorities in 2020-2021 for adults and children’s social care, to support the rising demand on the social care system. The Local Government Finance Settlement 2020-21 technical consultation, issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), provides the proposed formula for the distribution of the grant and indicative local authority allocations of the additional unringfenced grant funding. It is anticipated that the additional adult and children’s social care grant will be sufficient to meet the projected remaining budget deficit in 2020-2021 and therefore enable the Council to set a balanced budget in that year. It is important to note however, that there is no certainty around the level of funding at the point of writing. Any reduction in the Government’s allocation of funding to the Council would have a significant detrimental impact and further increase the budget deficit forecast over the medium term. It is hoped that further clarity is provided in the provisional local government settlement 2020-2021, which it is anticipated will be announced in December 2019.

7.8 Due to the uncertainty about the additional adult and children’s social care grant funding work will continue to identify efficiencies in order to reduce the budget deficit over the medium term and mitigate the reliance on one-off funding.

7.9 Due to external factors, budget assumptions remain subject to significant change, which could, therefore, result in alterations to the financial position facing the Council. At the point of writing, the negotiations surrounding Brexit are ongoing and there continues to be speculation around Parliamentary changes; the announcements made in the Spending Round 2019 therefore hold an element of risk.

7.10 **Pension deficit**

Work is being undertaken by the West Midlands Pension Fund through the triennial valuation process to determine the employer contributions that will be required over the medium term. At this stage, the MTFS reflects the forecasts based on the previous valuation in 2016. Updates will be provided to Cabinet in future reports.

7.11 Pay Award

The MTFS assumes an average pay award of 2% per annum. National pay negotiations are likely to take a number of months to conclude. Any increase above an average of 2% will place additional pressure on the MTFS.

8.0 Budget Proposals for 2020-2021

8.1 In July 2019, a number of proposals were presented to Cabinet for approval to address the projected budget deficit for 2020-2021 and the medium term. Since the last update to Cabinet, further detailed work has continued to take place to develop the proposals reported to Cabinet at that point in time. As a result of this detailed work, it is anticipated that there could be potential revisions to the phasing of some budget proposals over the medium term. This will be kept under review over the forthcoming months and in the event that rephrasing of proposals are required, they will be presented in future reports to Cabinet.

8.2 Where proposals have a 2020-2021 budget reduction or income generation target, further details for individual proposals are available on the Council's website using the following link www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/financialstrategy

8.3 For those proposals which do not impact on the 2020-2021 budget, further details for individual proposals will be made available in future reports to Councillors.

8.4 Directors and Heads of Service will continue to develop budget reduction and income generation opportunities for the medium term, in order to ensure that a balanced budget can be set in each individual year.

9.0 Budget Risk Management and Timetable

9.1 A summary of the 2020-2021 budget setting process timetable is detailed in the Table 2.

Table 2 – Budget Timetable

Milestone	Deadline
------------------	-----------------

Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2020-2021 to 2023-2024 report to Cabinet	16 October 2019
Formal Budget Consultation and Scrutiny	21 October – 31 December 2019
Report to Cabinet following the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement	22 January 2020
Final Budget Report 2020-2021 to Cabinet	19 February 2020
Full Council Approval of Final Budget 2020-2021	4 March 2020

- 9.2 As detailed above the budget consultation process will take place from 21 October to 31 December 2019. This consultation process is the start of continuous engagement with the community throughout the year through community events. The Council will explore the use of digital tools to widen community engagement, however the focus will be on priorities for the City.
- 9.3 Cabinet approval is sought to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Resources in consultation with the Director of Finance, to approve the final budget consultation arrangements.
- 9.4 The overall level of risk associated with the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2020-2021 to 2023-2024 is assessed as Red. The following table provides a summary of the risks associated with the MTFS, using the corporate risk management methodology.

Table 3 – General Fund Budget Risks 2020-2021 to 2023-2024

Risk	Description	Level of Risk
Medium Term Forecasting	Risks that might materialise as a result of the impact of non-pay inflation and pay awards, uptake of pension auto enrolment, and National Living Wage.	Amber
Service Demands	Risks that might materialise as a result of demands for statutory services outstretching the available resources. This particularly applies to adults and childrens social care.	Red
	Risks that might materialise as a result of demands for non-statutory services outstretching the available resources.	Amber
Identification of Budget Reductions	Risks that might materialise as a result of not identifying budget reductions due to limited opportunity to deliver efficiencies.	Amber

Budget Management	Risks that might materialise as a result of the robustness of financial planning and management, in addition to the consideration made with regards to the loss of key personnel or loss of ICTS facilities	Green
Transformation Programme	Risks that might materialise as a result of not delivering the reductions incorporated into the budget and not having sufficient sums available to fund the upfront and one-off costs associated with delivering budget reductions and downsizing the workforce.	Amber
Reduction in Income and Funding	Risks that might materialise as a result of the multi-year Spending Review, which is due to be announced in 2020-2021, and reforms to Business Rates Retention and the Fair Funding Review.	Red
	Risks that might materialise as a result of income being below budgeted levels, claw back of grant, or increased levels of bad debts. The risk of successful appeals against business rates.	Amber
Third Parties	Risks that might materialise as a result of third parties and suppliers ceasing trading or withdrawing from the market.	Amber
Government Policy	Risks that might materialise due to structural uncertainties including the impact of exiting the European Union.	Red
	Risks that might materialise as a result of changes to Government policy including changes in VAT and taxation rules, and in particular, from the Care Bill.	Red

10.0 Evaluation of alternative options

10.1 In determining the proposed Five Year Financial Strategy, consideration has been made to the deliverability of budget reduction and income generation proposals and budget pressures. If we were to not implement the budget strategy as proposed in this report, alternative options would need to be identified in order for the Council to set a balanced budget for 2020-2021. This may therefore potentially impact upon service provision.

11.0 Reasons for decisions

11.1 It is recommended that the budget strategy for 2020-2021, including changes to corporate resources assumptions, emerging budget pressures and budget reduction and income generation opportunities, as set out in this report, is approved by Cabinet for budget consultation and scrutiny where necessary. Cabinet will be provided with an update following formal budget consultation and scrutiny in the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2021 to 2023-2024 report which will be presented to Cabinet in February 2020. In approving this strategy, the Council will be working towards identifying options to be able to set a balanced budget for 2020-2021.

12.0 Financial Implications

12.1 The financial implications are discussed in the body of the report.

[MH/08102019/W]

13.0 Legal Implications

13.1 The Council's revenue budgets make assumptions which must be based on realistic projections about available resources, the costs of pay, inflation and service priorities and the likelihood of achieving any budget reduction proposals.

13.2 The legal duty to spend with propriety falls under S.151 Local Government Act 1972 and arrangements for proper administration of their affairs is secured by the S.151 Officer as Chief Financial Officer.

13.3 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer to report to the Council when it is making the statutory calculations required to determine its Council Tax. The Council is required to take this report into account when making its budget decision. The Chief Financial Officer's report must deal with the robustness of the budget estimates and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides. Both are connected with matters of risk and uncertainty. They are inter-dependent and need to be considered together. In particular, decisions on the appropriate level of Reserves should be guided by advice based upon an assessment of all the circumstances considered likely to affect the Council.

13.4 The relevant guidance concerning reserves is Local Authority Accounting Panel Bulletin 77, issued by CIPFA in November 2008. Whilst the Bulletin does not prescribe an appropriate level of reserves, leaving this to the discretion of individual authorities, it does set out a number of important principles in determining the adequacy of reserves. It emphasises that decisions on the level of reserves must be consistent with the Council's MTFS, and have regard to the level of risk in budget plans, and the Council's financial management arrangements (including strategies to address risk).

13.5 In addition, Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the Chief Financial Officer to '**...make a report ... if it appears to her that the Authority, a**

committee or officer of the Authority, or a joint committee on which the Authority is represented':

- a. has made or is about to make a decision which involves or would involve the Authority incurring expenditure which is unlawful,
- b. has taken or is about to take a course of action which, if pursued to its conclusion, would be unlawful and likely to cause a loss or deficiency on the part of the Authority, or
- c. is about to enter an item of account the entry of which is unlawful.

13.6 The Chief Financial Officer of a relevant Authority shall make a report under this section if it appears to her that the expenditure of the Authority incurred (including expenditure it proposes to incur) in a financial year is likely to exceed the resources (including sums borrowed) available to it to meet that expenditure.

13.7 These statutory requirements will have to be taken into account when making final recommendations on the budget and council tax requirement for 2020-2021.
[TS/07102019/Q]

14.0 Equalities implications

14.1 The method by which the MTFs for 2020-2021 is developed is governed by the Council Plan priorities described in paragraph 3.2 which itself was guided by consultation and equality analysis. The further development of the various budget proposals for Cabinet's consideration will include an initial equalities screening for each proposal and, where necessary, a full equalities analysis.

14.2 The Council will publish details of its income generating and budget reduction proposals as part of its public consultation around the 2020-2021 budget. No proposal will be approved until the details of the responses to public consultation have been analysed for their impact on equalities. The resulting and final report to Cabinet and Council will contain a supporting equality analysis that will offer information across the whole range of proposals and will include any relevant details from the consultation work findings. The final report will enable Councillors to discharge their duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

15.0 Climate change and environmental implications

15.1 There are no relevant climate change and environmental implications arising from this report.

16.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications

16.1 There are no relevant health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

17.0 Corporate Landlord Implications

17.1 There are no relevant corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

18.0 Human resources implications

- 18.1 In line with the Council's statutory duties as an employer under the Trade Union Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, an HR1 form was issued to the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills identifying the intention to reduce employee numbers by up to 500 across the Council in the period 1 April 2019 up to 31 March 2020. The reductions will be through both voluntary redundancy and budget reduction targets which could result in compulsory redundancies.
- 18.2 The numbers included in an HR1 include posts held by colleagues who, as part of business review, redesign and/or restructure, need to be included, as they will need to be put at risk of redundancy. However, many of these employees will apply and be offered jobs in the new structure or elsewhere in the organisation and therefore the number of employees leaving the authority is anticipated to be far fewer than the number declared on an HR1.
- 18.3 A new HR1 will need to be issued with effect from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, on the same basis as the previous one.
- 18.4 Many of the budgetary reductions will be made through efficiencies with new and smarter ways of working and transformation initiatives. Income generation will also be key.
- 18.5 If any reductions in employee numbers are required, these will be achieved in line with the Council's HR policies. Compulsory redundancies will be mitigated as far as is possible through seeking voluntary redundancies in the first instance, and through access to redeployment.
- 18.6 The Council will ensure that appropriate support is made available to employees who are at risk of and selected for redundancy. The Council will work with partner and external agencies to provide support. If any of the budget reduction targets are to move service delivery from direct Council management to private, community or third sector providers may have implications under the TUPE regulations. If TUPE were to apply, appropriate consultation with relevant Trade Unions and affected employees, would take place.
- 18.7 The Council will consult with the recognised Trade Unions on any proposals relating to revisions to NJC terms and conditions of employment.
- 18.8 There is on-going consultation with the trade unions on the impact of the Council's budgetary position and the targets being made to meet the challenges posed by it.

