

<b>Time</b>	5.00 pm	<b>Public Meeting?</b>	YES	<b>Type of meeting</b>	Executive
<b>Venue</b>	Council Chamber - 4th Floor - Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton, WV1 1SH				

## Membership

<b>Chair</b>	Cllr Ian Brookfield (Lab)
<b>Vice-Chair</b>	Cllr Stephen Simkins (Lab)

## Labour

Cllr Obaida Ahmed  
Cllr Paula Brookfield  
Cllr Steve Evans  
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal  
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre  
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal  
Cllr Linda Leach  
Cllr Beverley Momenabadi

Quorum for this meeting is three voting members.

## Information for the Public

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

<b>Contact</b>	Dereck Francis
<b>Tel/Email</b>	Tel: 01902 555835 or <a href="mailto:dereck.francis@wolverhampton.gov.uk">dereck.francis@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Address</b>	Democratic Services, Civic Centre, 1st floor, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

Copies of other agendas and reports are available from:

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<b>Email</b>	<a href="mailto:democratic.services@wolverhampton.gov.uk">democratic.services@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Tel</b>	01902 550320

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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 - 12)  
[For approval]

### DECISION ITEM (RED - FOR DECISION BY THE COUNCIL)

- 4            **Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2022-2023 including Rent and Service Charges** (Pages 13 - 48)  
[To approve the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2022-2023 including Rent and Service Charges]

### DECISION ITEMS (AMBER - DELEGATED TO THE CABINET)

- 5            **SEND Inspection Outcome Written Statement of Action** (Pages 49 - 106)  
[To consider the outcomes of the SEND Inspection]
- 6            **Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement and Draft Budget Update**  
(Pages 107 - 114)  
[To provide an update to the Draft Budget and on the Local Government Provisional Finance Settlement 2022-2023]
- 7            **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2024** (Pages 115 - 146)  
[To approve the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2024]
- 8            **Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2025** (Pages 147 - 160)  
[To approve the Corporate Parenting Strategy]
- 9            **Determined Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2023-2024** (Pages 161 - 188)  
[To determine admission arrangements for 2023-2024 to comply with mandatory provision of the School Admissions Code 2021]
- 10          **Building Surveys of Large Panel System Blocks** (Pages 189 - 200)  
[To approve the cessation of letting identified void properties and rehouse tenants (where required) to allow specialist surveys to be undertaken]

11

**Purchase of affordable rent and shared ownership units - Northcote development (WV Living) (Pages 201 - 210)**

[To approve entering into a contract agreement with WV Living to purchase affordable units on Northcote development site]

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<b>CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL</b>	<b>Meeting of the Cabinet</b> <b>Minutes - 8 December 2021</b>
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## Attendance

### Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Ian Brookfield (Chair)  
Cllr Stephen Simkins (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr Obaida Ahmed  
Cllr Paula Brookfield (Virtually)  
Cllr Steve Evans  
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal  
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre  
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal  
Cllr Linda Leach (Virtually)  
Cllr Beverley Momenabadi (Virtually)

### Employees

Tim Johnson	Chief Executive
Mark Taylor	Deputy Chief Executive
Emma Bennett	Executive Director of Families
Ross Cook	Director of City Housing and Environment
John Denley	Director of Public Health
Ian Fegan	Director of Communications and External Relations
Charlotte Johns	Director of Strategy
Richard Lawrence	Director of Regeneration
Claire Nye	Director of Finance
David Pattison	Chief Operating Officer
Laura Gittos	Head of Governance
Jaswinder Kaur	Democratic Services Manager
Dereck Francis	Democratic Services Officer

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## Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1               | <b>Apologies for absence</b><br>No apologies for absence were received.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 2               | <b>Declaration of interests</b><br>Councillor Linda Leach declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 4 - Council Tax Base and Business Rates (NDR) Net Rate Yield 2022-2023 and Draft Budget Update 2022-2023. David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer advised that there is a standard |

dispensation for Councillors in the Constitution namely in relation to members' allowances, business rates, plus housing matters and rents.

3 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 17 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 **Council Tax Base and Business Rates (NDR) Net Rate Yield 2022-2023 and Draft Budget Update 2022-2023**

Councillor Ian Brookfield presented the report on the estimates for the Wolverhampton Collection Fund 2022-2023, which the Council managed on behalf of local precepting bodies and central government. The report also provided an update on the draft budget strategy 2022-2023 following the headlines arising from the Government's Spending Review Statement 2021.

Resolved:

1. That the Collection Fund Council Tax Base for 2022-2023 be set at 64,936.94 Band D equivalents.
2. That the Collection Fund Business Rates, also referred to as Non-Domestic (NDR), Net Rate Yield for 2022-2023 be set at £65.6 million.
3. That authority be delegate authority to the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Director of Finance to approve amendments to:
  - a. The final Business Rates Net Yield as required as a result of changes to the NNDR 1 form (National Non-Domestic Rates return) by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities or data revisions and changes in projections;
  - b. The Council Tax Base as a result of any data revisions and changes in projections.
4. That the impact on the draft budget strategy for 2022-2023 including the headlines arising from the Spending Review 2021 be noted.
5. That it be noted that the final budget report presented to Cabinet in February 2022 would reflect the outcome of the settlement and detailed budget work for 2022-2023, including a review of all budget reduction proposals and the risks associated with their delivery.
6. That it be noted that for the purposes of the budget setting process an increase in council tax of 1.99% and a 1% adult social care precept is assumed for 2022-2023, in line with the Spending Review Statement.

5 **Collection Fund Estimated Outturn 2021-2022**

Councillor Ian Brookfield presented the report on the estimated outturn for Council Tax and Business Rates, also referred to as Non Domestic Rates (NDR), transactions on the Collection Fund in 2021-2022. The proposals would inform the budget setting process for 2022-2023 for the Council and precepting bodies.

Resolved:

1. That the estimated outturn for Council Tax in 2021-2022 is a cumulative deficit of approximately £3.5 million which includes the carry forward of the in-year 2020-2021 deficit, which the Government confirmed could be spread over three years from 2021-2022 to 2023-2024.
2. That the estimated outturn for Business Rates, also referred to as Non-Domestic Rates, in 2021-2022 is a cumulative deficit of approximately £15.4 million; this is as a result of a cumulative deficit totalling £6.1 million brought forward from 2020-2021, which the Government confirmed could be spread over three years from 2021-2022 to 2023-2024, and an estimated deficit in 2021-2022 totalling approximately £9.3 million.
3. That authority be delegated to the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Director of Finance, to confirm any final changes to the forecast outturn reflecting any further information received ahead of the statutory deadline of 31 January 2022.
4. That authority be delegated to the Director of Finance to confirm and arrange the final payments to the precepting authorities.
5. That it be noted that at the point of writing the Council awaits confirmation of the Government's view regarding the spread of the 2020-2021 deficit. The information provided in this report are therefore estimates at this stage and are subject to change following the publication of guidance as part of the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

6

### **South Staffordshire Local Plan Preferred Options Consultation**

Councillor Stephen Simkins presented the report on a summary of the South Staffordshire Local Plan (SSLP) Preferred Options Consultation, which set out preferred housing and employment site allocations and policy directions. The report detailed the implications of the SSLP for Wolverhampton, together with principles for City of Wolverhampton Council's response to South Staffordshire's plans to build on the periphery of the City.

