

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel

28 January 2021

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

Venue Via Microsoft Teams

Membership

Chair Cllr Mak Singh (Lab)

Vice-chair Cllr Paul Appleby (Con)

Labour

Cllr Mary Bateman
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE
Cllr Greg Brackenridge
Cllr Alan Butt
Cllr Jacqui Coogan
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Keith Inston
Cllr Beverley Momenabadi
Cllr Martin Waite

Conservative

Cllr Christopher Haynes

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

Information for the Public

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

Contact Martin Stevens

Tel/Email martin.stevens@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Address Scrutiny Office, Civic Centre, 1st floor, St Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

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Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

1 **MEETING BUSINESS ITEMS**

2 **Apologies**

[To receive any apologies for absence].

3 **Declarations of interest**

[To receive any declarations of interest].

4 **Minutes of the previous meeting** (Pages 3 - 12)

[To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record]

5 **Matters arising**

[To consider any matters arising from the minutes].

DISCUSSION ITEMS

6 **Digital Technology in Transportation** (Pages 13 - 18)

[To consider a briefing note on Digital Technology in Transportation].

7 **Work Programme** (Pages 19 - 28)

[To consider the Work Programme for the Panel].

8 **Future Meetings**

[The next scheduled meeting of the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel is on Thursday, 25 March 2021 at 6pm].

Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel

Agenda Item No: 4

Minutes - 26 November 2020

Attendance

Members of the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Paul Appleby (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Mary Bateman
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE
Cllr Greg Brackenridge
Cllr Alan Butt
Cllr Jacqui Coogan
Cllr Keith Inston
Cllr Mak Singh (Chair)
Cllr Martin Waite

In Attendance

Cllr Steve Evans (Cabinet Member for City Environment)
Cllr Stephen Simkins (Cabinet Member for City Economy)

Employees

Martin Stevens (Scrutiny Officer) (Minutes)
Ross Cook (Director for City Environment)
Alison Shannon (Chief Accountant)
Helen McGourlay (Finance Business Partner)
Jenny Lewington (Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Policy)
Heather Clark (Strategic Projects and Funding Manager)
Julia Cleary (Scrutiny and Systems Manager)
Earl Piggott-Smith (Scrutiny Officer)

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

1 **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Christopher Haynes, Cllr Beverley Momenabadi and Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal.

Cllr Jacqueline Sweetman sent her apologies in her capacity as the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing.

2 **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

4 **Matters arising**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.

5 **Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2022 to 2023-2024**

The Finance Business Partner introduced the report on the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2022 to 2023-2024. They were asking the Scrutiny Panel to provide feedback on the Budget relevant to the Panel's remit and how it was aligned to the priorities of the Council. In addition, they were asking for feedback on the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2022 to 2023-2024. The Panel's response would then be submitted to Scrutiny Board and then onward to Cabinet.

The Finance Business Partner commented that the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 was appended to the main report. It was different this year as there was a focus on the response to Covid-19. It detailed the costs of Covid-19 for the year and the projected financial implications for the medium term, this was alongside the grants that had been received. It considered the next steps the Council would need to implement in order to address the financial pressures faced by the Council. The report also set out the "Relighting our City" agenda and explained the transition from the response to the recovery phase of the pandemic. There was an assumption in the report that the Council were expecting the Government to provide sufficient grant funding to cover the cost of Covid-19. The forecast deficit with this assumption for 2021-2022 was £4.5 million rising to over £19.6 million over the medium term. Savings to help fill this gap were currently being considered by Directorates. If grants were not received to meet the pressures of Covid-19, the deficit would be significantly more and could rise to £23.2 million in 2021-2022, increasing to over £40 million over the medium term.

The Finance Business Partner remarked that on the previous day the Spending Review had been announced in Parliament. There were some indications that the Council would receive additional funding to help cover the costs of Covid-19, but they were still assessing the implications of the announcement for the Budget moving forward.

The Director for City Environment presented a slide on the key strategies and priorities of the directorate. He made reference to the Climate Change Action Plan, the Council had adopted the Climate Change emergency proposals earlier in the year. They would be working on the action plan and bring updates to Cabinet and Council in the coming months. The Director referred to the Waste Transformation Programme, the Waste Service had been brought back in house over two years ago. This had resulted in a much improved service being delivered to Wolverhampton residents and in particular over the last 10-11 months. They would be addressing in the future how the Waste Service could become more integrated with Street Scene and street cleansing. This would link with the Street Scene and Open Space Action Plans. Environment and Commercial regulation meant they were able when necessary to enforce the law, when other measures had not been successful.

The Director for City Environment stated that they would be bringing forward the Highways Capital Programme report as part of the budget setting in March / April next year. This would focus on not only improving the network but also supporting other modes of transportation such as cycling and walking. It was important to ensure that the improvement programme was also aligned with the City Regeneration Portfolio, so the City could continue to develop. The Street Lighting LED Programme had commenced earlier in the year and would provide budget efficiencies, improve the lighting in the City and create safer places across the City. With reference to car parks and highways enforcements, he commented that the main focus in this area was in relation to keeping the City safe, rather than income generation.