19.0 Schedule of Background Papers

This report is PUBLIC
[NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]

Cabinet, 31 July 2019 - [Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020-2021 to 2023-2024](#)

Full Council, 6 March 2019 - [Final Budget Report 2019-2020](#)

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CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	Cabinet 16 October 2019
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Report title	City Housing Strategy 2019 - 2024	
Decision designation	AMBER	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Peter Bilson City Assets and Housing	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Kate Martin, Director of City Assets and Housing	
Originating service	City Housing	
Accountable employee	Mila Simpson Tel Email	Service Lead Housing Strategy 01902 554841 mila.simpson@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Housing Leadership Team Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel Equalities Advisory Group	7 August 2019 5 September 2019 17 September 2019

Recommendation for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

Approve the City Housing Strategy 2019 – 2024, as attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Cabinet to formally adopt a new City Housing Strategy 2019 – 2024, which has been developed to reflect on emerging national and local priorities as well as to align the priorities for the delivery of housing and housing services for the next five years to the new Council Plan. The report sets out the requirement for a City Housing Strategy, the process that has been involved in developing the strategy and to summarise the key priorities that will drive the housing agenda up to 2024.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The city's existing Housing Strategy, approved by Cabinet in 2013 achieved a number of successes in 'Improving the City Housing Offer', under the Council's Corporate Plan. A new City Housing Strategy 2019 – 2024, 'Better Homes for All' has been developed to set the framework for how the Council will address the challenges it will face in the coming years, giving direction to our partners and stakeholders involved in housing across all tenures, so that housing and housing services can be developed to provide the right homes and support where needed.
- 2.2 Whilst having a housing strategy is not a statutory requirement, having one is considered both best practice and necessary to set out how the Council, with partners, will address the housing challenges and opportunities that are facing the City and its residents.
- 2.3 The Council Plan 2019 – 2024 identifies three priorities for housing; more and better homes, safe and healthier homes and access to a secure home. The City Housing Strategy 2019-2024 sets out how these priorities will be achieved.

3.0 Developing the City Housing Strategy

- 3.1 The Housing Strategy, included at appendix 1 has been developed based on a detailed evidence base, a review of national and regional policy and guidance as well as feedback from stakeholders and members of the public.
- 3.2 Consultation on the strategy was undertaken across June and July 2019 and included detailed discussions with senior officers, presentation at Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel and Council Leadership Teams, attendance at a number of fora, a briefing note shared with all Councillors and an online survey for members of the public (also available in hard copy). In addition, the draft strategy was shared with a wide range of partners (including Registered Housing Provider partners, tenant management organisations and the Wolverhampton Equality and Diversity Partnership), who were encouraged to feedback their views. A summary of the key themes from the consultation is set out at appendix 2, which have been incorporated into the final version of the Strategy.
- 3.3 The final City Housing Strategy is a relatively concise document that clearly sets out the challenges and provides the guiding principles for action over the next five years to drive

forward housing growth, investment and improvement. The strategy will be underpinned by a detailed delivery plan that will be owned by the Better Homes Board. A housing partnership of stakeholders will be established to strengthen the delivery of the strategy, who will monitor its delivery and report this through to the Better Homes Board. Key to this delivery will be our partnership with Wolverhampton Homes, the Council's wholly owned Arm's Length Management Organisation (ALMO), who manage 22,000 homes on the Council's behalf as well as deliver a number of cross-tenure services to residents.

3.4 A summary of the three priorities are set out below:

More and better homes

3.5 This priority focuses on the City's drive to increase the pace and quantum of new homes delivered in the city to meet the needs of our communities and the growing number of households looking to work, study and settle here. This will be boosted by the great opportunity for the City to access resources and support for growth across the Walsall to Wolverhampton Corridor through the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), the establishment of the Council's local housing company, WV Living and the removal of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing cap with the Council directly delivering new affordable homes.

3.6 Ambitions to further grow the local economy will need to be supported by a wide-ranging, cross tenure housing offer, through the provision of affordable housing, good quality private rented accommodation as well as homes to attract higher income households, including a contribution to a revitalised City centre. To achieve this, work will be done to understand housing need to build the right homes in the right places, improve the financial viability of sites to ensure land that needs significant remediation can be brought forward for development and contribute to an improved infrastructure by making use of innovative methods and materials. Development also has a role in inclusive growth using local suppliers and the creation and provision of jobs and training opportunities.

Safe and healthier homes

3.7 Aligned to the Social Housing Green Paper, 'a new deal for social housing', this priority is concerned with achieving high quality management and maintenance of housing, and strengthening the tenant voice, particularly for the growing number of people renting in the City, whether from the Council and managed by Wolverhampton Homes or the tenant management organisations (TMO), from a housing association or those renting in the growing private rented sector. This will include a programme of work to ensure the ongoing safety of the City's high-rise stock under Council and private ownership and ongoing responses to the rolling national programme of building safety.

3.8 The City is committed to a programme of redevelopment to ensure communities across the city live in quality neighbourhoods. Large scale stock investment and remodelling of a small number of estates, including the completion of works at Heath Town will be

complimented with a programme of neighbourhood uplift, working with communities to improve the quality of local environments.

- 3.9 Conditions in the private rented sector continues to be a challenge at the lower end of the market. There remain challenges with the incidence of category one hazards, concentrations of poor quality/managed housing and a growing number of houses in multiple occupation (HMO), which will be tackled through the Council's landlord and property accreditation scheme 'Rent with Confidence', underpinned by a programme of support, licensing and enforcement.
- 3.10 Rented homes will have access to a new cross tenure Home Improvement Agency, as too will vulnerable owner occupiers, which will bring together a range of support, grants and loans to improve the adaptation, condition and energy efficiency of homes so that people can live independently and improve their health outcomes.
- 3.11 Maximising the use of the City's housing stock with a targeted programme to bring empty properties back into use is also a priority.

Access to a secure home

- 3.12 This priority focuses on the City's commitment to those residents that need additional support in accessing and sustaining secure accommodation, with the City supporting residents to maintain their independence within their homes, wherever possible.
- 3.13 Local drivers include an ageing population with growth in the over 65 age group outstripping others, who need the right housing and housing services that enable them to remain independent for as long as possible but appropriate accommodation available when it is required. This not only applies to older people but those residents with additional support needs, which by working with social care will be better understood so that people can access a secure home and sustain living there, including those with a visible or non-visible disability as well as those requiring additional support for example those at risk of or experiencing domestic abuse.
- 3.14 Nationally the Homelessness Reduction Act introduced in 2018, increases the Council's responsibilities to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage than before, whilst Welfare Reforms continue to present challenges for residents and landlords. The City will continue to work innovatively to develop measures across partners at a regional and local level to prevent homelessness and reduce rough sleeping, with the City already having adopted a 'Housing First' approach.

4.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 4.1 The alternative option would be to not adopt the City Housing Strategy and to carry on with business as usual operating outside of any overarching strategic framework for housing. This would miss out on opportunities to align work across partners operating

within the City to achieve shared aims and maximise resources, which could lead to a duplication of effort or partners working in conflict with each other.

5.0 Reasons for decision

5.1 It is recommended that the City Housing Strategy is endorsed for adoption as it has been developed based upon a comprehensive review of evidence and consideration of the national and local context, achievements and progress of the 2013-2018 Housing Strategy and consultation with stakeholders. Adoption of the strategy will allow resources to be spent on strengthening the housing partnership in the City and focussing on delivery.

6.0 Financial implications

6.1 This report has no direct financial implications.

6.2 The Housing Strategy refers to matters which are already reflected in approved budgets, and where additional resources are required to deliver the housing priorities set out in the Strategy, the financial implications of these will be evaluated and reported once plans have been developed.

[LT/27082019/Z]

7.0 Legal implications

7.1 There is no legal requirement to have a Housing Strategy as the Deregulation Act 2015 abolished the statutory requirement for English authorities to produce a housing strategy as previously required by section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003.

7.2 It does, however serve as a useful policy document setting out the Council's approach to housing and allows Councillors to scrutinise delivery. There are no other legal implications.

[DC/20082019/M]

8.0 Equalities implications

8.1 An equalities impact analysis has been undertaken based on consultation, with the Housing Strategy addressing issues identified. The equality impact analysis was considered by the Equalities Advisory Group on 17 September 2019.

9.0 Climate change and environmental implications

9.1 The City Housing Strategy does not have any direct environmental impacts, however the actions it proposes serve to raise the quality of environments across the City through the delivery of new housing, improvement of existing housing and regeneration of estates. The environmental impacts associated with specific projects and work programmes will

be identified and addressed in the relevant project documentation and/or reports brought forward for approval.

10.0 Human resources implications

10.1 This report has no direct human resource implications with the delivery and monitoring of the City Housing Strategy to be carried out by the Housing Strategy and Policy Team.

11.0 Corporate landlord implications

11.1 This report has no direct Corporate Landlord implications. Where implications are identified associated with specific projects and work programmes they will be addressed in the relevant project documentation and/or reports brought forward for approval.

12.0 Health and Wellbeing implications

12.1 The three priorities of the City Housing Strategy 2019-2024 more and better homes, safe and healthier homes and access to a secure home all seek to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents.