Resolved:

1. That the following principles be approved as the basis of the Council's response to the South Staffordshire Local Plan (SSLP) Preferred Options consultation:

#### **Duty to Cooperate and Statements of Common Ground**

- a. Acknowledgment that the Black Country Authorities (BCA) and South Staffordshire District Council (SSDC) have been working together constructively on planning issues of mutual interest and that this is expected to continue. Going forward, it is essential that the phasing of site delivery and associated infrastructure (including the construction period) is managed in a coordinated manner given the clustering of proposed allocations and the cumulative impact of development.
- b. Expectation that, as the Black Country Plan (BCP) and SSLP both move towards Publication in summer 2022, the BCA and SSDC will aim to reach agreement on all relevant cross-boundary issues and reflect this agreement in draft Statements of Common Ground to support each Plan;

- c. Support for the preferred housing growth option of local housing need plus 4,000 homes to meet Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area need up to 2038;
- d. Given detailed evidence provided by the Draft BCP that the Black Country has a very significant housing shortfall up to 2039, and the close geographical, migration and commuting links between the Black Country and South Staffordshire, request that the full 4,000 homes should be specifically allocated to meet Black Country housing needs;
- e. Support the longer term growth aspirations for a new settlement with strong sustainable transport links to the Black Country, which could help meet longer term Black Country housing shortfalls;
- f. Request that the South Staffordshire Housing and Employment Needs Assessment (HEDNA) is completed as soon as possible, with due regard to the Black Country EDNA (2021) and the West Midlands Interchange Apportionment Study, and shared with the BCA as soon as possible to determine how far the SSLP will be able to contribute towards significant unmet employment land needs in the Black Country.

### **Site allocations and cross-boundary infrastructure**

- g. Noting the scale and location of the proposed extensions to the Wolverhampton urban area and to commit to require further work on infrastructure requirements associated with the type, scale, location and phasing of development and assurances that close joint working on all relevant planning issues will continue throughout the Plan preparation process, Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) preparation, pre-application and planning application processes;
8. Request that a SPD and Infrastructure Delivery Strategy is also prepared for the Langley Road site;
9. Request that the affordable housing secured on sites proposed in the Plan within the Wolverhampton locality are allocated through nomination rights for Wolverhampton residents, and that this requirement is set out in the Publication Plan;
10. Request that the combined impact of SSLP and BCP developments on the wider transport network is assessed, that development links effectively to the strategic transport network and avoids excessive pressure on sensitive transport links, that effective sustainable transport solutions are provided to connect essential trips to the local network, and that developments seek to minimise trip generation through all available mechanisms;
11. Support for the continued promotion of the existing Brinsford Strategic Park and Ride site allocation in the Preferred Options and request that this project and other supporting infrastructure which increases access to the rail network should be fully promoted in the SSLP;
12. Support for developing a Statement of Common Ground establishing the principle of self-containment regarding primary and secondary school places for both the SSLP and the BCP, however request further detail on how secondary school places arising from Linthouse Lane and Cross Green would be accommodated;
13. Request that land is set aside at Linthouse Lane and/or Cross Green sufficient to accommodate GP consulting rooms to serve all residents, in line with the principle of self-containment for urban extensions;
14. Request that SSDC develop a developer contribution system which will secure sufficient funds from major housing development to deliver GP

consulting rooms in a timely manner, so that there are no negative impacts on Wolverhampton GP service provision;

15. Request that the SSLP makes clear that the Langley Road development will be required to make sufficient contributions to deliver an extra GP consulting room in south west Wolverhampton;
16. Request that green infrastructure proposals for developments on the edge of Wolverhampton are integrated with existing and potential networks in Wolverhampton.

## 7 **Energy from Waste Plant - Future Options**

Councillor Steve Evans presented the report on an update on the contractual arrangements in place for the operation of the Energy from Waste (EfW) Plant. The report outlined the short term implications of the contract end on 11 February 2023 and made recommendations to address issues associated with that end, taking into account the financial implications. This included an opportunity to enter into a partnership arrangement to deliver the short term requirements for the Wolverhampton EfW Plant.

Resolved:

1. That the proposed way forward in terms of the short term and contract end requirements for the Energy from Waste Plant identified within the body of the report be approved.
2. That entering into a formal Energy from Waste partnership arrangement as detailed within the report be endorsed.
3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change in consultation with the Director of City Housing and Environment and the Chief Operating Officer to sign an initial knowledge sharing formal tripartite arrangement and any additional ancillary agreements.
4. That Use of Budget Strategy reserve to cover initial Energy from Waste partnership expenditure be approved.
5. That authority be delegated to the Director of City Housing and Environment, Director of Finance and Chief Operating Officer to proceed with next stage option appraisal work.
6. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change in consultation with the Director of City Housing and Environment and the Chief Operating Officer to procure a new short term operate and maintain contract on final expiry of the current contract.
7. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change in consultation with the Director of City Housing and Environment and the Chief Operating Officer to agree the terms to extend the current contract if required.
8. That the contract end issues identified within the report and the proposed way forward be noted.
9. That the need to undertake further work to determine the future strategic direction in terms of the Energy from Waste Plant be noted.

8 **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 item of business as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

## **Part 2 - exempt items, closed to press and public**

The Chair reported that as stated previously the meeting was in confidential session as the information included in the report could, if released into the public domain, prejudice the financial position of the Council or its partners. As such all present are under a legal duty of confidentiality and must not disclose any confidential information - to do so would not only be a breach of the Council's codes (for councillors and employees) but also a breach of the legal duty of confidentiality.

9 **Energy from Waste Plant - Future Options**

Councillor Steve Evans presented for approval the exempt version of the report on future options for the Energy from Waste (EfW) Plant.

Resolved:

1. That the proposed way forward in terms of the short term and contract end requirements for the Energy from Waste Plant identified within the body of the report be approved.
2. That the entering into a formal Energy from Waste partnership arrangement as detailed within the report be endorsed.
3. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change in consultation with the Director of City Housing and Environment and the Chief Operating Officer to sign an initial knowledge sharing formal tripartite arrangement and any additional ancillary agreements.
4. That Use of Budget Strategy reserve to cover initial Energy from Waste partnership expenditure be approved.
5. That authority be delegated to the Director of City Housing and Environment, Director of Finance and Chief Operating Officer to proceed with next stage option appraisal work.
6. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change in consultation with the Director of City Housing and Environment and the Chief Operating Officer to procure a new short term operate and maintain contract on final expiry of the current contract.
7. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change in consultation with the Director of City Housing and Environment and the Chief Operating Officer to agree the terms to extend the current contract if required.

8. That the contract end issues identified within the report and the proposed way forward be noted.
9. That the need to undertake further work to determine the future strategic direction in terms of the Energy from Waste Plant be noted.

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<b>CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL</b>	<b>Cabinet</b> <b>19 January 2022</b>
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<b>Report title</b>	Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2022-2023 including Rent and Service Charges	
<b>Decision designation</b>	RED	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal, City Assets and Housing Councillor Ian Brookfield, Leader of the Council	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	Ross Cook, Director of City Housing and Environment Claire Nye, Director of Finance	
<b>Originating service</b>	Housing, Finance	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Jo McCoy Andrew Bryant Tel Email	Strategic Finance Service Lead – Landlord Services 01902 558433 andrew.bryant@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Strategic Executive Board	16 December 2021

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**Recommendations for decision:**

The Cabinet recommends that Council:

1. Adopts the Business Plan set out at Appendix 1 to this report as the approved Housing Revenue Account Business Plan including:
  - a. The revenue budget for 2022-2023 at Appendix 1 to this report.
  - b. The Capital Programme for 2022-2023 to 2026-2027 at Appendix 2 to this report that includes the following among the proposed investment plans;
    - £118.7 million for new build development
    - £42.6 million provision for estate remodelling
    - £50.4 million to complete the refurbishment of the Heath Town estate

- £79.8 million for programmes to high rise estates to include fire safety improvements, infrastructure replacement, retrofitting of sprinklers and external works.
2. Approves the implementation of an increase of 4.1% to social housing rents in accordance with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 and to give 28 days notice to all secure and introductory tenants of the rent increase from 1 April 2022.
  3. Approves the rates for garage rents and service charges set out in Appendix 3 to this report and formally notifies tenants.
  4. Approves Management Allowances for Managing Agents as follows;
    - Wolverhampton Homes - £40,460,000
    - Bushbury Hill Estate Management Board - £1,780,000
    - New Park Village Tenants Management Organisation - £395,000
    - Dovecotes Tenants Management Organisation - £1,148,000