The Director for City Environment referred to the Markets Strategy. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions it had been a particularly challenging year for the City's markets. He gave full credit to the Markets team who had ensured that when they had been allowed to reopen, that they did so in a safe way. He was keen to increase the offer of the Markets moving forward, they could also be a good introduction to people who wished to start a business. He referred to the City Events Programme which he saw as a key part of the "Relighting our City" agenda. When it is safe and appropriate, he hoped it would be a great boost to the City. The Creation Day weekend in May had already been announced and the City would be hosting the Commonwealth Games Time Trial in 2022.

The Director for City Environment commented that it had been a difficult time for WV Active due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The business plan for next year would look to grow the business and return the membership to levels it was before the Covid-19 pandemic. The Housing Strategy had been discussed previously at the Panel. It was now ever more important to ensure the Council had the right number of properties and that the access, standard and tenure were appropriate to modern day living.

The Cabinet Member for City Environment commented that it had been a difficult year. Regardless of the financial pressures of Covid-19, the Council would have received a reduced Government grant anyway, which it had since 2010. Sadly, during the Covid-19 pandemic the Council had lost a significant amount of income, he cited as examples the Market rents, income from WV Active Membership and car parks. He hoped the Government would reward the Council with additional funding to help cover the costs of the continued pandemic. Regardless of whether the funding was received, the Directorate's budget would have to be reduced and so they would have to do things differently in order to make savings.

The Cabinet Member for City Environment praised the Garden Waste Service, Wolverhampton had been one of the few Council's which had been able to continue the service during the pandemic. This was in spite of the fact that many Council staff had been forced to self-isolate or had even tested positive for Covid-19. As the service was inhouse they had been able to utilise staff from other areas to continue operating the service. The number of subscriptions for the Garden Waste Service had actually increased. This had brought welcome income into the Council.

The Cabinet Member for City Environment commented on the unique challenges moving forward. The City Centre was one area of focus and the City's other High Streets. They were determined to support businesses. With reference to WV Active,

he commented that they had been able to retain over 50% of their membership. They were looking to enhance the virtual WV Active offer. People were viewing these sessions all over the country and even in other countries in Europe. Other areas they were looking to change, were the replacement of fleet vehicles with electric one's, reconfiguring of depots and promoting the climate change agenda. He placed on record his sincere thanks to all Officers and staff across the Council who had been able to keep services running as normal as they could during the pandemic.

A Member of the Panel asked about the Capital Programme on Active Travel and the Environment strategy. £99,000 was listed in the report for the Active Travel Programme. He believed more investment was needed in the network to make Active Travel the priority in the transport infrastructure. He added that the Mayor of the West Midlands had promised £10 per head on cycling infrastructure when he was elected in 2017. This would equate to £2.5 million a year for the City of Wolverhampton. He did not believe this money had been received to the level promised.

The Cabinet Member for City Economy commented that a number of schemes relating to Active Travel had been put in place already in the City Centre. He agreed that more focus was needed on making a better environment for Active Travel and to making it safer. People needed to feel comfortable to encourage people to use other modes of transport. He did not however wish to ban the car, it was important to find the right balance. He did not believe the Mayor of the West Midlands would be able to reward any significant funding for Active Travel in Wolverhampton. He referred to some of the cycling routes throughout the City and hoped they could be further enhanced, such as a cycle route from the City Centre to the hospital. They were also considering participating in some electric cycle trials for staff.

The Director for City Environment commented that in addition to the Active Travel Programme funding listed in the report, there would be other investment in cycling through other capital programmes such as the Highways improvement Programme. They were awaiting to hear on whether some grant funding was going to be rewarded. Encouraging people to use other modes of transport was important and he hoped soon to announce a project with some local schools.

The Chair commented that he had requested the statistics from the WV Active Manager. They had been approaching 10,000 Members before the Pandemic which had reduced to about 65% before the start of the second national lockdown.

The Vice Chair asked if there could be a further breakdown of the expenditure and income listed in table 1 in the report in the future, which showed the service and revenue budget provision. He referred to Leisure Services and Parking, which Covid-19 had dramatically impacted and asked what considerations were taking place for the 2021-2022 budget because of the current volatility. He also asked what the total income was from the Garden Waste Service for the last twelve months. The Capital Programme had highlighted the, "Lighting up the City" as an area for expenditure, he asked if some examples could be provided. He also asked if the Panel could consider adding the issue of fleet procurement as part of the Scrutiny Work Programme.

The Director for City Environment responded that fees and charges were continuing to be reviewed, this would include car parks and markets. He would send the Councillor the details for the Garden Waste Service income over the last twelve months. On the “Lighting Up the City” programme the main focus had been on lighting up key buildings in the City Centre and he hoped to light up more buildings in the future throughout the City. On the transport presentation planned for the January Scrutiny panel meeting, the fleet procurement approach could be included as part of the item. The Finance Business Partner commented that more information on the expenditure and income listed in table 1 in the report, which showed the service and revenue budget provision, could be provided in reports for future years going forward.

The Cabinet Member for City Economy spoke on Planning and Libraries, which fell within the remit of the Panel and his Portfolio. He praised the Library service during the Pandemic. E-books had been particularly popular and provided an insight into reshaping the service going forward. He detailed the services the Libraries had provided and how they had been utilised. Social media posts had been particularly popular and a range of virtual and telephone services had been provided.