13.0 Schedule of background papers

13.1 Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel, 11 April 2019 – [Housing Strategy](#)

14.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – City Housing Strategy 2019 - 2024

Appendix 2 – Key themes from City Housing Strategy Consultation

Better Homes for All 2019 - 2024

A Housing Strategy for Wolverhampton





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INTRODUCTION

Wolverhampton is a city of opportunity and the City of Wolverhampton Council is ambitious, thinks strategically and continually looks to improve how it delivers services to residents. The council's vision for 2030 is that:

**Wolverhampton will be a place where people
come from far and wide to work, shop,
study and enjoy our vibrant city**

Good quality housing plays a fundamental role in developing Wolverhampton's identity and economic function on the regional, UK and international stage. It is vital we continue to provide enough good quality homes, including new affordable homes in our city. We understand the importance of providing greater housing choice and demand high-quality housing design and property management standards. This strategy delivers plans to accelerate housing development that will support inclusive economic growth. It also focuses on people, our plans to support our residents and create better homes and communities as we are committed to enhancing the health and well-being of the people who live and work here.

This is a housing strategy that recognises our achievements, acknowledges our challenges but most importantly looks to the future. It is underpinned by leadership but works in partnership to deliver its objectives and encourages innovative approaches to some complex housing problems. We are flexible in how we tackle issues and we have greater financial flexibility now that the Housing Revenue Account caps have been lifted. We are a committed authority within the Black Country and West Midlands Combined Authority and our strategy clearly sets out how much we value and invest in these partnerships.



Our Vision for housing is to deliver '**Better Homes for All**' which underpins and supports the fourth strategic outcome of the Council Plan 2019-2024.

In doing so we will:

- **Deliver more and better homes** to meet the needs of our economy, communities and the growing number of households looking to work, study and settle in our city.
- **Ensure safe and healthy homes** for all by tackling and challenging criminal landlords and setting excellent levels of housing management and maintenance standards for all our housing management agents. We will make the best use of housing in the city; bringing empty properties back into use, improving the quality and thermal efficiency of homes and reducing fuel poverty.
- **Provide access to secure homes** for those in vulnerable situations. We continue to tackle rough sleeping in partnership. We will work to prevent homelessness and provide support and advice to people who need sustainable accommodation options to meet their housing needs. We will work to provide housing options that enable choice, good health and well-being and promote independent living.

Our Recent Success Stories

Our ambitious plans are underpinned by a track record in innovation and partnership. Since our last strategy, we are proud of what we have achieved to create a better housing offer and service for people living in our city.

We have:

- Built the first new council homes in over 30 years with a rolling programme of new build in place across a range of small and large sites throughout the city.
- Established WV Living, the council's local housing company, which is already delivering homes across the city. From 2017 to 2023, 1,072 new homes will be delivered through WV Living. This is set to increase the provision of new housing with an increased housing pipeline over the term of the strategy.
- Brought the Heath Town Regeneration scheme into delivery, demolishing disused commercial assets, and submitting new homes for planning approval.
- Secured funding for further estate redevelopment at New Park Village.
- Delivered a range of specialist/supported accommodation including ten wheelchair accessible homes, a fourteen-unit mental health scheme, and a seven-unit scheme for people with autism.
- Planned for the roll out of the Housing First pilot to provide entrenched rough sleepers with a route off the streets and into housing and support.
- The council and Bushbury Hill Estate Management Board, a tenant led management organisation, have signed a Partnership Agreement which provides additional funding, responsibilities and community new build.
- With support from Public Health, established Rent with Confidence to drive up standards within the private rented sector and improve health outcomes for vulnerable residents.

- By establishing Rent with Confidence we have strengthened our response and support to the private rented sector and tenants, underpinned by a range of strategies and policies to support a proactive and targeted enforcement approach to standards.
- Continued to bring properties back into use through the empty homes agenda.



WV Living Developments



Heath Town Regeneration



Housing First Pilot Scheme



Rent with Confidence

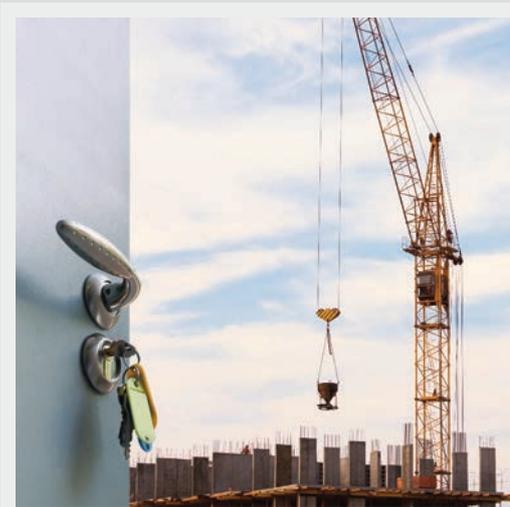
making better use of our social housing stock

Our Current Working Environment

The policy environment that we operate in nationally, regionally and locally sets the context for this strategy.

The strategy recognises:

- The need to deliver more housing and enable greater housing choice by delivering a range of tenure options.
- The new freedoms from government in lifting the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap, allowing councils to borrow to build new affordable homes and ensure that the housing we already have meets modern standards of decency.



- That we must make the best use of the social housing stock that we own; maintaining a fit for purpose allocations policy, retaining numbers through our replacement Right to Buy programme and adding to that stock where possible.
- The importance of strategically positioning the city to access government funding opportunities to develop more homes as both a delivery and a change agent; focusing the role of the public sector as a catalyst for driving forward better asset management.
- How clear we are of the importance of the role and purpose of social housing, giving residents

a stronger voice and making us more accountable. The need for us to support the objectives of the Social Housing Green Paper; tackling stigma, promoting tenants' views and rebalancing the tenant – landlord relationship.

- The need to work in partnership to deliver the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act.



- That we must understand the housing needs of our most vulnerable residents; promoting independence and providing services which will enable residents to remain in their own home for as long as they are able and want to. The need to work with social care and partners to assess and plan for a range of supported and accessible housing options, meet the needs of residents and offer choice.
- The changing debate, Government policy and standards on; improved energy and water efficiency, improved building design and use of renewable and low carbon energy sources. All in order to reduce carbon emissions, adapt to climate change, reduce overheating and reduce fuel poverty.



We know there are challenges to be addressed in our housing market. We must work to balance our communities, attracting and retaining younger people, as our older population is growing. We must address the challenges of a growing private rented sector in terms of management and quality standards. The city must pool its collective resources to support those residents experiencing financial pressures from the ongoing roll out of Welfare Reforms.

We face these challenges head on. We have a robust knowledge of our housing market; we monitor how it performs and we understand our demographic profile. We are well connected, can be flexible and have the right delivery partnerships and vehicles in place. We are set up and ready to respond over the lifetime of this strategy to achieve our vision of **'Better Homes for All'**.

The objectives of this strategy are based on an extensive evidence base. Qualitative data analysis and interviews with partners, compiled independently on behalf of the council.



**supporting
local people
to access
homes to
rent or buy**

1

MORE AND BETTER HOMES

1.1 Building High Quality Homes for Our Future

Ambitious plans for growth

Our plans to deliver more homes is aligned with our Economic Growth Strategy, that seeks to retain and attract economically active people to live and work in our city. Getting the right housing offer, which includes affordable housing and a growing city centre living offer, is essential to attracting and retaining a skills base that will encourage inward investment.

The adopted Black Country Core Strategy set a target of around 63,000 additional homes (net) to be delivered over the period 2006-26 to accommodate its growing population. The target for Wolverhampton is 13,400 homes or 670 homes each year. Whilst we have enough land to build these homes on, many of our sites are affected by adverse ground conditions, infrastructure constraints and land assembly issues which need to be addressed to make them ready for development. This, coupled with the location of some sites, in areas of low demand adds to the complexity of developing new homes; costs can be higher and in many cases, the sales value of homes may not be high enough to make them attractive to developers.

We will tackle these issues directly, innovatively and in partnership with developers, seeking external funding to support the viability of key sites, where necessary.

WV Living is proud to be serving the City of Wolverhampton and its people

Established in 2016, WV Living is a private company wholly owned by the council, which is developing new homes for rent and sale to meet the needs of local people.

WV Living is unique; it is an innovative model for delivering a greater number of homes in the city. It balances its profit margin with increasing the added social value we receive, through the creation of local jobs and apprenticeships, use of local suppliers and delivering a range of housing options to improve access to good quality homes.



Whilst it competes with developers, its relationship with the city means that it can borrow money from the council, buy council owned sites at market value, provide much needed capital receipts and deliver the type of homes that the city needs to deliver, and it can do so with a much lower profit margin.

It will deliver rented homes that will be managed by Wolverhampton Homes and the city's Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs); this delivery and management model maximises the income for the city allowing us to deliver a regenerative impact upon neighbourhoods which have suffered from the blight of derelict land areas.

WV Living has significant plans to grow and diversify its activities and will be delivering 250 home ownership homes per year by 2022.

The City as an Investor

We believe in the growth of our housing market and, alongside developers, Registered Providers and other investors, we will invest in the housing market. We will work at the forefront of best practice and create opportunities to maximise new housing delivery and the land available for new housing. We will make the best use of the assets in the city, creating the right infrastructure for growth, working with partners and accessing funding such as One Public Estate and Homes England Strategic Partnership funding.

Key to this will be further work to develop a Housing Investment Fund. We will identify sources of funding that might be drawn together to enable us to

provide loans and 'gap funding' to support specific sites to make them viable so that we are better placed to achieve the right mix of homes in the right place. We will undertake further research and consultation with developers and Registered Providers to develop a 'toolkit' of interventions and investment opportunities to increase the delivery of new homes.

We will set out our plans to bring more 'challenging' sites through to delivery and our planning teams will be given the flexibility to use a range of tools to work with developers to bring sites forward for housing development.

Tools could include making loans to developers, making direct investment to buy affordable

homes from developers, direct site acquisition and developing new partnership arrangements with the private sector. We will look and consider the potential to invest in financial products to support local people to access homes to rent and buy, for example shared ownership and Rent to Buy.





Who Are We Building For?

Building the right type of home, at the right price, tenure and in locations where people want to live, is just as important as numbers, so we will improve the choice of homes for people to buy and rent to help create mixed and sustainable communities. We know from the Housing Strategy evidence base that we need more larger homes for growing families and a higher quality offer to retain and attract higher income households to the city. Like many places, we also have a growing older population and we know we must ensure that we have homes that meet the needs and aspirations of people as they age.