**Recommendations for noting:**

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. The issues raised during the consultation have been communicated to the managing agents and will also be provided to tenants as areas for possible tenant scrutiny during 2022-2023.
2. From 1 April 2020 the Regulator of Social Housing has regulated social rents charged by Local Authorities. The Rent increase at 4.1% is chargeable in line with Government policy set out in the Rent Standard 2020.
3. The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper (2020) sets out the principles for a new, fairer deal for social housing residents, focusing on the provision of safe and decent homes, resolving complaints, empowering tenants, tackling stigma and building new homes.
4. The National Building Safety Programme of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Grenfell Inquiry pending its full outcomes, will impact upon future building safety planning. The Hackett Review 2018 makes recommendations for residential building safety and improvements to be considered as part of all future HRA asset management and improvement planning and the Building Safety Bill introduces regulation seeking greater assurance on the safety of multi-occupied buildings.
5. Asset planning in 2022-2023 will look at the future management and asset planning for non-traditional homes, including high-rise homes.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 This report presents an updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2022-2023 for recommendation to Full Council which is intended to balance the provision of new homes for rent, whilst continuing to invest in better and safer homes programmes to the existing stock and improving and redeveloping housing estates.
- 1.2 The report also provides, as an integral part of that Business Plan, a proposed HRA budget for 2022-2023, including proposed rents and service charges to take effect from 1 April 2022, and a proposed HRA Capital Programme for the period 2022-2023 to 2026-2027 for recommendation to full Council.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Since the implementation of Housing Revenue Account self-financing in 2012, the Council has been required to set out its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan. The Business Plan is monitored quarterly and reviewed annually to ensure that assumptions remain robust and resources within the plan are sufficient to meet expenditure requirements. Appendix 4 provides more detail on HRA self-financing.
- 2.2 In February 2019, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government gave a direction which set out the government's rent policy for social housing for the next five years and the requirement for the Regulator of Social Housing to undertake the regulation of Local Authority Social Housing Rents, aligning the regulation with that of private-registered providers. The resulting Rent Standard came into force on 1 April 2020.
- 2.3 Key elements of the direction are to restrict rent increases on social and affordable rent properties by up to Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1% annually from 2020 for a period of at least five years. CPI is based on the published figure for September of the previous year. The direction also allows discretion over the rent set for individual properties with a 5% flexibility for general needs stock.
- 2.4 On 29 October 2018 an announcement as part of the Government's Budget confirmed that the HRA borrowing cap was abolished completely with immediate effect. The Government issued a determination that revoked the previous determinations specifying local authority limits on indebtedness. As a result, local authorities are now able to borrow for housebuilding in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code.

## **3.0 The HRA Business Plan 2022-2023**

- 3.1 The Business Plan has been reviewed in 2021 and updated to revise planning assumptions on rent increases, interest rates, and right to buy sales. The forecast for 2022-2023 includes a reduction in rental income due to it taking longer to refurbish and re-let empty properties because of Covid-19 working practices.

- 3.2 The number of HRA dwellings is currently around 21,700; of which around 11,900 are houses and bungalows, 5,000 are in medium and high-rise blocks and the balance of around 4,800 are low rise flats.
- 3.3 Around 4,100 of these properties are non-traditional construction of which 1,100 are reaching a stage where it will be uneconomical to continue to maintain them. These properties will form part of a detailed asset strategy and proposed estate regeneration. Therefore, the focus is on maximising resources available to finance capital expenditure to balance the needs of the existing stock, improve and redevelop estates and provide much needed additional social and affordable housing units.
- 3.4 The Business Plan is based on applying a rent increase of CPI plus 1% to social and affordable rents for the next three years, commencing 1st April 2022, in line with government policy set out in the Rent Standard 2020. Based on the CPI figure of 3.1% published September 2021 the rent increase proposed for 1st April 2022 is 4.1%. The same increase is applied to garage rents.
- 3.5 Inflationary increases to budgets have been applied where appropriate and a prudent provision for increases to the bad debt provision, taking into account the challenge Universal Credit has brought to rent collection and the additional impact of Covid-19 on rent arrears.
- 3.6 In terms of service charges, modelling indicates that an increase across all service charges by CPI 3.1% will see full recovery of associated service charge costs.

#### 4.0 HRA Revenue Budget

- 4.1 The number of right-to-buy properties since discounts were increased in 2012 has had an impact on stock numbers, not wholly offset by new build and acquisition of additional stock. However, the rate of decrease has slowed in the last three years. Table 1 below illustrates the decrease in stock numbers over the last five years, an overall decrease of 3.6%.

4.2 Table 1 – Stock numbers over five years

Stock Numbers	2017-2018 Outturn	2018-2019 Outturn	2019-2020 Outturn	2020-2021 Outturn	2021-2022 Forecast
Opening	22491	22,214	21,995	21,926	21,808
Right to Buy sales	(288)	(265)	(228)	(155)	(223)
Other disposals	(5)	-	-	(9)	-
Additions	16	46	159	46	97
Closing	22,214	21,995	21,926	21,808	21,682
Cumulative reduction	(277)	(496)	(565)	(683)	(809)

- 4.3 90% of the management and maintenance budget is spent on Management agents' allowances. These have, in general, been based on a historic calculation and not linked to property numbers. An independent review of the HRA Business plan by consultancy firm Savills in January 2021 confirmed that current management and maintenance budgets within the HRA are comparable with other councils and recommended considering linking allowances to property numbers going forward. Therefore, using current allowances as a base position, future allowances will be based on property numbers with annual inflationary increases. This ensures that management and maintenance costs remain affordable over the life of the business plan.
- 4.4 The 2021-2022 inflationary pay award has not been settled but a pay increase is expected with a further award for 2022-2023 CPI inflation for November 2021 was 4.2% and may reach 5% by the end of the financial year, increasing costs to service providers. Therefore, it is proposed that management allowances per property will be increased by inflation of 3.1% to cover a blend of the increase in pay and general inflation.
- 4.5 The Council is incurring increased costs from the regulatory role which have been reflected in the revenue budget. The retained element of the budgets includes an annual budget of £70,000 for Tenants Scrutiny, a contract has been successfully awarded with service delivery due to commence from February 2022.

## **5.0 The HRA Capital Programme**

- 5.1 The Council wishes to use capital resources to maximise the provision of additional homes as far as possible but also needs to consider and prioritise the needs of the existing stock with particular emphasis on building safety, decency and energy efficiency. As part of a long term, estate-based approach to asset management the remaining life of stock will be taken into account when making investment decisions and alternatives to refurbishment considered where appropriate.
- 5.2 The HRA has sufficient resources for work programmes currently in progress but indications are that it will be challenging to meet all the required stock investment needs and fund stock decarbonisation works in the long term. It is therefore likely there will be a need in the future to prioritise investment decisions.
- 5.3 The construction industry is currently facing unprecedented market conditions with shortages of key building materials coupled with a post-lockdown surge in demand. There are also regional pressures affecting the supply chain and shortages of technical and professional staff. These factors have all combined to increase costs and restrict ability to deliver which has impacted on capital projects and budget requirements.
- 5.4 The programme includes new homes provision of £104.1 million for the next five years from 2022-2023, including £34.2 million set aside for future new build schemes. £20.0 million of this provision has been earmarked to purchase affordable housing developed by WV Living on key future schemes around the city. Proposals will come forward for

member approval on a site by site basis, including the development on the site of the former Northicote school.