The Cabinet Member for City Economy referred to planning applications, which had actually increased during the pandemic. 16,000 planning applications had been received in 2020, which compared to 15,000 for last year. He was encouraged that the service had been able to continue throughout the pandemic. He had asked Officers to try and make the Planning Department cost neutral in the future. He praised all the staff within his portfolio for their excellent work during the course of the pandemic to date. The Chair echoed the Portfolio’s Holder’s compliments and gave praise to all Council staff for their work.

Resolved: That the Scrutiny Panel response on the Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2021-2022 to 2023-2024 be finalised by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Panel and forwarded to Scrutiny Board for consideration.

6 **Housing and Connectivity**

The Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Policy introduced a presentation on the subject of Housing and Connectivity. The Council owned 22,000 residential properties across the City which were managed by Wolverhampton Homes and four tenant management organisations. Wolverhampton Homes were the largest management agent. Homes in the City had taken online applications forms for properties since 2009. Since 2019 applicants had needed to have an email address to use the system. A range of support was available to people applying for homes in the City. There were step-by-step guides and signposts to agencies who could provide face-to-face support. A total of 96% of property bids were made online. The number of online bids had increased by 17% from 2018-2019. There was a range of support available to customers who did not want to bid online. Support was available for people with sight and hearing disabilities. Language support was also available. A range of improvements were planned including addressing how easy it was for people to understand the application form and how people applied online.

The Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Policy remarked that only 11-13% of housing tenants reported housing repairs online which was approximately 500 per month. Primarily housing repairs had been reported via the telephone. During the

first Covid-19 pandemic lockdown the online reporting function had been turned off. This was to ensure that the tenants were able to be spoken to over the telephone to determine if a repair was possible in lockdown, that there were operatives available and that no one in the household was exhibiting symptoms. The target for online repairs reporting to increase was a long-term one. The target for next year, 2021-2022 had been set at 12%. Wolverhampton Homes were continuing to invest in their online platforms and new interactive repairs reporting.

The Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Policy commented that Housing Options and Homelessness was a statutory function of the Council, which was delegated to Wolverhampton Homes to deliver. Housing options and Homelessness had never had a digital platform, it was accessed via the telephone or face-face contact. During the lockdown the service had to change because they weren't able to deliver face-to-face services. It had very rapidly moved online. Documents had been submitted via email or via What's App. She had heard that this service had gone very well, but there would be a need to reinstate face-to-face services for some people in the future.

The Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Policy stated that Wolverhampton Homes, every two years, conducted a Star Survey with a range of customer satisfaction questions. For last Summer there had been over 2000 responses to the survey. 80% of tenants had listed the telephone as their preferred method of contact with Wolverhampton Homes. 10% had favoured the website and web chat with 4% favouring social media. 51% of tenants did use the internet for a variety of purposes such as internet shopping or banking. This statistic indicated that there was potential to grow online services and contact, which long-term could create financial savings, time and staff efficiencies. It was interesting to note that 27% of tenants had said they did not use the internet at all. 25% simply preferred not to use online service, 22% did not have access to a computer or smartphone and 8% had said they couldn't afford internet access.

The Strategic Projects and Funding Manager stated that Wolverhampton's Digital Strategy had been adopted in January 2020 and it outlined the Council's approach for the rollout of full fibre broadband and also wireless connectivity. This was in recognition of the importance that a future-proofed digital infrastructure could have, to the City in terms of economic growth. This was also important for the "Relighting our City" recovery from the pandemic commitment. The strategy picked up the cross-cutting issues of growing Wolverhampton's digital economy and skills.

The Strategic Projects and Funding Manager presented a slide on supporting the rollout of Full Fibre Broadband. The Local Full Fibre Network had hit its 30% milestone for the rollout of full fibre to the Public Service Network. A commercial rollout had also been announced by the company. To increase the speed of the rollout, the number of gangs onsite had been increased. They had also introduced a number of measures to address resident and Councillor concerns including road sweepers. Block wayleave was being finalised to support rollout of full fibre in social housing, this process for rollout had been agreed with Wolverhampton Homes. For new builds, a full fibre toolkit for planners had been developed. A full fibre and 5G policy had been introduced into the draft Black Country Core Strategy. Links had also been established with WV Living to ensure all houses were connected to full fibre broadband.

The Strategic Projects and Funding Manager spoke on the subject of the Digital Divide. Pre-Covid-19, 35,000 residents of Wolverhampton had not been online for three months and 59,000 lacked all five basic skills (Digital Exclusion Heatmap), 44% of which were under 60. Covid had highlighted the extent of the issue with many residents unable to access online learning, employment support and low take-up of online support for vulnerable groups including issues around data poverty, unsuitability of devices as well as motivation and skills. Local intelligence had indicated that 50% of adult education learners, 9 out of 10 residents on a basic skills course, 60% of job seekers working with Wolves at Work and 25% on “Impact” (scheme targeting young people) lacked a device or connectivity to access online learning or support. A number of schools had reported that less than half of their pupils had a device and / or connectivity during lockdown to access online learning. A greater number reported that pupils lacked suitable devices or had restricted access due to sharing devices.