We intend to undertake more detailed research to better understand and evidence the need for different types of housing and we will do that through a local housing needs assessment which will help us to deliver our planning policies by allowing us to determine the optimal mix of properties in terms of size, type, tenure and value on each site that we consider.

To help balance the housing market we have identified groups who we want to ensure have a choice of good quality homes in the city, at a price they can afford through rent and sale options. These are:

First time buyers and second stage movers who cannot afford to purchase a home on the open market and cannot access affordable housing either. These households underpin our economy and to support them we will develop more intermediate products for sale and rent with greater flexibility to move between the two tenures.

Households who want to rent especially among young professionals, who want to live close to work. We want to grow a professionally managed private rented sector, partly as a response to the challenges of the cost of buying a home and to improve the economic flexibility for residents that renting brings. We want to increase the proportion of quality homes available in Wolverhampton for private rent including a new focus on the city centre.

People who need affordable homes; we will work to boost the supply of affordable housing in the city, adding to the homes managed by



Wolverhampton Homes and the Tenant Management Organisations through new build, private sector leasing, and buying existing properties where it makes strategic sense, ensuring that the city retains a diverse social housing sector. We will continue to secure 25% affordable housing (15% for rent and 10% affordable homeownership) on all sites of 15 homes or more and 10% for affordable home ownership on all major developments where this is financially viable in line with our Core Strategy and national policy. The type of affordable homes sought will be determined on a site by site basis, based on the best available information regarding housing need, site surroundings and viability considerations. The council will make use of the new flexibilities in the Housing Revenue Account to build new affordable housing and we have made provision of £157.3 million up to 2023-2024 for the new build programme.

Homes for new communities who choose to make Wolverhampton their home. We recognise the importance of inward migration in growing our population and we positively welcome new households who bring their skills and knowledge to add value to our work force. We are committed to ensuring that there are a range of housing choices to rent and buy and that support is available to assist new communities to settle in Wolverhampton.

Homes for people as they get older By 2041 the number of people age 65 and over will grow by 11,779. The 75+ population is expected to grow by 27% by 2031. We believe that there should be a range of options to support older households make positive choices that work for them, bringing stability and independence for the long term. We will consult our older residents to find out what sort of accommodation they need and aspire to.

Housing for graduates Wolverhampton values and encourages students to study in the city and we will work with the university to undertake research which identifies the push and pull factors of students remaining in Wolverhampton following completion of their studies. What we learn from that research will establish new policy in how the city can support graduates to remain living and working here.

1.2 A Housing Offer for People that Underpins Economic Growth

Housing has a key role to play in boosting the city's economic wellbeing. Good quality housing is important to attract and retain skilled employees within the city, which in turn will attract businesses to move or set up and grow here. Housing investment can be a powerful driver of local economic activity; new construction and improvements to properties can support local businesses through the supply chain and create jobs for local people. Co-ordinating regeneration and economic development interventions maximises the potential for achieving a virtuous circle that can deliver greater economic inclusion.

Wolverhampton is a member of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), a strategic authority with powers over transport, economic development and regeneration and now includes housing, skills, and digital technology. Its priority is to accelerate an improvement in productivity and enable the West Midlands to become a net contributor to the UK exchequer - while improving the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the area.

The City of Wolverhampton can play a strategic role as one of the top ten growing economies in the UK and is currently experiencing record levels of private and public investment, with £4.4 billion being injected into regeneration projects citywide. New housing development will be concentrated in locations that support urban regeneration, minimise environmental impacts, reduce the need to travel, and are, or can be made, most accessible by public transport, cycling and walking. Where possible, brownfield land will be reused, and urban open spaces protected. Development will be managed to ensure it makes a positive contribution to the quality of places and the wellbeing of people delivering genuinely sustainable neighbourhoods with supporting facilities and services.

one of the top 10 growing economies in the UK

Strategic Growth Corridors

Priority corridors for new jobs and homes have been identified by the WMCA in their Spatial Investment and Delivery Plan (SIDP), reflecting the brownfield focussed regeneration strategy set out in our Core Strategy. These are strategic locations that will transform these areas, bringing new businesses and jobs and new housing developments. In many cases mixed use developments will enhance the retail and leisure offer and strengthen our strategic links across the city and the region. Two corridors have been identified by the WMCA for growth opportunities in Wolverhampton:



The Wolverhampton Northern Growth Corridor covers Wolverhampton city centre and north Wolverhampton up to South Staffordshire and the i54 major employment site and will also require joint working with South Staffordshire.

The Wolverhampton - Walsall Corridor connects the two strategic centres of Wolverhampton and Walsall and covers the south-east quadrant of the city including the town centres of Bilston and Wednesfield.



A Vibrant and Revitalised City and City Centre

Wolverhampton is the only city in the Black Country. It is the focus for economic, social, cultural and community activity serving an extensive catchment area. By 2026 Wolverhampton will be transformed with a wide variety of quality shops and cultural attractions, 21st century offices, urban living and a city-scale public transport interchange.

The **city centre's** small resident population will be transformed through the provision of over 2,000 new homes, supporting the growth of the city centre. Raising aspirations by creating a different type of city centre living will help bring residents back into the city, creating high quality homes that support mixed and sustainable communities with sufficient affordable housing to meet local needs. Key strategic locations such as Springfield Canalside South, the Royal and St George's will anchor the housing offer and, as a landowner, the city will be supporting developers through remediation works, site assembly and the provision of necessary infrastructure.



The Bilston Corridor The Bilston Corridor is one of the key regeneration areas in Wolverhampton. The corridor acts as a “gateway”; linking Wolverhampton to the Black Country and Birmingham by rail, Metro, road and canal. By 2026, there will be major new residential areas on surplus industrial land clustered around Wolverhampton city centre and Bilston town centre. New communities will be served by high quality transport networks, residential services and high-quality job opportunities. The positive impact of this regeneration will also benefit neighbouring communities, as housing renewal activity spreads to adjoining deprived communities.

The Stafford Road Corridor By 2026 the Stafford Road Corridor will have fulfilled its potential to become one of the premier high-quality employment locations in the West Midlands, already having secured major employers into the city. i54, a flagship business park, will be supported by other high-quality employment locations. To ensure we can provide the homes needed to support this economic growth, new development sites will provide at least 450 new homes, together with 780 homes on existing housing commitment sites.



new and innovative approaches to house building

Creating Employment and Social Value through Growth in Construction

We are determined that any investment made in the city secures economic benefits and social added value for the residents living here. The value of investment which is occurring through construction in housing, commercial and transportation over the coming 10 years, is around £1.1 billion, and is estimated to generate 10,000 jobs across the city.

We will maximise the positive benefits for the city and its residents, building on the City of Wolverhampton initiative - 'Wolves at Work'. This will include working at the planning stage to maximise benefits for residents and supporting contractors to identify skills, jobs and supply chain analysis.

So far, the work has contributed to an increase in work experience opportunities, engagement with schools and young people and apprenticeships. Over the lifetime of this strategy we will set ambitious targets for job creation through the city's construction projects.

Supporting Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SME) through Our Investment

We will continue to ensure that local businesses understand their corporate social responsibilities. Close working with developers and construction-based businesses has created contract opportunities for SMEs across the city.

We will continue to support and work with local businesses who recognise our commitment to our social responsibility policies by supporting upskilling and recruitment in the supply chain, hosting 'meet the buyer' events, providing specialist business support and developing local packages for businesses to support the aspirations of young people in education and training.

Embracing Innovation in Design and Construction

As part of the WMCA priorities, we are looking at new approaches to house building, exploring ways to exploit its scale and potential to work with the house building industry. Proposals include supporting the capacity locally for off-site construction and supporting local small and medium-sized housebuilders for whom smaller sites will be more viable.



We are taking opportunities to explore new approaches to house building to deliver homes that are safe by promoting fire safety measures in the design of new homes, are of a higher quality and/or delivered with greater speed and precision. Our first modular homes were delivered in 2018, and further opportunities to explore the off-site manufacture of housing are being explored.

Our housing developments already meet at least 10% of their energy requirements through on-site renewable energy generation – this typically means that at least half of the buildings on each development have roof-mounted solar photovoltaic panels. We also require most housing developments to provide electric vehicle charging points. With a focus upon delivering high performance homes that are highly affordable to heat, we are exploring the development of Passivhaus standard housing. This will address fuel poverty and provide warm homes that are affordable to run and minimise carbon output.

Innovation and skills ambitions are supported by investment into the Springfield Campus in Wolverhampton and the creation of Europe's largest specialist construction and built environment campus.

This will explore new avenues of technology, including batteries to store solar energy for household use, and other innovations to improve the delivery of housing and support our residents to live affordably.

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ENSURE SAFE AND HEALTHY HOMES FOR ALL

We are committed to providing an excellent level of landlord service to tenants across our city. We work innovatively and in partnership with all landlords and managing agents, to ensure that the levels of service offered are outstanding in the stock that we own, is owned by our housing association partners and meet the Rent with Confidence standards in the private sector.

2.1 Management: Offering a Better Landlord Offer

Creating the Best Service Delivery Arrangements

Wolverhampton Homes is the council's wholly owned Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO), managing more than 20,000 homes on behalf of the council and has a successful track record of delivering housing management services across the city. A trusted partner to the council, Wolverhampton Homes provides a range of services that extend beyond housing management to council tenants.

The council also has four tenant management organisations (TMO) who manage over 2,000 properties on our behalf with varying levels of management and repair responsibilities. The council is supportive of tenant led housing management and the benefit this brings to communities. We work closely with the TMOs to ensure all our tenants receive excellent housing management services and offer all performing TMOs new and additional opportunities to enhance their local offer to tenants.

We will be reviewing our landlord services delivery model to ensure that the services delivered to our tenants are high quality, cost effective and add significant value to their lives. The council will ensure that the model for the delivery of housing management services to its 22,000+ homes continues to be of a high quality, fit for purpose and contributes to the wider strategic objectives.

As the largest landlord in Wolverhampton, we will strengthen our partnerships with Registered Providers operating in the city. We will work to ensure all tenants in the city receive an excellent service and we will create new opportunities for development, stock rationalisation, alternative and better use of stock and support for growth with Registered Providers who

share our high standards ethos. We will explore whether partnership working across the sector, with our housing association partners will also allow the sharing of resources and other efficiencies.