- 5.5 The Council's development programme seeks to prioritise the type of housing stock developed in order to increase homes available for those with priority need under the allocations policy, alleviate homelessness and help people to live independently in their own homes.
- 5.6 Alongside the application of HRA capital borrowing and capital receipts, homes will be delivered using grant from Homes England and the Local Enterprise Partnership where appropriate, as well as applying S106 commuted sums for affordable housing arising from private developments in the city.
- 5.7 Development has begun on site for Phase 1 of the Heath Town new build development with Phases 2 and 3 planned to start in 2022-2023. The works are expected to complete in 2024 resulting in 211 new homes.
- 5.8 The Heath Town estate refurbishment managed by Wolverhampton Homes is continuing well, with the first phase (the improvement of the deck-access blocks) now complete. Work commenced on the second phase, which is the improvement of the eight tower-blocks on the estate, in September 2021. This work includes the improvement of fire safety features within the blocks and includes the installation of sprinkler systems. In response to new legislation and the Council's decarbonisation commitments, the work to the estate will include a new energy centre and more efficient heating systems for residents. The budget required to complete the works from 2022-2023 is forecast to be £39.3 million.
- 5.9 The work programmes being carried out on the high-rise estates to install external wall insulation, upgrade balconies and windows, renew the mechanical and electrical infrastructure and improve fire safety and retrofit sprinklers have combined budgets of £79.8 million.
- 5.10 Paragraph 3.3 refers to the 4,100 non-traditional built homes and the detailed Asset Management Strategy that is being prepared to address in what instances these homes will continue to be maintained or replaced, which should also provide some opportunity to make use of unallocated new build funding to bring forward additional homes. This work will be done in consultation with local communities as it progresses.
- 5.11 The programme includes a budget of £41.3 million for estate remodelling, but it is expected that a large proportion of this budget will be required to fund the development programme at New Park Village. A report was approved at Cabinet Resources Panel in February 2021, which set out the progress being made for the New Park Village development. A housing needs analysis is currently being carried out with residents, the results of which will be communicated to an Architect and Master Planning consultant to ensure that the scheme is viable for the Tenants Management Co-operative (TMC) and the right mix of properties is built to adequately meet demand for existing and future

residents who will reside on the estate. The architect procurement is likely to commence early 2022, with a potential start on site for the newbuild towards the end of 2022. TPAS have also recently been appointed as Independent Tenant and Home Advisors on the redevelopment to help draw up a Tenant and Resident's Charter and provide suitable training for tenants and residents as well as ensuring the existing community is empowered in the decision-making process.

- 5.12 The programme also includes £4.5 million for the refurbishment of Bond House, a Council owned city centre commercial building that will be converted into 34 units of supported accommodation and services for single people with a history of rough sleeping. The project will receive government grant funding of £320,000 towards the conversion costs and will be managed by Wolverhampton Homes.
- 5.13 These projects above are all reflected in the five-year HRA Capital Programme in Appendix 1C. The programme will be monitored quarterly and reviewed annually to ensure a balanced budget.
- 5.14 Early work indicates that to make provision in the longer term capital programme to reduce the carbon impact of the housing stock in line with the council's strategic priority and to meet Government targets to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, it is likely to add in the region of £700 million to future costs. External funding contributions will be sought to ensure that this does not impact on the ability of the HRA to fund additional homes over and above the requirements to replace the non-traditional properties referred to 4.10.

## **6.0 Legislative and Policy Changes**

- 6.1 On 17 November 2020 the Government published The Charter for Social Housing Residents: Social Housing White Paper, which follows on from the Social Housing Green Paper released in 2018 and sought to set out the issues facing social housing tenants and the actions that could be taken so they are safe, protected, listened to and able to influence how their homes are managed.
- 6.2 The White Paper details the new requirements for social housing landlords, one of the most significant is the strengthening of the Regulator of Social Housing, moving them from a reactive to a proactive consumer regulatory regime. This will require the proactive oversight of the Consumer Standards; regulation which aims to ensure tenants are safe in their homes, given appropriate degree of choice and protections, and can hold landlords to account. This will mean that social housing landlords will be subject to four yearly inspections as well as an annual review of newly introduced KPIs. The White Paper makes clear that the Regulator will be seeking assurance that where a Council contracts out its housing management service, to an ALMO or managing agent, as is the case in Wolverhampton, compliance with the standards remains with the Council. To ensure Councillors are provided with oversight and assurance that the standard is being met, reports are to be provided to Scrutiny Panel on a bi-annual basis from September 2021 onwards.

- 6.3 The White Paper sets out that Government will review the Decent Homes Standard to consider if it should be updated, including how it can better support the decarbonisation and energy efficiency of social homes, and improve communal and green spaces. Nationally Decent Homes funding ceased in 2012, as did the requirement for local authorities to establish alternative models for the delivery of housing and residential landlord services. There are 26 ALMO management arrangements that remain active in the UK in 2021.
- 6.4 In its commitment to supporting more households into home ownership, the White Paper makes clear Government wants to see local authorities make the most of borrowing flexibilities and to innovate to deliver more homes for the future.
- 6.5 Government has said that it will introduce the legislation needed to implement the Social Housing White Paper as soon as it is practicable. The Social Housing Regulator has advised that although the Consumer Standards cannot be implemented yet, social housing providers should not wait for regulation to look at how they can improve services and engagement with tenants.
- 6.6 Government has also published a Fire Safety Bill which puts in place an enhanced regulatory regime for all buildings, including a more stringent regime for the design, construction, day-to-day management and maintenance of higher-risk buildings including high rise. Any significant additional requirements relating to improvements to building safety (including fire safety management), energy efficiency, decency and the planning for Better Homes from 2022 will have implications for the Business Plan period.
- 6.7 The Fitness for Human Habitation Act; came into force in 2019, gives tenants a right to take action in the courts when a landlord fails to maintain a property that is fit for human habitation. The Act covers all existing tenancies in both the social and private rented sectors.
- 6.8 During 2019-2020 the Council and its managing agents led the development of an updated Housing Allocations Policy. Supported by extensive consultation, the updated policy which was adopted by the Council in February 2020, updated the Council's objectives to reflect the need to:
- A. Ensure people in the greatest housing need have the greatest opportunity to access suitable housing that best meets their needs.
  - B. Make use of a range of housing options and tenures to prevent and relieve homelessness.
  - C. Make best use of the Council's and partner registered providers' housing stock.
  - D. Manage applicants' expectations by being realistic about availability of stock, to support them in making informed choices about their housing options, and the extent to which they are able to express reasonable preference.



E. Ensure that the Council's legal duties and corporate responsibilities are met and that the policy contributes to delivering the Council's priorities.

6.9 Following significant changes to the NEC Housing IT system during 2020-21, the new Allocations Policy was applied 28 September 2021, with applicants to Homes in the City supported in moving from the previous system to the new policy.

6.10 Further developments will be made to the way Council homes are allocated to contribute to the 'best use of stock' including; scoping of an Accessible Homes Register, renewal of the Nominations Agreements with Registered Housing Providers and analysis of the use of flexible tenancies for high demand properties, such as purpose built adapted properties and houses which are four bed or larger.

## **7.0 Evaluation of alternative options**

7.1 The proposed rent increase of 4.1% is chargeable in line with Government policy set out in the Rent Standard 2020. Not applying an increase would reduce the resources available to fund services and the capital programme. The proposed service charges are consistent with existing policy to recover the cost of the service. An alternative option could be to reduce the charges, in which case the cost would not be recovered, and a subsidy required from general rents.

7.2 The Council could decide not to plan to increase capital expenditure in response to the abolishment of the HRA borrowing cap and instead use the HRA net surplus to pay off debt instead of financing borrowing. However, it would not then be using available resources to improve and increase its housing stock as well as the requirement to respond to national building safety requirements.

## **8.0 Reasons for decisions**

8.1 The Council is asked to approve the 4.1% increase to dwellings rent and garage rents and approve the proposed increase to service charges of 3.1% to enable the aspirations in the business plan to be met.

8.2 The Council is required to approve a balanced HRA budget which is based on income forecasts, maintains supervision and management expenditure, provides for depreciation and finances borrowing.

8.3 A risk matrix is attached at Appendix 5. The risk register has been updated to reflect the economic and legislative setting in which it operates.

## **9.0 Financial implications**

9.1 A full listing of non-dwelling rents and service charges is set out in Appendix 3.

9.2 The Business Plan model has been reviewed, assumptions updated and additional capital expenditure built in with the aim of providing sufficient resources to maintain

existing stock and maximising new build. The assumptions in the model were externally validated as part of an external review by Savills in January 2020.