The Strategic Projects and Funding Manager remarked that they were piloting a Wolves Online device and connectivity loan scheme for a range of reasons such as applying for benefits, accessing online learning, reducing isolation and accessing support. They were also looking at a place based approach to digital inclusion informed by a digital exclusion map which showed the areas where residents were more prone to not being online. They were hoping to work with schools, libraries and community hubs to see if they could be encouraged to become Online Centres and exploring tools such as “reboot”, a recycling scheme for devices. In addition, they had been proactively working with schools to maximise the take up of Department for Education laptops targeting school children, with 200 devices being lent to schools through Wolves Online, complemented by ward funds and BT Hotspot vouchers for connectivity. The Council were also exploring innovative means of getting people online including the use of personal budgets and links to telecare for connectivity as there were so many benefits of digital inclusion. She thought an important question for the Scrutiny Panel to consider was “How else can we support our residents to become digitally included?”

The Vice Chair commented that digital inclusion was a very important area. He asked how far the Council had come in relation to future-proofing digital services infrastructure. He also asked how the statement in the briefing note to the Panel, of Covid-19 accelerating the adoption of digital services by 2-5 years, had been calculated. With reference to housing repairs online reporting being switched off during the beginning of the pandemic, he asked how this had impacted on the overall numbers for the reporting of household repairs. With regard to developing the online platform for Wolverhampton Homes, he asked if tenants were being engaged for their input. On the matter of encouraging people to use online services, he asked what actions were being taken to do this and the obstacles reported by residents to using online services. He thought a further demographic breakdown on the 2000 residents who had completed the Star Survey would be useful. The briefing note had referred to smart technologies being held back before the introduction of full fibre broadband in the City. He asked if some examples could be given of the smart technologies which had been held back. He also asked how the figures cited on the digital divide in the presentation had been calculated. He asked if Wolverhampton Homes had any plans for subsidising access to Wi-Fi in high rise flats and other large developments. Potentially it could be subsidised from rent payments.

A Panel Member commented on the lack of digital devices in people's homes who had children that required them for schoolwork. He commended the use of Councillor Ward funds and other schemes being utilised for the provision of digital devices and hoped more devices could be provided in the future.

The Chair raised the important issue of raising people's awareness of the danger of scams in the digital world. He hoped that more information on how to avoid being scammed could be shared on the Council's social media platforms.

The Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Policy offered to report back to the Panel the figures for how switching off the online household repairs reporting system had affected the overall number. The online platform for Homes in the City was part of an overall update for the Wolverhampton Homes website, which was addressing accessibility and compatibility with smart phones. Prior to lockdown there had been engagement with tenants through a range of methods including annual get-togethers, committees and other meetings. These were currently paused because of the pandemic but there was online engagement taking place. She would ask for further information on how they intended to gain feedback on improving and testing the new website. Wolverhampton Homes were in the early stages of updating the website and so she hoped some face-to-face consultation could take place next year. In relation to the question on the demographics of the Star Survey, she could confirm that it was sent out to the over 10,000 tenants who had an email address. It was sent out via email and then the demographics of the people who had responded were compared to the whole tenant population. They then targeted tenants in order to make sure the responses were weighted correctly. She was happy to provide the data to the Panel.

The Service Manager for Housing Strategy and Policy on the question of Wolverhampton Homes promoting access to Wi-Fi and devices, commented that she would look at the results of the last trial and provide a note to the Panel. They had looked at Wi-Fi as part of the service charge in the past but there were difficulties arising from the question of equity, as some people in a block would not wish to make use of the Wi-Fi or they already had their own arrangement. It was however worth looking at with Wolverhampton Homes again in the future.

The Strategic Projects and Funding Manager on the question of future-proofing the digital infrastructure responded that it was for about 20 years. The figure relating to accelerating the adoption of digital services of 2-5 years was from a report by PWC. The key to encourage more people to use online services, she regarded as being devices, skills and motivation. Lockdown had highlighted the issues relating to devices and connectivity. Smarter technology needed bigger band width and so to increase the number of these technologies in people's households, improved broadband was required. The data on the digital divide had been calculated using the data from the digital dashboard which gave information on the number of people who had not used the internet in the last 3 months and lacking digital skills. The data was being updated as lockdown had highlighted the problems with lack of devices and connectivity. In relation to scams, she commented that they were producing a digital Wolves website with the intention of collating resources relating to digital, this would include links to staying safe online.

7 Work Programme for the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel

The Scrutiny Officer spoke on the Work Programme for the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel. He commented that the scrutiny theme for the year was how digital could be used to improve the lives of the residents of Wolverhampton. For each item scrutiny considered it was important to relate this theme to the item. For the next meeting of the Panel in January, the Panel had chosen to look at Transport in a connected City and feedback from the pilot on e-scooters by the WMCA. In March, the Panel had chosen to look at the environment in a connected City and to receive a statement from the Portfolio Holder, where questions could be asked to the Portfolio Holder about his portfolio.

The Scrutiny Officer stated that the Work Programme was a live document and could be adjusted as appropriate. The Chair and Vice-Chair were keen to hear from the Panel Members on any information they would like to be included for the January and March items.

A Panel Member spoke on the important issue of air quality and added that the carbon footprint of the Council would also be good to consider. The Director added that he would be happy to speak to the Panel Member to obtain more details about the information he was seeking on the carbon footprint for the March item on the environment.

The Vice Chair added that fleet procurement would be valuable to include for the item on Transport in January 2021.

8 Future Meeting Dates

The future meeting dates of the Panel were confirmed as follows:-

28 January 2021 at 6pm

25 March 2021 at 6pm

The meeting closed at 7:20pm.