Private Sector Leasing

Our private sector leasing service is now in its tenth year. Managed by Wolverhampton Homes, properties are leased from landlords to enable us to extend the number of homes available for people in housing need. It supports professional management arrangements in the city and all properties that are accepted onto the private sector leasing programme score at least 3 stars on our Rent with Confidence scheme, thereby also supporting improvements in the quality of homes.

Wolverhampton Homes currently manage around 80-90 properties through the private sector leasing scheme and increasing the number of properties in management is a priority. They will target landlords and developers who own a portfolio of properties as well as taking on the management of WV Living's market rent properties.



zero tolerance of criminal landlords

Strengthening Partnerships with Private Landlords

The Rent with Confidence (RwC) star rating system came into effect in April 2016. It was and remains a pioneering system to support tenants to find good quality rented property with quality management services and hold landlords to account.

Rent with Confidence will drive up the quality of homes, for example; making sure homes are safe with all legal requirements being met, that rented properties reach minimum EPC standards, and that tenants are issued with Government approved tenancy agreements. More detail will be set out in the Private Homes Strategy.

It visibly shows that the city has zero tolerance on ‘criminal landlords’ and fully supports compliant landlords who share our values. Between 2016 and 2018, 1,000 properties belonging to 500 landlords were star rated through Rent with Confidence.

We plan to build on the success of Rent with Confidence and aim to grow the scheme by 100 landlords each year.

Rent with Confidence will also support us to underpin our homeless prevention commitments. We will ensure that any tenant who is served with a Section 21 notice, which brings their tenancy to an end, receives a visit from the Rent with Confidence team to try and identify the reason that the notice has been served. Research suggests that we can save £25k every time we prevent 10 cases of homelessness in this way.





Involving tenants to have a greater influence in Service Delivery

We are responding pro-actively to the 2018 Green Paper 'A New Deal for Social Housing'. We fully support its call for tenants and residents to have a greater voice with their landlords, which will form the foundation of the city's approach to gaining customer insight from all our residents, to respond to their needs and enhance our city's housing offer.

The city's housing management agents will have an important role to play, working directly with tenants and residents to increase their engagement and involvement to scrutinise performance and help improve service delivery. It will be a priority to ensure numbers increase and the engaged tenant base becomes more representative.



2.2 Maintenance: Offering a Safer Landlord Offer

Safer Homes

The Social Housing Green Paper made a commitment to delivering homes that are safe and decent and the council are committed to this being the case whether renting from a social or private landlord.

Wolverhampton Homes provide exemplar compliance services across all council homes and continually work to enhance this offer. There is a robust approach in place to monitor and manage the safety of tenants in their homes working in close partnership with the West Midlands Fire Service. Wolverhampton Homes publish the full fire risk assessment process and individual block assessments can be accessed on the Wolverhampton Homes website. High rise housing blocks are checked daily by concierge staff and plans are in place for the retrofit of sprinklers across all council owned high rise blocks.

As part of the city's Safer Homes programme, a multi-agency approach has been put in place to address any fire risk and safety issues identified in high rise homes that are not in the council's ownership. Our enforcement team will continue to challenge poor practice by residential landlords to protect our residents from unacceptable living conditions and overcrowding. Prioritising the safety of all tenants in the city including fire safety, no matter what their tenure, will always be our focus.

Developing healthy homes through our Home Improvement Agency

The Wolverhampton Better Care Fund seeks to 'provide individuals and families in Wolverhampton with the services and knowledge to help them to live longer, healthier and more independent lives no matter where they live in the city'.

The Plan recognises the role that housing plays in people's health and well-being, and the contribution that can be made by helping people to maintain and adapt their homes in reducing hospital discharge times,



preventing admission/re-admission (particularly from falls), and helping to reduce/delay expensive care packages.

The launch of a new Home Improvement Agency managed by Wolverhampton Homes will provide a holistic, tenure neutral service encompassing Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), Housing Assistance, Telecare and Affordable Warmth programmes. This will provide customers with the most appropriate services for their needs to assist them to live healthier lives for longer. Wolverhampton Homes are tasked with working with health partners to radically increase service take up and maximise the use of the available grant funding including take up from families with children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Improving our Homes

As a landlord we are committed to providing high quality services and homes. Over the past five years we have invested £206.5m in our housing stock and have significant additional investment plans. This includes:

- Delivering approximately 30 new homes a year as part of the redevelopment of infill sites across the city.
- One of the key objectives is to keep the existing homes in a decent condition through the replacement of kitchens, bathrooms and heating, and where identified, the completion of structural repairs. £42.3 million has been set-aside to achieve this.
- We endeavor to adapt homes to help people with disabilities to continue to live independently, and £5.5m will be spent over the next five years on a variety of adaptations.
- There is a rolling programme of lift refurbishments to ensure that they continue to operate optimally with £4 million to be spent over the next five years.
- There is a rolling programme to install or upgrade security to blocks of flats through the installation of door entry and CCTV systems; £2.2 million over the next five years.

building resilient communities



- We deliver work to improve the sustainability of estates and will be spending £12.45 million over the next five years enhancing the communal space in and around blocks of flats.
- We will improve the energy and water efficiency of homes, reducing fuel poverty and tackling climate change by reducing carbon emissions.

Creating Healthy and Vibrant Neighbourhoods

The quality of the environment around homes is as important as the homes themselves. We work to create safe, healthy neighbourhoods with the right infrastructure, parking, transport, green spaces, leisure facilities and amenities, achieved

through joint working for example across Highways, Planning, Transportation and Public Health. Good design is a priority for helping to build resilient communities; developing connected spaces that encourage social interaction, reduce isolation and build those connections that enable residents to support each other.

Our Neighbourhood Uplift Area Programme focuses on building resilient communities by seeking out new models of working with voluntary sector groups to 'uplift' areas using smaller but critical funding to get ideas and initiatives off the ground. Linking in to the latest 5G test bed programme, we will create opportunities for volunteering and local engagement.

We have embraced the Black Country Garden City programme to accelerate house building and develop attractive places where people want to live, while also transforming the reality and perception of the region. Sweet Briary for example, will see WV Living build a total of 34 properties

for market sale and rent. The development will comfortably achieving the strict criteria set by the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) by offering residents beautifully designed homes which are energy efficient, close to public transport, schools, healthcare and green spaces.

Our three Community Hubs keep the local community up to date with local information, providing events, volunteering opportunities, job prospects, education and more. The hubs offer a wide range of events, classes, and activities for residents as well as support and advice. Low Hill Community Hub has now achieved the status as a healthy living hub which formally trains community members to enable a social prescribing role; a system where healthcare professionals are able to refer people to local, non-clinical

services to meet their wellbeing needs. With formal links to GPs, and pharmacies, the hub is actively promoting and supporting residents to create and live in healthy neighbourhoods

Supporting Tenants into Work

We support all residents into work through our Wolves@work programme. There is also a specific programme to assist council tenants into training and employment, with Wolverhampton Homes employing three employment coaches to support young people, adults and new council tenants from homeless backgrounds.

Through the Wolverhampton Homes Employability Team, we have supported over 60 residents into employment. We aim to support 500 residents into employment over the lifetime of this strategy.

Where the city invests in its housing stock it seeks to maximise the social value achieved; for example, the apprenticeship opportunities provided by the city's Strategic Construction Partners and the training programme provided by Wolverhampton Homes. The aim of these programmes is to up-skill residents to access employment opportunities.



Improving Existing Homes and Raising Quality Standards

Good quality housing is the cornerstone to what makes a place good to live in and economically competitive; it ensures people feel safe. Well-targeted spending on existing housing can provide significant value for money. It can reduce the demand for health services, increase tenancy success, reduce carbon emissions and fuel poverty.

While the quality of both rented and owner-occupied homes is improving, standards remain below the national average and we are committed to focusing our resources on making improvements.

Development of the private rented and home ownership sectors in the city are a priority area for improvement. Our plans are set out in more detail in the Private Homes Strategy and the Empty Homes Strategy.

An Improved Private Rented Sector

Evidence tells us that the private rented sector is growing in Wolverhampton. We are encouraging the growth of a higher quality offer in the city. Wolverhampton is also home to a range of existing, older privately rented properties which are often of very poor condition. These properties are often held in small portfolios by single property landlords.

new council tenants from homeless backgrounds. A stock condition survey of Wolverhampton carried out by the Building Research Establishment in 2016 reported that approximately 5,018 category 1 hazards exist within our private rented sector. The estimated total cost of mitigating these hazards is £9.3 million.

We have made in roads in improving the private rented sector; with the establishment of our Rent with Confidence Scheme, the introduction of an Enforcement Policy and the adoption of a proactive service led by Environmental Health Officers.



Selective Licensing

We have previously introduced selective licensing in the All Saints area of the city. We believe that selective licensing can be a very positive mechanism for driving up standards of management where concentrations of private landlords are failing to do so. The case for selective licensing will be supported where robust evidence demonstrates it will help to manage and drive up standards in these areas.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

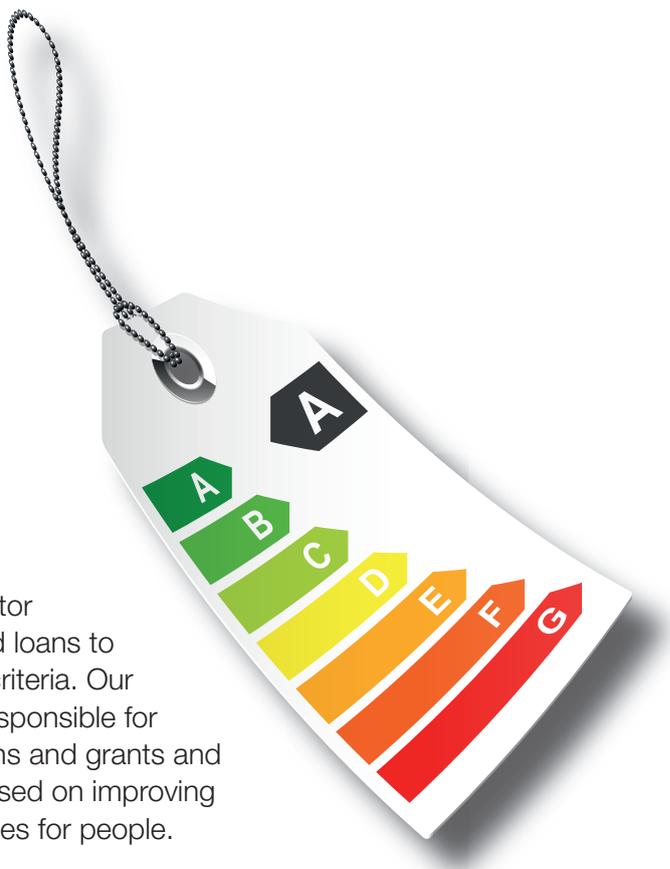
We will manage the growth of HMOs in the city by implementing mandatory, additional and Selective Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation as required, to ensure occupants in HMOs live in safe housing with good quality environments. An Article 4 Direction is now in place which removes permitted development rights to convert houses into small HMOs, allowing more control over the quality of small HMOs in the city.