- 9.3 By increasing the rent the HRA is expected to have sufficient resources to fund £2.4 billion of capital works required over the next 30 years, as well as meeting its management and maintenance obligations in the same period and adding to the housing stock. Inflation forecasts have been updated in line with the latest economic forecasts. Due to the possible forthcoming period of economic uncertainty it will be necessary to closely monitor the data underpinning assumptions in the model and forecast the effect of any changes. The five year revenue budget and 30 year forecasts are summarised at Appendix 1
- 9.4 The 5-year Capital Programme is reviewed quarterly and the latest version is shown in Appendix 2. This budget combines the budgets for the High Rise Sprinkler programme and Fire Safety improvements together with the budgets for High Rise Mechanical and Electrical upgrade since the work programmes are being delivered on an integrated estate based basis. As well as adding a further year to rolling replacement programmes the budget allows for the increased scope of refurbishment works at Heath Town.
- 9.5 The Council now has the freedom to borrow to increase the provision of new build housing in line with prudential indicators. HRA borrowing is monitored to ensure that the revenue surplus will always be sufficient to fund forecast interest on debt with a margin built in to allow for interest rate fluctuations.  
[JM/23122021/H]

## **10.0 Legal implications**

- 10.1 Statutory requirements as to the keeping of a Housing Revenue Account are contained in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 ('the 1989 Act'). The 1989 Act includes a duty, under Section 76 of the 1989 Act, to budget to prevent a debit balance on the HRA and to implement and review the budget.
- 10.2 Under Section 24 of the Housing Act 1985, local housing authorities have the power to "*make such reasonable charges as they may determine for the tenancy or occupation of their houses*". Section 24 also requires local authorities, from time to time, to review rents and make such changes as circumstances may require. This provision conferring discretion as to rents and charges made to occupiers, is now subject to further restrictions arising from the provisions of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016.
- 10.3 Rent and other charges are excluded from the statutory definition of matters of housing management in respect of which local authorities are required to consult their tenants pursuant to Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 and Sections 137 and 143A of the Housing Act 1996 in relation to secure, introductory and demoted tenants respectively.
- 10.4 The Council has nevertheless undertaken to consult with tenants before seeking to change rent and other charges.

- 10.5 It is further provided by Section 103 of the Housing Act 1985 in relation to secure tenancies, which also applies in respect of introductory tenancies, that its tenants are notified of variation of rent and other charges at least 28 days before the variation takes effect by service of a notice of variation.

[TC/07012022/G]

## **11.0 Equalities implications**

- 11.1 Notwithstanding the legal requirement to increase rents by no more than CPI plus 1%, there is a difficult balance to be struck in deciding the levels at which rents and services charges are set and the income required to maintain and to improve services and properties. This is based upon a thirty-year forecast which sets out indicative levels of future rental income and forecast changes to expenditure levels. The Council has always operated a very open and consultative approach to service and rent reviews.
- 11.2 Whilst usually face-to-face consultation opportunities would be provided (via the Wolverhampton Homes Get Togethers and Tenant Management Organisation facilitated opportunities), the impact of Covid-19 restrictions in the first half of 2021 and ongoing concerns regarding public events has prevented these opportunities from occurring. The Council faced similar concerns in 2020 and successfully conducted consultation online.
- 11.3 A similar approach was taken this year, on the Councils webpage (22 November – 05 December 2021), and promoted by using social media and email to 10,000 (45.8%) Council tenants. However, unlike the 2020 consultation, there was a limited response.
- 11.4 As part of Council's commitment to involving tenants and other service users in the management of housing services, City of Wolverhampton Council invites views from tenants and leaseholders in respect of rent and service charges and the Council's priorities for 2022-2023.
- 11.5 Themes arising from the consultation included concerns regarding financial struggles, the continuing impact of Covid-19 and high energy costs. Wolverhampton City Council aims to develop a co-ordinated and coherent strategic response to the increased risk of hardship faced by Wolverhampton citizens due to the far-reaching economic and social implications of Covid-19.
- 11.6 The aim of the Council's Financial Inclusion Strategy is to achieve a financially inclusive Wolverhampton where residents have access to a comprehensive range of appropriate financial and money advice services, as well as the knowledge, skills and confidence to maximise their own financial well-being.
- 11.7 The strategy aims to maximise support with essential living costs, gain optimal physical and emotional wellbeing and ensure supportive and connected communities for the people of Wolverhampton. The Financial Inclusion Strategy will provide a robust framework that will enable a shared understanding of the situation, consolidate and develop a range of initiatives to mitigate risk and implement early and preventative

action. The Strategy will provide a single document to ensure that Council Leaders, our partners and the public are regularly updated on progress

11.8 An Equality Analysis has been completed and there are no implications to consider further.

## 12.0 All other implications

12.1 The investment and improvement of the city housing stock will have a significant positive impact on the overall city environment. The strategic planning that will take place to ensure that all council homes are as energy efficient as they can be will make a major contribution to ensure that the Council meets its carbon reduction targets.

12.2 The investment and improvement of the current city housing stock and the additional housing created by new build programmes will have a significant positive impact on the health and wellbeing of current and future tenants.

12.3 As detailed in point 11, consultation opportunities have excluded face-to-face consultation with tenants this year due to Covid-19 restrictions.

## 13.0 Schedule of background papers

13.1 [Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016](#)

13.2 [Housing and Planning Act 2016](#)

13.3 [The Housing Revenue Account self-financing determinations 2012](#)

## 14.0 Appendices

14.1 Schedule of Appendices

	<b>Housing Revenue Account Business Plan</b>
1	30-year and medium term business plan
2	Capital Programme
	<b>Recommendations concerning income</b>
3	Non-dwelling rents, service charges and other rents and charges
4	<b>Background to the Housing Revenue Account</b>
5	<b>Risk analysis</b>

## Appendix 1

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## 30-year Business Plan 2021-2022 to 2050-2051

REVENUE ACCOUNT	Years	Years	Years	Years	Years	Years
	1 - 5	6-10	11 - 15	16 - 20	21 - 25	26 - 30
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
<b>Income</b>						
Dwelling Rents	(498)	(544)	(584)	(631)	(678)	(749)
Other Rents	(3)	(3)	(4)	(4)	(5)	(4)
Service Charges	(32)	(36)	(40)	(44)	(48)	(55)
	<b>(533)</b>	<b>(583)</b>	<b>(628)</b>	<b>(679)</b>	<b>(731)</b>	<b>(808)</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Management and Maintenance (net of retained surpluses)	265	284	307	329	354	379
Depreciation and provision for redemption of debt	204	211	200	195	201	224
Net Financing Costs	64	88	121	155	176	205
	<b>533</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>628</b>	<b>679</b>	<b>731</b>	<b>808</b>
<b>Balance</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-

## Appendix 1

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<b>CAPITAL ACCOUNT</b>	<b>Years 1 - 5</b>	<b>Years 6-10</b>	<b>Years 11 - 15</b>	<b>Years 16 - 20</b>	<b>Years 21 - 25</b>	<b>Years 26 - 30</b>
	<b>£M</b>	<b>£M</b>	<b>£M</b>	<b>£M</b>	<b>£M</b>	<b>£M</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Capital Expenditure	403	381	412	376	329	454
<b>Financing</b>						
Major Repairs Reserve	(104)	(118)	(122)	(131)	(141)	(151)
Grants, Contributions and Receipts	(31)	(23)	(18)	(18)	(18)	(18)
Borrowing	(268)	(240)	(272)	(227)	(170)	(285)
	<b>(403)</b>	<b>(381)</b>	<b>(412)</b>	<b>(376)</b>	<b>(329)</b>	<b>(454)</b>
<b>Balance</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-

## Appendix 1

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## Medium term Business Plan 2022-2023 – 2026-2027