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Briefing Note

Title: Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel - Digital Technology in Transportation

Date: 28 January 2021

Prepared by: John Roseblade Job Title: Head of City Transport

Intended Audience: Internal Partner organisation Public Confidential

Purpose or recommendation

The purpose of this briefing note is to inform the Panel of current Digital development within the transport sector within City of Wolverhampton.

Overview

The use of digital technology within all sectors is accelerating at pace and this includes the enhancement of all modes of transportation. The potential subject area is vast so for the purposes of this panel the briefing will focus on the current and developing uses of technology within highways. Public transport sectors are not considered in this paper.

The note provides an outline to some of the key areas of development within CWC and is intended as a brief overview for discussion.

Background and context

SMART City and LED street lighting

The Smart Digital Infrastructure project (funded by Wolverhampton Council and European Regional Development Fund grant until end March 2022) delivers a package of low carbon initiatives that provide additional cost savings, carbon savings and resident benefits.

The main element of the programme is to upgrade 27,750 streetlights to low energy Light Emitting Diode (LED) lanterns. Invest to Save borrowing is funding the street light conversions with the grant providing additional funding for other project elements, as follows:

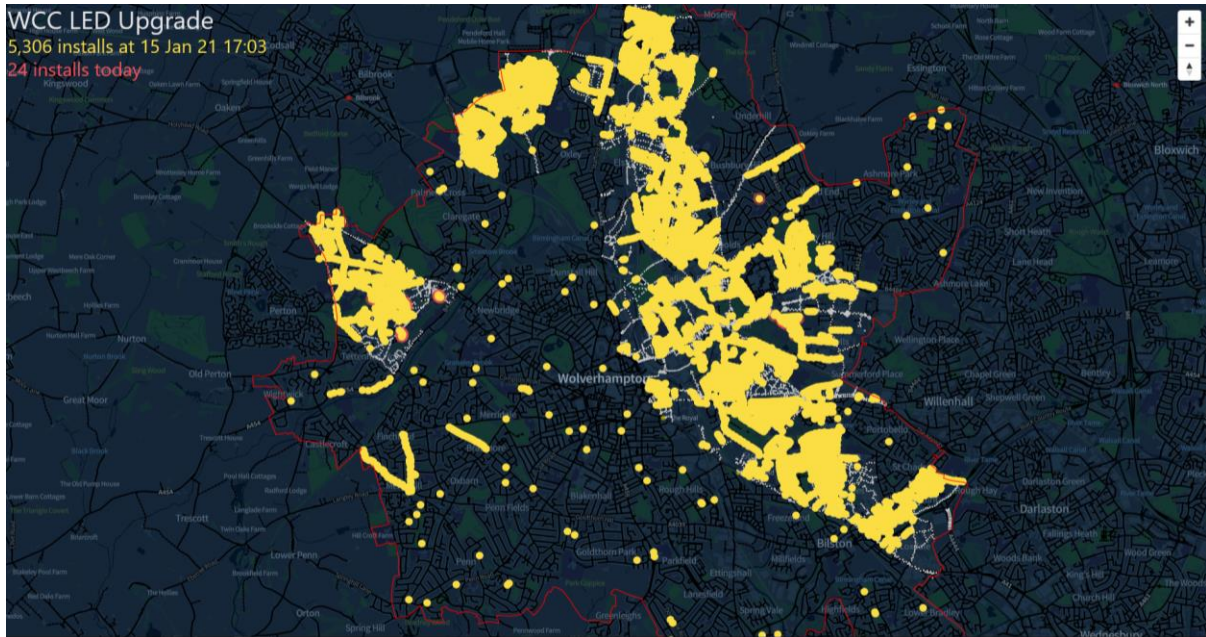
- Central management system for 9,000 street lighting units and smart city sensors.
- Procurement and installation of cycle counter signs
- Installation of solar lighting along canal towpath and digital wayfinding (delivered by Canal and River Trust)

Further grant is available for the central management system and nodes to enable a wireless mesh network that will provide remote dynamic street lighting control. The manageability, flexibility

and responsiveness of the system will bring major resource and cost savings, supporting further energy and carbon savings.

The grant will also enable city streetlights to transform into smart, connected urban assets with the addition of sensors to the columns. Sensors provide an opportunity to remote-control a range of council operations, unlocking urban data to reveal unique insights which can help improve efficiencies, sustainability and citizen experience.

Live mapping of installation progress across the city:



Digital Highway (Variable Message) Signs

We have developed a new strategy to displaying information on the highway utilising modern LED signage. These enable a variety of information to be displayed including public information, car park status, road safety, traffic directions, event management and a wide range of other areas including key messages of national importance such as Stay at Home.



The renewal programme focusses initially on the city centre before rolling out along strategic corridors to cover the whole city.

These signs are also being enhanced to incorporate warning messages, for example, a vehicle registration could be displayed alongside a slow-down message to encourage greater compliance with the speed limit. A further development currently being trialled is displaying a warning sign to advise of turning traffic where collision trends have been identified.

The potential to utilise the signs capacity in the future includes dynamic route messages linking in with other workstreams such as: live congestion and Air Quality monitoring and car park availability.

Traffic signals and network management

Wolverhampton currently hosts the Urban Traffic Control Centre (UTC) for the Black Country.

Digital technology is used to monitor the network and maximise the efficiency of traffic movements, integrating signal timings and responding to incidents. There are many data sources that are integrated to increase the intelligence and knowledge of the behaviour of the network.