We will closely monitor any growth in the number of HMOs by working with planners and develop best management practice through our cross organisational working group.

Supporting Owners

A high number of vulnerable households live in privately-owned homes, which means that although home owners are responsible for the maintenance of their homes. The need for support, signposting and advice is significant.

We will undertake research to better understand the condition of private housing across the city; where the poorest stock is and the nature of the problems faced. We will use the information we gain to take an increasingly targeted approach to how we invest to tackle poor conditions in existing private housing.



We still maintain an active Private Sector Assistance Policy and offer grants and loans to households who meet our qualifying criteria. Our Home Improvement Agency will be responsible for ensuring the maximum take up of loans and grants and that the improvements made are focused on improving homes to create better health outcomes for people.

Bringing Empty Homes Back into Use

Empty homes are a wasted resource and when empty for long periods can deteriorate, attract anti-social behaviour and have an overall negative impact on a street; devaluing nearby properties and being the cause of nuisance to neighbours. Wherever possible the city works cooperatively with owners, but will also employ the full range of legal actions available including compulsory purchase orders to ensure empty properties are brought back into use for rent or sale, to be lived in as homes.

Wolverhampton has an excellent track record of responding to the challenges associated with long term and problematic empty homes. Since 2010, the city has acted to bring over 1,650 empty homes back into use and the city’s Empty Homes Strategy 2019-2024 will set out the range of mechanisms to be deployed by the council to do more to address empty homes for example over the next 5 years we will introduce both grants and loans to home owners to support them in bringing empty homes back into use.

Delivering Affordable Warmth

The city recognises the importance of tackling fuel poverty and is currently developing a new strategy focusing on improving the health and wellbeing of vulnerable members of the community, reducing excess winter deaths and a means of reducing carbon emissions. Tackling affordable warmth will be a priority of the Home Improvement Agency.

supporting the zero-carbon city pledge

Over the next five years we will be exploring using external funding to improve and support our existing schemes aimed at providing affordable warmth. This will include introducing the Energy Company Obligation (ECO); a government energy efficiency scheme which helps reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. This will provide support to both owners, private tenants or those with a social housing tenancy to improve heating in their home.

We continue to work hard to maximize the number of households that qualify for these schemes to improve the health and well-being of those most in need. We have also identified places in the city that exhibit deprivation, and we will be targeting funding to reduce the effects of fuel poverty in these areas.

Delivering Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Priorities

The council has made a commitment to make the city greener, working towards our activities being net-zero carbon by 2028. Housing has a key role to play and we will improve energy and water efficiency, improve building design and use of renewable and low carbon energy sources, all in order to reduce carbon emissions, adapt to climate change, reduce overheating and reduce fuel poverty.

The council publishes its energy conservation measures in the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) report. This sets out the measures that the council considers practicable, cost-effective and likely to result in significant improvement in the energy efficiency of residential accommodation in its area.

Further improvements in this area will be driven by the development of a new Fuel Poverty Strategy – an Affordable Warmth Plan for the city. The council will lead on this, in consultation with partners including Wolverhampton Homes, Public Health and community groups.

3

ACCESS TO A SECURE HOME

3.1 Improving People's Health and Lives by Delivering Better Housing and Support

Good quality, suitable housing is central to our health and well-being and our ability to positively contribute and take part in all aspects of community life. Our vision for people with social care needs, as with the population as a whole, is that they have access to a range of housing that is able to meet their needs and enable choice, allowing them to remain as independent as possible, for as long as possible.

Recent policy both locally and nationally has seen a deliberate move away from traditional residential care and hospital care towards people living independently in their own homes, with their own front door.



Our priorities are to:

- Maintain up-to-date assessments of the housing and support needs of people with social care needs to better inform commissioning and housing development decisions. This will help ensure that there is a range of housing available and crisis/safe place housing on a temporary basis.
- Continue the development of a full range of housing options in the city that enable choice and good health, including level access/adapted properties.
- Ensure residents with social care needs can access, secure and adapted housing across all tenures, with the council ensuring their policies as landlord to most of the social housing in the city recognises and gives priority to those with social care needs.

Support for Older People

Wolverhampton has a growing older population. Many households want to remain living in their own home and that should be their choice.

We understand the need for suitable accommodation for older people and the likely demand for support given the growth projections. Our Council Plan 2019-2024 supports residents to remain in their homes as it brings the best outcomes for our people and communities. Where this is not the case or where older households require more intensive support, we will consult our older residents to find out what sort of accommodation they would find attractive and where. We are a dementia friendly city, nationally recognised as such, working to improve the lives of people with dementia, as well as their carers.

Working with partners we will develop services with frailty in mind; reducing accidents and hospital admissions, and that people remain connected and not socially isolated and supporting people to age well and remain living independently for longer. This will be done by ensuring homes are free from hazards, receive necessary adaptations in a timely manner and that we are tackling isolation in the development of services and new housing, for example by planning, designing and developing high quality places that promote physical activity, foster social connections and inspire healthy eating.

We will develop a range of options to ensure that there are choices for older households to access high quality accommodation as they age with quality support services.

We will be undertaking further research to:

- Ensure that the supply of extra care accommodation meets the demand.
- Explore the potential of introducing a right sizing scheme.
- Adopt scheme development standards for creating homes that older people will find popular.

- Consider what support could be made available to older households in lower value locations who face a financial gap to make the move to a more suitable home.
- Identify new models for older households such as co-housing, where older people choose to live 'independently together'.
- Prioritise adaptation, potentially funded through loans, enabling people to stay living in their current home for longer.

Supporting People with Disabilities

We expect the number of people with disabilities and long-term conditions, for example, Dementia and autism, to grow and people are likely to live for longer with these health conditions. We support the work of social care in enabling those residents with a physical disability, learning disability or mental health condition to retain their independence and will work with partners to develop advice services, support services and housing options that meet a broad spectrum of need.

Development of independence through the Home Improvement Agency will improve access and speed up the delivery of a range of services including disabled facilities grants which will assist people to retain their independence for longer. We will also review the council's Housing Allocations Policy, improving access and making the best use of adapted homes. We will work with the Autism Partnership Board and Experts by Experience Panel to ensure managing agents make reasonable adjustments to support residents to access advice, housing and support and ensure that housing can be adapted to help meet their needs. We will strengthen our partnership with private rented sector landlords to improve their ability to identify and refer tenants with support needs, particular those with mental health needs.

The council is committed to maximising the opportunities provided through advancements in technology, building on the use of Telecare to embrace

meeting the needs of a diverse population

the city as a 5G pilot area. We will explore Smart City opportunities, using artificial intelligence to improve the services we offer. Supporting the work Social Care are doing to understand how smart home technology, Telecare and the Internet of Things (IoT) can make a real difference to people's lives and support them to manage their health care.

The council will support the development of specialist housing in the city where there is a need, having already led on the development of an autism housing scheme in the Springfield area of the city and a mental health housing scheme in Low Hill.

Supporting Children in Care and Care Leavers

As corporate parent the council has a responsibility to children in care and care leavers to ensure along with partners we work to provide them with the best possible support and care, enabling them to feel in control of their lives and are able to overcome the barriers they face.

The city will work in partnership to support and develop services that ensure children and young people are safe, and have stability in their home lives, for example the council's Housing Allocations Policy will prioritise the housing needs of children in care and care leavers.

The council has an internal housing support service that provides high level housing related support to young people who are leaving care or are on the edge of care, which responds to the complex needs of vulnerable young people enabling them to move on to independent living through the Wolverhampton Young Person's Accommodation Forum.

The council is delivering the House Project, which will expand the housing offer available to our young people in care and care leavers who will work together to refurbish properties that become their homes, developing a long-term community of support.



Working in Partnership to Prevent Homelessness

Changes resulting from the economic downturn, and in particular welfare reform, are impacting detrimentally on many low-income groups and those susceptible to homelessness. Since our last housing strategy, we have seen dramatic changes to the environment in which homelessness services are delivered requiring much earlier intervention and tailored advisory services from the city. This is at a time when funding cuts are 'biting' and as a result, our current approach is delivered in a context of shrinking resources and increasing demand for services.

We are a partner with other West Midlands authorities to tackle homelessness. The priorities of our work focus on finding long-term affordable housing solutions for people and increase employment opportunities for those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

In Wolverhampton, our homelessness service is provided on behalf of the council by Wolverhampton Homes, who are focusing on why people are becoming homeless in the first place, so that we can increase the resilience of households and communities and equip them with the necessary skills to prevent crises, such as homelessness, before they occur.

We will extend the use of private sector leasing to bring additional housing options to those using the homelessness service and refer a specialist Health Visitor for all households placed in temporary accommodation where children under five are present.

Whilst we are working on measures to prevent homelessness, the need to provide temporary accommodation continues to be an expensive one for the city. We are acting to reduce this cost and increase the availability of well managed and affordable temporary accommodation where it is required.



committed to ending rough sleeping

Supporting Rough Sleepers

The problem of rough sleeping is by no means unique to Wolverhampton and tackling rough sleeping is a corporate priority. Requiring a holistic and cross-cutting approach; the city has established a multi-stakeholder task team. We are working with the West Midlands Combined Authority to tackle rough sleeping as part of a coordinated regional response.

We are part of the Housing First pilot, which offers a unique opportunity to tackle rough sleeping by moving people on the streets into a permanent home with the support to help them keep it.

The city has a plan on reducing rough sleeping to as close to zero by 2022 and we are developing a multi-agency approach that will develop a No First Night Out Model, provide accommodation to react quickly to those who are 'rough sleeping' and need a safe place to sleep that evening and work to find former rough sleepers employment. This will be coordinated through our city-wide Rough Sleeper Plan.