REVENUE ACCOUNT	2021- 2022	2022- 2023	2023- 2024	2024- 2025	2025- 2026	2026- 2027
	Forecast	Budget	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Income</b>						
Dwelling Rents	(89,745)	(93,126)	(96,526)	(102,317)	(102,331)	(103,991)
Other Rents	(644)	(564)	(585)	(606)	(617)	(628)
Service Charges	(5,995)	(6,143)	(6,327)	(6,577)	(6,583)	(6,714)
	<b>(96,384)</b>	<b>(99,833)</b>	<b>(103,438)</b>	<b>(109,500)</b>	<b>(109,531)</b>	<b>(111,333)</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Repairs and maintenance	26,823	27,530	27,584	27,991	28,534	28,964
Supervision and management	21,014	21,400	21,769	22,025	22,453	22,791
Rents, rates and taxes	1,029	800	824	840	857	874
Increase in provision for bad debts	1,500	2,000	2,069	2,190	2,191	2,227
Depreciation of fixed assets	19,160	20,388	20,858	21,202	21,623	21,937
Capital Financing	5,336	2,990	2,289	-	-	-
Interest Payable	10,019	10,233	11,504	13,051	14,231	15,059
	<b>84,881</b>	<b>85,341</b>	<b>86,897</b>	<b>87,299</b>	<b>89,889</b>	<b>91,852</b>
<b>Surplus/deficit for the year</b>	<b>(11,503)</b>	<b>(14,492)</b>	<b>(16,541)</b>	<b>(22,201)</b>	<b>(19,642)</b>	<b>(19,481)</b>
Provision for the redemption of debt	<b>11,503</b>	<b>14,492</b>	<b>16,541</b>	<b>22,201</b>	<b>19,642</b>	<b>19,481</b>
<b>Balance</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-

## Appendix 1

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CAPITAL ACCOUNT	2021-	2022-	2023-	2024-	2025-	2026-
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Expenditure</b>						
Capital Expenditure	54,900	84,663	88,488	84,560	68,760	76,260
	<b>54,900</b>	<b>84,663</b>	<b>88,488</b>	<b>84,560</b>	<b>68,760</b>	<b>76,260</b>
<b>Financing</b>						
Major Repairs Reserve	(19,160)	(20,002)	(20,464)	(20,801)	(21,214)	(21,522)
Grants, Contributions and Receipts	(12,592)	(9,990)	(7,749)	(4,460)	(4,460)	(3,750)
Borrowing	(23,148)	(54,671)	(60,275)	(59,299)	(43,086)	(50,988)
	<b>(54,900)</b>	<b>(84,663)</b>	<b>(88,488)</b>	<b>(84,560)</b>	<b>(68,760)</b>	<b>(76,260)</b>
<b>Balance</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-





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## Appendix 2

## Capital Programme Forecasts 2021-2022 to 2026-2027

Programme Budget	2021- 2022	2022- 2023	2023- 2024	2024- 2025	2025- 2026	2026- 2027	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>New Build Programme</b>							
Tap Works site	30	-	-	-	-	-	30
Tower and Fort Works	30	-	-	-	-	-	30
Small Sites Phase 4	21	-	-	-	-	-	21
Burton Crescent	269	-	-	-	-	-	269
Heath Town New Build Phase 1	4,000	5,500	-	-	-	-	9,500
Heath Town New Build Phase 2	500	3,500	4,500	4,500	-	-	13,000
Heath Town New Build Phase 3	500	3,500	3,000	3,000	-	-	10,000
WVL Units (future)	-	-	3,000	5,000	6,000	6,000	20,000
WVL units - Prouds Lane	30	-	-	-	-	-	30
WVL units - Wednesfield	1,897	-	-	-	-	-	1,897
WVL units - Former Residential Care Home sites	47	-	-	-	-	-	47
WVL Units - Northicote	1,600	4,000	-	-	-	-	5,600
Ettingshall Road, Showell Circus and Villiers Avenue	200	3,900	3,780	-	-	-	7,880
Reedham Gardens	429	2,000	1,800	-	-	-	4,229
Additional Social Housing	2,672	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	12,672
Small Sites (future)	-	-	3,000	3,000	-	-	6,000
Inkerman St Community Housing Development	100	1,379	-	-	-	-	1,479
Bushbury Hill Community Housing Development	100	1,379	-	-	-	-	1,479
Small Sites Phase 5	2,000	3,412	-	-	-	-	5,412
Old Fallings Crescent	100	2,300	2,448				4,848
New Build Programme	-	-	2,250	2,000	5,000	5,000	14,250
<b>New Build Programme Total</b>	<b>14,525</b>	<b>32,870</b>	<b>25,778</b>	<b>19,500</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>13,000</b>	<b>118,673</b>
<b>Estate Remodelling</b>							

## Appendix 2

Programme Budget	2021- 2022	2022- 2023	2023- 2024	2024- 2025	2025- 2026	2026- 2027	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Heath Town	-	563	-	-	-	-	563
Estate Remodelling	-	2,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	9,000	38,000
Estate Remodelling – New park Village	998	1,000	-	-	-	-	1,998
Estate Remodelling – City Wide Non -Traditional	200	1,800	-	-	-	-	2,000
<b>Estate Remodelling Total</b>	<b>1,198</b>	<b>5,363</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>42,561</b>
<b>Adaptations for People with Disabilities</b>	1,500	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	7,500
<b>Disabled Adaptations Total</b>	<b>1,500</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>7,500</b>
<b>Decent Homes Stock Condition</b>							
Refurbishment of Voids	6,075	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	31,075
External Improvement Programme	600	-	-	-	-	-	600
Boiler Replacement Programme	803	680	680	680	680	680	4,203
Internal Decency Works	2,930	4,900	5,800	6,000	4,300	3,800	27,730
Heath Town - Refurb of Retained Properties	11,100	11,200	12,400	10,600	3,600	1,500	50,400
Bushbury Improvement Programme	900	220	-	-	-	-	1,120
High Rise M&E	4,500	10,300	15,000	11,700	8,600	7,800	57,900
Low and Mid Rise infrastructure	-	-	-	-	4,000	10,500	14,500
Sustainable Estates Programme	270	1,000	600	600	600	600	3,670
Non-traditional property surveys	50	150	200	500	50	50	1,000
High Rise External Works	-	-	2,400	7,000	6,200	6,300	21,900
<b>Decent Homes Stock Condition Total</b>	<b>27,228</b>	<b>33,450</b>	<b>42,080</b>	<b>42,080</b>	<b>33,030</b>	<b>36,230</b>	<b>214,098</b>
<b>Other Stock Condition Improvements</b>							
Structural Works	1,100	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	6,100
Lift and Disability Discrimination Act Improvements - High Rise	710	400	400	400	400	400	2,710

## Appendix 2

Programme Budget	2021- 2022	2022- 2023	2023- 2024	2024- 2025	2025- 2026	2026- 2027	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Fire Safety – Medium and Low Rise	2,250	2,250	1,250	1,250	-	-	7,000
Roofing Refurbishment Programme	2,750	1,600	4,200	4,200	4,000	4,000	20,750
Door Entry Security Programme	270	470	370	370	370	370	2,220
Remedial Works to non-traditional properties	-	-	650	3,000	4,200	8,500	16,350
<b>Other Stock Condition Improvements Total</b>	<b>7,080</b>	<b>5,720</b>	<b>7,870</b>	<b>10,220</b>	<b>9,970</b>	<b>14,270</b>	<b>55,130</b>
<b>Other Improvements to the Public Realm</b>							
Pathway Improvement and Safety Programme Total	209	200	200	200	200	200	1,209
<b>Service Enhancements and Miscellaneous</b>							
Right to Buy Sale Administration	60	60	60	60	60	60	360
Wolverhampton Homes Capitalised Salaries	1,650	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	10,650
City Council Capitalised Salaries	500	500	500	500	500	500	3,000
Jericho House	250	-	-	-	-	-	250
Commercial to Residential – Bond House	700	3,500	-	-	-	-	4,200
<b>Service Enhancements and Miscellaneous Total</b>	<b>3,160</b>	<b>5,860</b>	<b>2,360</b>	<b>2,360</b>	<b>2,360</b>	<b>2,360</b>	<b>18,460</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>54,900</b>	<b>84,663</b>	<b>88,488</b>	<b>84,560</b>	<b>68,760</b>	<b>76,260</b>	<b>457,631</b>