Examples of use include:

- To influence road users by gating techniques to encourage alternative routes
- Develop different modal priorities i.e buses, cycling
- Improve efficiency to support reliable journey times
- React to specific events e.g. Railway station exit, post football match
- Support future driverless cars
- Prioritise travel corridors based on air quality to comply with national/ legislative requirements
- Provide journey time, traffic flow and travel data for public – commercial benefit?
- To develop automated incident detection to assist in identifying issues occurring across the network

One further recent development is the introduction of contactless activation of pedestrian crossings at key locations in the city.

Average Speed Cameras

CWC has led the introduction of digital average speed cameras across the Black Country. Whilst it is the responsibility of the Police to enforce compliance with speed limits, we have a shared obligation to reduce road traffic collisions and make our roads safer. Over £700,000 has been invested in camera infrastructure on the highest priority road sections

across the Black Country and these are now being monitored and enforced by WMP. The technology allows for speeds to be recorded over a length of road rather than in one spot and have been demonstrated to have a marked impact on speeds and accident prevention.

CWC Full Fibre Network and 5G

Building this new, faster network will allow the Council to future proof the city with a digital infrastructure that will benefit and be used by businesses, residents and other services.

COVID-19 has accelerated the adoption of digital services by between 2-5 years with connectivity deemed critical to levelling up the economy and driving public and private recovery, growth and innovation. 'Driven by Digital' is a cross cutting scheme in Wolverhampton's Relighting Our City recovery commitment and a key element in making the city a major player in UK's digital market, in turn generating new opportunities and jobs.

CWC has been supporting WM5G's accelerator project rolling out 5G across the city. Whilst this supports our digital connectivity it is distinct from CWC's own Local Full Fibre Network programme.

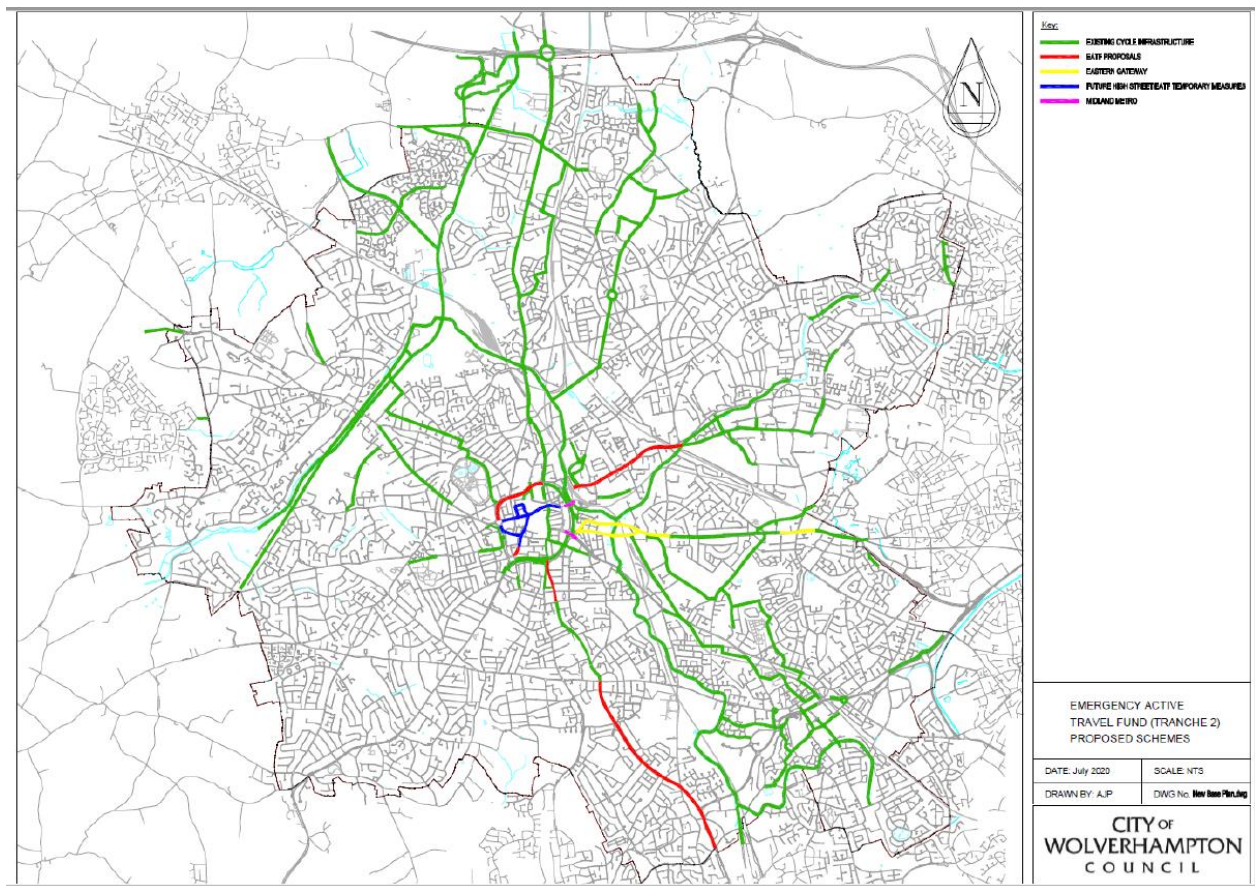
City of Wolverhampton Council secured £4.9m in funding from the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), for the Local Full Fibre Network in June 2018 to connect 170 public sector premises across the city to full fibre (1Gb) broadband. The business case emphasised the lack of commercially available broadband in the city centre and lack of plans from the existing commercial providers to enable connectivity in the city centre going forward.