Supporting People Experiencing Domestic Abuse

Significant steps have been taken to strengthen our response to domestic abuse and housing has played an important role. Victims of domestic abuse will be supported to remain in their homes if they wish to do so, for example the Safe Homes Scheme supports people to feel secure in their own home following incidents of domestic abuse. The scheme consists of multi-agency support, with the priority being on making the property secure as soon as possible. The priority is to enable people to feel safe and remain living in their homes.

Where households are in danger of being made homeless due to domestic abuse, the city will provide intense support including rent bonds, cash deposits, paying rent in advance and help towards fees for moving and the city is planning closer working with landlords to encourage landlords to take in domestic violence victims.

Supporting New Communities

Wolverhampton is a diverse city and provides a welcoming place to live for all. We are a recipient city of those seeking asylum. Before households are given leave to remain, we believe that we should still have a duty of care and we have worked hard to provide a range of services and support. We have successfully gained and utilised MiFriendly City funding to provide initiatives to integrate new households into our communities.

We will continue our work with the Refugee and Migrant Centre providing specialist support and tenancy training and look to grow the number of properties we can make available for use by Children's Social Care for No Recourse to Public Funds families and therefore limit any placement in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

actively providing support and assistance

Armed Forces Personnel

As part of the city's Armed Forces covenant, we are committed to ensuring the armed forces community and their families get help and support when needed. Through our Allocations Policy and Wolverhampton Homes' Housing Options Team we actively provide support and assistance to ex service personnel presenting as requiring housing, homeless or at risk of being homeless. We can offer emergency accommodation, rent guarantee bonds and are working to engage with private landlords who will be keen on taking veterans without bonds.



Site and Pitch Provision for Gypsy and Travellers

The Gypsy and Traveller accommodation requirements for Wolverhampton are small. We have a target to provide 13 additional pitches by 2036 for Gypsy and Travelling show people. We currently provide 46 pitches. We will actively seek other sites to meet the outstanding need.



Reducing Reoffending

As part of our Community Safety Partnership, the city is proud to be a partner in delivering the Black Country Reoffending Strategy. We work with our partners across statutory, business, and the voluntary and community sectors, to unblock barriers and reduce reoffending, which by consequence, will reduce the associated harm to victims, the economy and contribute to the ambitious regeneration of the Black Country.

Housing has a significant role to play. Central to reduce reoffending are the issues of vulnerability and risk. Being homeless significantly increases the propensity for offenders to reoffend. Stable accommodation can reduce the likelihood of reoffending by more than a fifth and it provides the building blocks for individuals to gain employment and access support services.

We will be developing targeted pre-release support for offenders to access appropriate housing and sustain tenancies in partnership with Wolverhampton Homes, the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Company.

**stable accommodation
can reduce the
likelihood of reoffending**

ACTION PLAN AND MONITORING

This strategy will be supported by a **Delivery Plan** which will identify the areas of work and specific tasks needed to deliver our priorities for housing; more and better homes, safe and healthier homes and access to a secure home.

The delivery of this strategy will be monitored by the Better Homes Board, a group led by the city housing service. The Board has responsibility for ensuring the objectives and priorities for city housing, as identified in the city's Housing Strategy – Better Homes for All, are delivered through effective partnership working and operational delivery.

Wider strategic links will be made to related strategies, for example the Private Homes Strategy and the Empty Homes Strategy, as well as strengthening links to partners, stakeholders and residents.

Key Performance Indicators for Housing are identified in the Council Plan:

More and Better Homes

1. *Net additional homes*
2. *Net additional affordable homes*
3. *Net number of empty properties across the city*

Safe and Healthy Homes

4. *Number of approved 'Rent with Confidence' private landlords in our city*
5. *Number of households helped through Adorable Warmth Grant / Energy Company Obligation schemes*

Access to a Secure Home

6. *Households in priority need per 1,000 households*
7. *Number of households in temporary accommodation*
8. *Average number of people rough sleeping in our city*

These KPIs will be built upon and a clear vision for what success will look like will form part of the Delivery Plan.

You can get this information
in large print, Braille, audio or in another
language by calling 01902 551155
or order online here.

wolverhampton.gov.uk 01902 551155

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City Housing Strategy 2019 – 2024

Better Homes for All

Summary of consultation findings

Introduction

This report summarises feedback from the internal and external consultation on the draft City Housing Strategy 2019 – 2024, which ran across June and July 2019 (including public consultation 10 June 2019 – 10 July 2019).

The first draft of the strategy was developed based on consultation with officers and partners, which has been further refined based on internal, stakeholder and public consultation including:

Presenting the draft strategy at Council leadership meetings and a range of fora, providing the opportunity for face to face discussion and feedback including:

Housing, Adults, Children's, Public Health, City Environment, Regeneration, Education Council Leadership Teams. Vibrant and Sustainable City Panel, Wolverhampton Homes Board, Wolverhampton Federation Tenants Association, Deaf Café, Autism Partnership Board, Corporate Parenting, Youth Council and Care Leavers Forum.

Emails sent to internal and external stakeholders including all councillors, Registered Providers, service providers and voluntary sector organisations offering the opportunity for them to feedback directly to the Housing Strategy team including face to face if preferred.

An online survey was made available to stakeholders and members of the public, and was promoted through various means, with hard copies available on request. 156 responses were received from the online consultation of which 88% identified themselves as residents.

The key messages resulting from the consultation are summarised below, having been incorporated into a revised City Housing Strategy document.

Consultation Feedback

Theme	Summary of feedback	Response
More and better homes - <i>Increasing the speed and number of new homes delivered to meet the needs of our communities and the growing number of households looking to work, study and settle here.</i>		
Infrastructure demands	<p>Should the required level of new housing be developed there will be clear demands on infrastructure to support that growth in terms of schools, GP services, public transport etc.</p> <p>Ensure the linkages between the Housing Strategy and the Transport strategy are made to ensure that where we are developing new housing there is appropriate infrastructure so that people can access services, employment e.t.c.</p> <p>Similarly, new housing developments need to have access to parks and open space as well as sufficient car parking.</p>	<p>The strategy recognises the need for the right infrastructure, transport, green spaces, leisure facilities and amenities to support communities.</p> <p>Wording in the strategy has been strengthened to demonstrate how this is achieved for example housing engage with Education when developing new homes to ensure there is/will be sufficient capacity within schools to support population growth.</p>
Design standards Page 84	<p>Emphasise design standards that support independence and enable people to live in their homes for longer for example space standards and the ability to adapt properties.</p> <p>Improve the quality of the environment developed around new build housing, better outdoor space size standards.</p> <p>Important to consult with local people to feed into designs of new developments, particular those with a disability.</p> <p>There was much support for modular constructed homes.</p>	<p>Whilst Lifetime Homes Standards have been superseded in England by inserts into Building Regulations, the Strategy supports good design of new build housing that will enable an ageing population to live in their homes for longer, retaining their independence. The Delivery Plan commits to developing scheme development standards for homes that older people will find popular and build these into new homes developed.</p> <p>The Strategy acknowledges that the quality of the environment around homes and the importance of local environments as spaces help build resilient communities and this has been more explicitly expressed.</p> <p>The Strategy highlights the Council's use of modern methods of house building and supports ongoing investigation and the use of off-site manufacture.</p>
Reducing carbon emissions	<p>Promote the commitment to improved energy and water efficiency, improved building design and use of renewable and low carbon energy sources, all in order to reduce carbon emissions, adapt to climate change, reduce overheating and reduce fuel poverty.</p>	<p>The Strategy has been strengthened to reflect on the Council's commitment and highlight the progress that has been made, for example our housing developments already meet at least 10% of their energy requirements through on-site renewable energy generation – this typically means that at least half of the buildings on each development have roof-mounted solar photovoltaic</p>

		<p>panels. We also require most housing developments to provide electric vehicle charging points. We are exploring the development of Passivhaus standard housing, which achieves optimum energy efficiency and produces close to zero carbon emissions. We take enforcement action to ensure that rented properties reach minimum EPC standards. All of which will address fuel poverty and provide warm homes that are affordable to run and minimise carbon output.</p>
<p>A revitalised city centre</p>	<p>Need to ensure the quality of city centre developments, with specific quality standards to ensure safe and healthy homes are developed, that encourage sustainable communities into the city centre.</p> <p>Housing growth within the city centre needs to be combined with an appropriate cultural offer to ensure people can be attracted into and will stay in homes created.</p> <p>Suggested a study of empty shops and properties above shops that could create single person accommodation.</p>	<p>The Strategy sets out the ambition that by 2026 Wolverhampton city centre will be transformed with a wide variety of quality shops and cultural attractions, 21st century offices, urban living and a City-scale public transport interchange.</p> <p>Wording has been added to emphasise the importance of the quality of these homes, with an action added into the Delivery Plan to investigate and develop quality standards for commercial conversions.</p> <p>An action has also been added to the Delivery Plan regarding research into the conversion of empty shops and accommodation above into use as housing (across the city).</p>
<p>Development land</p>	<p>Focus of development to be on brownfield land with a considered response to be developed on the potential for border development.</p> <p>Also make best use of empty properties, commercial and residential that could be converted and brought back into use to meet need.</p>	<p>The Housing Strategy is underpinned by the Council's Core Strategy which adopts a brownfield focussed regeneration strategy and is further supported by the WMCA in their Spatial Investment and Delivery Plan (SIDP) as is reflected in the Housing Strategy.</p> <p>The City Housing Strategy commits to bring new housing development forward in locations that support urban regeneration, minimise environmental impacts, reduce the need to travel, and are, or can be made, most accessible by public transport, cycling and walking, with brownfield land being reused where possible, and urban open spaces protected.</p> <p>The City Housing Strategy includes a sub section, 'Bringing Empty Homes Back into Use', which sets out the Council's commitment to reducing the number of empty properties in the City, having already brought back over 1,650 properties back into use since 2010. This is done by offering support to owners but</p>