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**Appendix 3**

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**Non-dwelling rents****Garage rents**

1. The table below sets out recommended garage rents to take effect from 1 April 2022. (before VAT).
2. Under VAT rules, garages that are let along with a dwelling do not attract VAT, whereas those that are let separately do. Furthermore, exemption from VAT only extends as far as two garages per tenant/leaseholder. Therefore, there are three different levels of garage rents

	Rent per week 2021-2022 (excl VAT)	% increase 2022-2023	Rent per week 2022-2023 (excl VAT)	Rent per week 2022-2023 (incl VAT)
Dwelling tenants and leaseholders (No VAT)	£4.60	4.1	£4.79	
Dwelling tenants and leaseholders – three or more garages (VAT)	£4.60	4.1	£4.79	£5.75
Privately let garages	£6.59	4.1	£6.86	£8.23

## Appendix 3

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## Service charges

Service Charge	Services funded	Rationale for charge	Charge paid per week 2021-2022	Proposed change	Charge paid per week 2022-2023
Communal Facilities	Communal facilities in former sheltered schemes	Cost Recovery	£2.88	3.1% increase	£2.97
Concierge with CCTV (Phased)	Essential caretaking duties and remote CCTV and door entry	Cost Recovery	£9.43	3.1% increase	£9.72
Concierge with CCTV (full cost recovery)	Essential caretaking duties and remote CCTV and door entry	Cost Recovery	£9.43	3.1% increase	£9.72
Concierge with CCTV	Essential caretaking duties and remote CCTV and door entry	Cost Recovery	£9.43	3.1% increase	£9.72
Communal cleaning	Cleaning services in communal areas in certain properties	Cost Recovery	£3.12	3.1% increase	£3.22
Digital TV	Installation and maintenance of the wiring required to convey digital TV signals to certain high rise blocks	Cost Recovery	£0.62	3.1% increase	£0.64
Fencing	Replacement of boundary fencing delivered by Wolverhampton Homes. All funds raised by this charge are ring-fenced to replacement fencing	Sufficient income raised to fund fencing programme	£1.92	3.1% increase	£1.98



## Appendix 3

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## Service Charges – Heating

Service Charge	Services funded	Rationale for charge	Charge paid per week 2021-2022	Proposed change	Charge paid per week 2022-2023
District Heating maintenance	Maintenance of boilers and district heating at Heath Town	Cost Recovery	£4.33	3.1% increase	£4.46
District Heating maintenance owner occupiers*	As above	As above – annual charge	£225 p.a	3.1% increase	£231.98
District Heating maintenance	Maintenance of boilers and district heating at Hickman Estate	Cost Recovery	£4.33	3.1% increase	£4.46
Central Heating – Gas	Servicing, maintenance and replacement of gas central heating systems	Cost Recovery	£3.85	3.1% increase	£3.97
Central Heating - Electric	Servicing, maintenance and replacement of electric heating	Cost Recovery	£0.96	3.1% increase	£0.99

## District Heating Usage

The following rates are charged for the provision of heating and hot water through District Heating to recover fuel costs based upon current metered usage

Heath Town Estate	6.3p per kw/h
Lincoln & Tremont House	5.4p per kw/h
Wodensfield and William Bentley Court	6.7p per kw/h

## Appendix 3

**Supported Housing Charges**

Service Charge	Services funded	Rationale for charge	Charge paid per week 2021-2022	Proposed change	Charge paid per week 2022-2023
Digital TV	Service provision at Trent Gardens	Cost recovery	£1.27	3.1% increase	£1.31
Communal cleaning	Communal cleaning at Tap Works	Cost recovery	£3.43	3.1% increase	£3.54
Communal cleaning	Internal communal cleaning at Trent Gardens	Cost Recovery	£9.35	3.1% increase	£9.64
Communal Heat Light and Water	Tapworks/Trent Gardens	Cost Recovery	£1.70	3.1% increase	£1.75
Fencing	Tap Works boundary fencing	Provision for replacement	£0.30	3.1% increase	£0.31
Capital Replacement – Tap Works	Capital equipment in communal areas	Provision for replacement	£8.00	3.1% increase	£8.25
Capital Replacement – Trent Gardens	Capital equipment in communal areas	Provision for replacement	£16.00	3.1% increase	£16.50
Window Cleaning	Tap Works	Cost Recovery	£0.20	3.1% increase	£0.21
Window Cleaning	Trent Gardens	Cost Recovery	£0.71	3.1% increase	£0.73

### Temporary accommodation rents and charges

1. The changes for 2022-2023 relate to self-contained standard rent and service charges.

Temporary Accommodation charges	2021-2022 £pw	2022-2023 £pw
Self-Contained standard rent and service charges	68.28 – 117.37	71.06 - 122.04
Self-contained management fee	34.33	35.39
Self-contained Furniture replacement 1	25.69	26.49
Self-contained Furniture replacement 1	33.07	34.10
water/light/heat/cleaning	17.46	18.00
Total minimum charge	145.74	150.94
Total maximum charge	194.85	201.92

Properties are across the council stock, mainly on flatted estates. Rent and service charges consistent with neighbouring properties will vary dependent on location, furniture replacement charge applied dependent on property size.

### Charges for Land Enquiries

The following fees are chargeable for land enquiries;

£180 land enquiry processing fee

£350 land valuation fee

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## Appendix 4

### The Housing Revenue Account

1. Local authorities are required by the Local Government and Housing Act (1989) to maintain a ring-fenced revenue account containing expenditure and income relating to their housing landlord service. This is known as the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
2. Statute governs what may be charged and credited to the HRA, the underlying principle being that housing rents and service charges should only pay for the housing landlord service. In particular, it prevents cross subsidy of those income streams and others that the council receives, for example council tax. The main items which are shown in the HRA are:
  - Income from rents and lettings from dwellings and non-dwellings
  - Costs associated with managing and maintaining the rental stock (but not improving it or the Decent Homes programme, which are capital budget items)
  - Costs and income associated with providing landlord services to tenants such as heating and concierge services
  - The net costs of providing Housing Support services including those to Homeless Families and Carelink as well as HRA feasibility work.
3. Authorities have a duty to prepare and make available to rent payers an annual budget for the HRA in advance of the year in question. The budget must identify how all planned expenditure is to be funded. This may include the use of retained surpluses from previous years, but the HRA must never go into an overall deficit.
4. In accordance with the Council's financial procedure rules, the budget, rents and service charges must be approved by Full Council, which receives recommendations from the Cabinet.

### Administration of the HRA at Wolverhampton:

5. The Director of Environment has responsibility for the overall HRA budget, and administration of
  - The Council's Housing function, which manages central costs and recharges with the General Fund in conjunction with strategic Finance, as well as undertaking housing development, housing strategy, services for rough sleepers and other specialist support.
  - Wolverhampton Homes and the Tenant Management Organisations who manage the rent collection, day to day maintenance and in the case of Wolverhampton Homes, the programme for maintaining properties at decent homes standard, and more recently, the homeless service.