This massive step change in connectivity will enhance the SMART City progress including systems such as the CCTV traffic management network and parking management systems.

WM5G's Transport use cases are exploring how 5G can help to ease urban traffic congestion and make public transport more attractive. It includes the UK's first 5G road sensor network targeted at reducing congestion and pollution by installing 5G enabled cameras, radar and pollution sensors at key junctions across the West Midlands. Other use cases include the use of 5G-enabled smart sensors to accurately identify and classify road usage in real-time and Mast-as-a-Sensor trial demonstrates how to use existing infrastructure (4G and 5G masts) and turn them into sensors, using AI and machine learning to produce real-time traffic data.

Active Travel Routes

We have in excess of 60Km of cycle way in our city. We have recently secured in excess of £1million to enhance that provision through the Active Travel Fund. In addition to the cycle route delivered through Leicester Street, Queen's Square and Darlington Street the additional funding has been allocated to new dedicated cycle routes on Ring Road St Peters and Wednesfield Road. UTC are working with suppliers to develop and improve Artificial Intelligence for cycle count and pedestrian count detectors across the city centre. The technology is seeking to revolutionise how such data is collected in future increasing the ease and efficiency in how it is collected



Fleet management

City Transport are currently in the process of procuring a new fleet management system with a more modern, sophisticated and mobile IT solution. This greater functionality, through continuous product development and on-going functionality improvements will future proof the service in line with the Council's aspirations for digital transformation.

Fleet Procurement

In line with our Climate ambitions we are moving towards the electrification of our fleet. We have secured free consultation advice from the Energy Saving Trust who are in the process of a complete fleet review to determine current capacity for change and future fleet and infrastructure requirements. This analysis has involved the use of telematics to track and monitor exact usage. The results of this analysis are expected in early February and will inform our green procurement strategy going forward.

The Council is in the process of introducing accessible Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points across the City to support the general uptake of EVs. Locations of all charging points are available on commercial sites such as Zap Map @ <https://www.zap-map.com/>

Winter Maintenance (Gritting)

This season we have secured a suit of 9 brand new gritters. These modern vehicles are fitted with the latest technology allowing for automatic spreading rates based on their exact location across the network. All vehicles are tracked improving performance monitoring and management capability.

Escooters and Bike Share



Woman riding an electric scooter in Victoria Square

Roll out of the Escooter trial and bike share programmes across the region is ongoing and will soon be visible in Wolverhampton. Units are fitted with telematics allowing a rich source of usage data. From the initial trial in Birmingham it has been shown that there have been considerable uptake with over 60,000Km covered by 30,000 individual trips (upto November 2020). Based on a trial of 2000 units and a 12-16% car replacement rate this could equate to a carbon saving of between 256

and 525 tonnes of CO₂ in Birmingham over the course of the trial.

The data being collated during the trial will inform future programmes to ensure investment is focused in areas of demand and where they will have the greatest impact.

Discussion

The above examples represent only a small sample of the ways in which digital technology enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of our highway network. It is intended to provide a vehicle for discussion and to generate questions regarding how technology is used and other areas in which development should be considered.



Scrutiny Work Programme (draft)

Vibrant & Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel 2020-2021

Theme – Connected City

Contents	Page Number
Scrutiny – New Approach	3
Work Programme considerations	4
Vibrant & Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel draft work programme	5-6
Scrutiny Panel Remit & Functions	7
General Role of the Scrutiny Board and Scrutiny Panels	8
Appendix A: Roles – Chair, SEB Lead and Scrutiny Officer	9

Scrutiny – A New Approach – Connected City

1. A new approach to scrutiny was agreed at Scrutiny Board on 14 July 2020. Scrutiny Board agreed a cross cutting theme for all panels. The agreed theme was '**Connected City**'. Connectivity and digital considerations will be considered as part of all items added to the work programme.
2. **Roles and expectations** have been defined for the Chairs of Scrutiny Panels, Strategic Executive Board (SEB) leads and Scrutiny Officers; creating a collective understanding of scrutiny's role within the Council. These can be seen in Appendix A.
3. Effective **work planning and agenda setting** will take place to produce **jointly owned work plans**.
4. The first panel meetings will receive an update on the areas that fall within the scope of the panel. There will then be an introduction to the **connected city theme**. This will enable the Panel to consider items for the workprogramme in line with the '**Connected City**' scrutiny theme.
5. Regular briefings will be arranged with the Scrutiny Panel Chair, Vice Chair, SEB lead and scrutiny officer to enable a shared understanding of priorities and reviews of progress and recommendations.
6. **Improved communication:** 'You said we did' updates and publicity (including social media)
7. Creation of a **strong organisational culture** that supports scrutiny work that **adds real value** and **evidences impact**.
8. Outcomes and recommendations from all panels will then be fed back to Scrutiny Board to unify into one comprehensive report based on the connected city theme.