		also making use of legal powers when necessary. New and innovative ways of addressing empty properties including commercial conversions will be set out in the Empty Homes Strategy which is being developed as a sub-strategy to the Housing Strategy, with the wording of the Housing Strategy being reviewed and strengthened.
Mixed communities	A continued commitment to creating mixed communities, when developing new housing estates.	Whilst the City is committed to creating mixed communities the strategy only mentioned this in relation to the city centre, and so this has been strengthened in the strategy.
Resilient communities	The role new housing development plays in developing connected spaces that encourage social interaction, reduce isolation and build those connections that enable residents to support each other.	The neighbourhood uplift programme partners with the voluntary sector to uplift areas, building capacity and increasing the resilience of communities and the importance of building resilient communities in terms of reducing isolation has been added into the Strategy and Delivery Plan.
Housing need	Need for larger family housing including accommodation for intergenerational living so that families can care for those with social care needs. Need for family accommodation that is or can be adapted. Need for smaller homes, including bungalows to encourage downsizing, across tenures. Housing for older people, enabling them to stay within their local communities. Demand for affordable housing that reflects local incomes both to rent and buy.	The Strategy makes reference to the Housing Strategy evidence base report establishing the need for more larger homes for growing families. The Strategy and delivery plan commits to enabling the development of homes that include level access/adapted properties as well as £5.5m investment into adapting existing stock over the next five years. The Strategy and delivery plan recognises the specific need for Homes for people as they get older, both in their existing homes, in extra care housing as well as exploring other models. The Strategy makes clear its commitment to increasing the range of affordable housing in the city to buy and rent including the potential to invest in financial products that address local conditions and support local people to access homes to rent and buy. Further work to develop these options for the City is captured in the Delivery Plan.
Joint working with local authority neighbours	In addition to working with our West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) neighbours, the strategy should recognise the need for joint working with our neighbours that are not part of WMCA, specifically South Staffordshire.	The need for ongoing joint working with South Staffordshire has been added to the Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Improving schools	Rising standards and improvements in the educational performance of schools is having a positive impact on communities, confidence in the neighbourhood and contribute to the regeneration and desirability of neighbourhoods. Improving education in schools around housing options available to people when they enter adulthood and the responsibilities they will encounter.	The Strategy recognises the link between housing and schools and commits to the ongoing engagement particularly around the development of new housing as well as the contribution to schools and education in terms of the added social value housing investment can bring.
Safer and healthier homes - <i>Achieving high quality management and maintenance of housing, particularly for those renting in the City, whether that be a private or social landlord.</i>		
Fire safety	The Council's commitment to improving fires safety in/of homes, particularly to vulnerable people and older people's homes for example construction materials, hard wiring of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms and sprinkler systems and work above minimum standards set by government. Promote fire safety measures in the design of new homes. Promote fire safety checks and measures in all rented homes.	Commitments are made within the Strategy to driving safety and its wider promotion. The Council's first focus had been the high-rise blocks, with a robust approach in place to monitor and manage the safety of tenants in their homes working in close partnership with the West Midlands Fire Service. Wolverhampton Homes publish the full fire risk assessment process and individual block assessments can be accessed on their website. Council high rise housing blocks are checked daily by concierge staff and plans are in place for the retrofit of sprinklers across Council owned high rise blocks. Work has been undertaken to identify the needs of vulnerable people in high rise homes and this will continue across the wider stock. Action has also been undertaken to inspect and assess the safety of private high-rise blocks in the City, and the Council continue to respond to any national changes arising from the Hackitt and Grenfell Inquiries. Wording has been added committing the promotion of fire safety measures in the design of new homes and the private rented sector.
Decent Homes	Need to review and revisit homes upgraded through the Decent Homes programme as more investment may now be needed.	The City Housing Strategy highlights the £206.5m we have invested in our housing stock since the end of the Decent Homes programme and the significant additional investment plans including the ongoing commitment to keeping the Council's existing homes in a decent condition through the replacement of

		kitchens, bathrooms, heating in addition to other investment priorities such as adaptations to help people with disabilities to continue to live independently and completion of structural repairs
Monitoring of managing agents	Need robust arrangements for ensuring the ALMO and TMOs operate in a compliant and efficient way, including tenant feedback.	The strategy commits the Council to reviewing its landlord services delivery model to ensure that the services delivered to tenants are high quality, cost effective and add significant value to their lives. The strategy also commits the Council and its managing agents to improve tenant engagement in improving service delivery, with the strategy being further strengthened in terms of the role of tenant scrutiny as is reflected in the Delivery Plan.
Private rented sector	Emphasis on a well-managed private rented sector with improvements to choice, quality and security. Work to be done with landlords to house those in receipt of housing benefit/Universal Credit, with more done to support potential tenants to access this housing.	The strategy is committed to driving up standards in the private rented sector, with a separate sub-strategy to the Housing Strategy, the Private Homes Strategy being developed to set out in greater detail how this will be achieved. The Rent with Confidence programme and Private Sector Leasing scheme are working to ensure a wide range of property types are made available to meet the varied needs of residents in the city. Added to the delivery plan is the need for further research into the impact of Universal Credit and access to private rented housing and security of tenure, with resulting actions to be developed.
Regulation	Local regulation and enforcement to manage and control rogue landlords and Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs), whilst providing support to good landlords.	The Strategy and Delivery Plan highlights the potential use of selective and additional licensing in the private rented sector, which will be further supported and explored in the Private Homes Strategy. Support to explore selective and additional licensing where need can be demonstrated through robust evidence will be made more explicit in the strategy.
Affordability	Support those who want to move from private renting into homeownership as often private rents can be more expensive than servicing a mortgage.	The Strategy makes clear its commitment to increasing the range of affordable housing in the city to buy and rent including the potential to invest in financial products as a local offer, that supports local people to access homes to rent and buy. Further work to develop these options for the City is captured in the Delivery Plan.

Quality of environments	Particularly refuse collection in areas with high numbers of HMOs	The Strategy asserts the importance of the quality of the environment for both existing and new housing developments. Selective and additional licensing are being considered for areas with high concentrations of private rented properties. Where this is detrimental to the local neighbourhoods, cases will be brought forward for the adoption of licensing schemes. A neighbourhood uplift programme partners with the voluntary sector to uplift areas. Commitments have been made to Heath Town and New Park Village in terms of investment and redevelopment.
Access to a secure home <i>A focus on the City's commitment to those residents that need additional support in accessing and sustaining secure accommodation.</i>		
Young people in care and care leavers Page 89	Make clear the Council's commitment to supporting the housing needs of Children and Young People in Care and to Care Leavers in making successful and sustainable transitions out of care and into adulthood.	The Strategy has been updated reflecting upon its commitment to Children and Young People in Care and to Care Leavers. The Council has an internal housing support service that provides high level housing related support to young people who are leaving care or are on the edge of care, which responds to the complex needs of vulnerable young people enabling them to move on to independent living through the Wolverhampton Young Person's Accommodation Forum. The Council is also committed to delivering the House Project, which will expand the range of offers available to our young people in care and care leavers and is based on cooperative principles through which adults and young people in and leaving care, work together to refurbish properties that become their homes, developing a long-term community of support.
Domestic Violence	Continued support for the Sanctuary Scheme, which provides support to households at risk of violence to remain safely in their own homes by installing a 'Sanctuary' in the home as well as other support that supports victims to stay in their home or local area.	Wording in the strategy has been strengthened to reflect the Council's commitment to supporting victims of domestic abuse to remain in their own homes where they choose to do so, making use of/developing schemes that enable people to feel secure in their own home with support in the Delivery Plan for the Safe Homes Scheme.
Older people	Link to the NHS' Frailty agenda, by enhancing/developing housing and housing support services that support people to age well and remain living independently for longer. Frailty is	The Strategy and Delivery Plan has been updated to reflect its support for a cross tenure approach to ensuring homes are free from hazards, receive necessary adaptations and that we are

	where someone is less able to cope and recover from accidents, physical illness or other stressful events.	tackling isolation in the development of services and new housing, that is aligned to the NHS' Healthy New Towns principles by planning, designing and developing higher quality places that promote physical activity, foster social connections and inspire healthy eating.
Autism	A commitment to ensuring the needs of those residents with a hidden disability such as autism are met, making reasonable adjustments to support residents to access advice, housing and support and ensuring that housing can be adapted to help meet their needs. A cross tenure approach, with links to Rent with Confidence for those tenants living in the private rented sector.	The strategy highlights Disabled Facilities Grants in terms of improving the ability for people with a disability to remain living independently, but this can appear to have a focus on physical disabilities. The Strategy has been strengthened to set out the support for meeting the housing needs of people with all forms of disability.
Prevention	The role housing/housing services plays in promoting wellbeing and supporting those residents with low level health and wellbeing needs, who perhaps are not in contact with social care services, and could help to prevent an escalation of needs and potential admissions to hospital.	The Strategy reflects on the Wolverhampton Better Care Fund and the links to Housing to provide individuals and families in Wolverhampton with the services and knowledge to help them to live longer, healthier and more independent lives and the contribution that housing can make by helping people to maintain and adapt their homes, in reducing hospital discharge times, preventing admission/re-admission (particularly from falls), and helping to reduce/delay expensive care packages.
Home Improvement Agency	Emphasise the work being done to create a holistic, joined up approach to services which support people to remain living at home. This includes the streamlining of Telecare services, making it available to a wider client group.	The Strategy highlights work being done to streamline services through the development of the Home Improvement Agency in the section Developing healthy homes through our Home Improvement Agency. This has been strengthened, added to the Delivery Plan with the inclusion of Telecare.
Assistive technology	Emphasising the value that technology will play now and in the future and the work the City is doing to embrace this for example the City as a 5G pilot area, exploring Smart City opportunities, using artificial intelligence to improve the services we offer the work Social Care are doing to understand how smart home technology, telecare and the internet of things can make a real difference to people's lives and support them to manage their health care.	The Strategy and Delivery Plan has been updated to reflect on the growing importance of new and innovative technologies, particularly in support of social care aims.

Specialist housing	Develop specialist housing where there is a need	The Strategy and Delivery Plan has been updated to demonstrate its support for the development of specialist housing where needed and highlights the Council led delivery of an autism housing scheme and mental health housing scheme in the city.
Rightsizing	Where possible make best use of current stock for example larger or adapted properties by supporting people to right size into homes that better meet their needs.	The Strategy supports the development of a range of housing types to allow people to right-size into homes that best meet their needs. The Strategy supports the development of housing products that will enable people to do this in terms of housing to buy as well as a review of the Council's housing Allocations Policy to assist those living in/accessing social homes in the city.

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