Work Programme considerations:

- 1. Is the issue in the public interest?**
- 2. How does it link to the Connected City theme?**
- 3. How can scrutiny add value by looking at it?**
- 4. Where is the evidence to support looking at this issue?**
- 5. Can we evidence impact?**
- 6. Is there a change to National Policy?**
- 7. Does it affect citizens across the City?**
- 8. Are there performance concerns?**
- 9. Is it a safety issue?**

Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel

Chair: Cllr Mak Singh	Vice Chair: Cllr Paul Appleby	SEB Lead: Ross Cook	Scrutiny Lead: Martin Stevens
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Date of Meeting	Agenda Publication	Item Description	Lead Report Author	Council Plan Priority	Notes
24 September 2020	16 September 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vibrant & Sustainable City update to include Covid response presentation Future Work Planning 	Ross Cook Scrutiny Lead/ SEB Lead Scrutiny Chair		
For information Items only – to be emailed out to Panel members – not for inclusion on the agenda.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S.106 Briefing Note. Housing Support for Veterans Briefing Note. 			Carried over from March cancelled meeting Carried over from March cancelled meeting
26 November 2020	18 November 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget Housing in a connected City 	Helen McGourlay / Jo McCoy		Local Connection update – outside of meeting – MS has emailed RC and Jenny Lewington drafting response.

					Applying for housing online process suggested at September meeting.
28 January 2021	28 January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Digital Technology in Transportation including E- Scooters 			To include Fleet Procurement approach.
25 March 2021	17 March 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environment in a connected City Portfolio Holder Statement and Question Time 	Portfolio Holder		Air Quality and Digital Monitoring raised at September meeting linking in with the Smart LED lights. Carbon Footprint raised at November meeting.

Scrutiny Panel Remit & Functions

The scrutiny of vibrant sustainable communities where people feel proud to live, keeping neighbourhoods, city infrastructure and the environment clean, Improving city housing and cultural and leisure services

The Panel will have responsibility for scrutiny functions as they relate to:

- Operational Services
- Public Realm
- Commercial Services
- Regulatory Services (policy)
- City Housing
- Planning (policy)
- Strategic Transport
- Keeping the city clean
- Keeping the city moving
- Improving the city housing offer
- Strategic asset management

General Role of the Scrutiny Board and Scrutiny Panels

Within the terms of reference set out in the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, the Scrutiny Board will:

1. Co-ordinate the work of the Scrutiny Panels and Scrutiny Review Groups.
2. Receive annual reports from the Councillor Champion and give consideration to the work undertaken and issues that the Councillor Champion wishes scrutiny to consider investigating further.
3. Maintain regular dialogue with the Cabinet on service improvement, performance management of cross-cutting issues, policy development and budgetary provision.
4. Oversee and ensure access to appropriate learning and development for scrutiny Councillors.
5. Discharge the call-in procedures relevant to its overarching role.

The Scrutiny Panels will:

1. Maintain regular dialogue with the Cabinet, Scrutiny Board and Councillor Champions.
2. Ensure that members of the public and stakeholders are informed of and involved in issues within the remit of each Panel.
3. Discharge the call-in procedure relevant to their terms of reference.

Appendix A: Roles and Responsibilities

1. Chair of Scrutiny Panel:

- To attend fortnightly meetings with the SEB lead and Scrutiny Officer
- To attend agenda setting meetings and other relevant briefings on a regular basis
- To contribute to the work planning for the panel and to bring forward relevant topics and issues for inclusion
- To chair meetings in a fair and open way and to encourage participation from panel members
- To attend Scrutiny Board (where appropriate) to provide feedback and updates on progress
- To prepare, when possible, questions in advance of a meeting to allow for healthy debate and to ensure that clear resolutions are made that add value and show impact
- To act as champion for scrutiny and to represent the best interests of the citizens of Wolverhampton

2. SEB Lead:

- Meet with the Chair, the Vice Chair and the Scrutiny Officer fortnightly to discuss upcoming issues, updates from previous meetings, workplans and any other relevant business as agreed by all parties.
- Recommend topics for inclusion on the workplan, working proactively with the Chair, Vice Chair and Scrutiny Officer to address any issues/opportunities/challenges that fit with the remit of the panel.
- To advise on the viability of any issues put forward by the panel for inclusion on the work plan.
- To attend relevant Scrutiny Panel meetings and provide an update at each meeting on any relevant issues within the remit of the panel. Also, attending Scrutiny Board (as appropriate) to provide feedback.
- To act as a champion for scrutiny in the Council and to encourage engagement with the scrutiny function and promote a healthy culture within which scrutiny can thrive

3. Scrutiny Officer:

- Provide support and guidance to the panel, its members, officers, partners and other stakeholders regarding the scrutiny function
- To ensure openness and transparency in the scrutiny function and to make sure that information is continuously shared and communicated between all relevant parties in a timely and suitable fashion
- To ensure that the appropriate persons are invited to meetings and that they are given adequate time to prepare and to provide guidance and support where appropriate
- To manage the administration of all relevant panels and meetings within statutory timescales
- To carry out research and information gathering exercises when required
- To provide advice on policy and legislation where appropriate
- To ensure that all resolutions are followed up and responses or actions fed back, monitored and recorded
- To act as liaison between the Chair and the SEB lead to ensure a shared understanding of priorities and work planning.
- To manage the agreed work plan and its outcomes to show impact and added value

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