## Appendix 4

### HRA Subsidy and Self-financing

6. Until April 2012, one of the key factors in the budget preparation process was the Government's annual HRA subsidy determination. HRA subsidy was a housing resource redistribution system administered by the Department for Communities and Local Government. Authorities either paid into or received money from a national pool, based on a formula that assessed their assumed need to spend and assumed income.
7. HRA subsidy was complex and difficult to predict but had significant impacts on the funds available to an authority's HRA, which made it central to the budget process.
8. With effect from 1 April 2012, HRA subsidy was abolished. Instead of annual determinations, authorities paid or received a one-off settlement at the end of March 2012. This settlement was calculated as the net present value of forecast subsidy payments or receipts over the next 30 years. The final HRA subsidy payment was made in 2012-2013.
9. As part of the self-financing process the government imposed a debt cap of £356.8 million on the HRA, this being the higher of the Subsidy Capital Financing Requirement and the self-financing valuation. On 29 October 2018 the government announced the abolition of the debt cap with immediate effect. The government issued a determination that revoked the previous determinations specifying local authority limits on indebtedness. As a result local authorities are now able to borrow for housebuilding in accordance with the prudential code.

### Service Charges

10. Service charges are intended to pay for the receipt of services over and above the provision of a standard dwelling, and not provided to all tenants. They should meet the full cost of providing the service in question, but never exceed it.

### Garage Sites

11. HRA garages are not let exclusively to HRA tenants and garage sites do not form part of HRA ringfenced services.

### HRA Contingency Reserve

12. The contingency reserve is set aside for emergencies and other unforeseen expenditure and is the minimum level below which the council does not allow its reserves to fall when preparing budgets and medium-term forecasts. On 25 February 2012, the council approved the setting of the contingency reserve to a minimum of 5% of gross HRA turnover (rounded to the nearest million pounds).

## Appendix 5

Risk Number	Category	Risk- cause/event	Impact of Risk	Probability of Risk (P) Score 1-5	Impact of Risk (I) Score 1-5	Score (Pxl)	Red (R) Amber (A) Green (G)	Risk Control Measures	Owner	Review Period	
Page 43	1	Government Legislation	There are changes to Government policy that have in year service and budget impact.	Overspend against budget requiring either in year savings or use of housing revenue account balance.	4	5	20	R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly monitoring at service level and quarterly monitoring to Members.</li> <li>Close monitoring of developing national position and reporting to Members.</li> </ul>	Director of Finance	Quarterly
		Income and Funding	Right to Buy sales are higher than forecast.	Less revenue will be received over the life of the plan than has been forecast.	3	4	12	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prudent estimates of the level of Right to Buy sales are used in forecasting.</li> <li>Review impact of new government policies</li> <li>Weekly monitoring of sales</li> </ul>	Director of Finance	Monthly
	3	Income and Funding	Inflation rates are lower than budgeted for.	Rents cannot be raised as much as has been forecast.	2	5	10	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prudent estimates of inflation rates are used in forecasting.</li> </ul>	Director of Finance	Monthly
	4	Income and Funding	General interest rates are higher than forecast.	If interest rates are higher than forecast there will be greater interest payments.	2	5	10	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prudent estimate of interest rates are used in forecasting. The latest forecasts from the OBR are used.</li> </ul>	Director of Finance	Monthly

## Appendix 5

Risk Number	Category	Risk- cause/event	Impact of Risk	Probability of Risk (P) Score 1-5	Impact of Risk (I) Score 1-5	Score (PxI)	Red (R) Amber (A) Green (G)	Risk Control Measures	Owner	Review Period
5	Income and Funding	Higher than anticipated bad debts.	Overspend against budget requiring either in year savings or use of housing revenue account balance.	3	3	9	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Robust debt collection and recovery mechanisms in place.</li> <li>Monthly monitoring at service level and quarterly monitoring to Members.</li> <li>Monitor effect of Universal Credit.</li> </ul>	Director of Environment	Monthly
6	Financial and Budget Management	Ineffective budget management.	Overspend against budget requiring either in year savings or use of housing revenue account balance.	2	4	8	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly monitoring at service level and quarterly monitoring to Councillors.</li> <li>Monitor through Financial Issues Group</li> </ul>	Director of Finance	Monthly
7	Financial and Budget Management	The 30 year asset management plan is inaccurate.	Capital expenditure is not budgeted correctly.	2	4	8	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close interrogation of information generated from asset management systems.</li> <li>Monitor through Asset Management Group</li> </ul>	Director of Environment	Monthly



## Appendix 5

Risk Number	Category	Risk- cause/event	Impact of Risk	Probability of Risk (P)	Impact of Risk (I)	Score (Pxl)	Red (R) Amber (A) Green (G)	Risk Control Measures	Owner	Review Period
				Score 1-5	Score 1-5					
8	Financial and Budget Management	Treasury Management Activity, including increases in the cost of borrowing (e.g. LOBO loans being called) and/or reductions in the return on investments.	Overspend against budget requiring either in year savings or use of housing revenue account balance.	2	4	8	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Robust Treasury Management Strategy.</li> <li>Established and experienced Treasury Management function.</li> <li>Proactive approach to the management of the council's cash flow, on a daily basis, including seeking opportunities to take advantage of borrowing opportunities when interest rates are favourable and seeking to maximise returns on investment whilst effectively managing the risk associated with those investments.</li> <li>External treasury management advisors who provide a proactive and timely service and advice.</li> </ul>	Director of Finance	Daily
9	Financial and Budget Management	Loss of ICT facilities, e.g. due to failure of systems and/or disaster recovery arrangements or key personnel	Lack of robust financial information on which to monitor budgets, leading to in-year budget deficit requiring savings to be identified or the use of Housing Revenue Account balances	2	4	8	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ICT disaster recovery project and arrangements.</li> </ul>	Head of ICT	Monthly

## Appendix 5

Risk Number	Category	Risk- cause/event	Impact of Risk	Probability of Risk (P) Score 1-5	Impact of Risk (I) Score 1-5	Score (Pxl)	Red (R) Amber (A) Green (G)	Risk Control Measures	Owner	Review Period
10	Financial and Budget Management	HRA borrowing rises to unaffordable levels after abolition of borrowing cap	Inability to borrow to fund future capital projects results in delays or cancellations.	2	3	6	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Close monitoring of capital spend requirements, including monitoring interest cover ratio</li> </ul>	Director of Finance	Monthly
11	Income and Funding	Reduction to other income.	Overspend against budget requiring either in year savings or use of housing revenue account balance.	2	3	6	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of the 2022-2023 budget process income budgets were reviewed and revised accordingly.</li> <li>Monthly monitoring at service level and quarterly monitoring to Members.</li> <li>Monitor through Financial issues group</li> </ul>	Director of Finance	Monthly
12	Managing Agent	Performance issues requiring intervention	Income collection Void rent loss Inappropriate use of resources	2	3	6	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quarterly performance monitoring</li> <li>Financial audits</li> <li>Monitoring of financial position and performance through the Financial Issues and Delivery Plan monitoring groups</li> </ul>	Director of Environment  Director of Finance	Quarterly  Annual

## Appendix 5

Risk Number	Category	Risk- cause/event	Impact of Risk	Probability of Risk (P) Score 1-5	Impact of Risk (I) Score 1-5	Score (Pxl)	Red (R) Amber (A) Green (G)	Risk Control Measures	Owner	Review Period
12	Third Parties	Third parties and suppliers / contractors cease to trade or withdraw from the market.	Short term expensive solutions may be necessary. Requirements to undertake tender exercise. Increased ongoing cost due to reduced competition. Overspend against budget requiring either in year savings or use of housing revenue account balance.	1	4	4	=A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Departments using external service suppliers work closely with them and are kept abreast of their service and business situation. At worst this gives the council notice of emerging problems.</li> <li>Monthly monitoring at service level and quarterly monitoring to Members.</li> <li>Strategic Construction Partnership uses two different contractors.</li> </ul>	Budget Holders	Monthly
13	Income and Funding	Lower than anticipated levels of capital funding through receipts and grants.	Capital schemes are cancelled or delayed or have to be funded from revenue budgets and/or prudential borrowing resulting in an over spend against budget requiring either in year savings or use of housing revenue account balance.	2	2	4	A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Capital Programme is actively and closely managed and when so doing expenditure and income streams are continuously monitored.</li> <li>Quarterly monitoring to Members.</li> </ul>	Director of Finance	Monthly

## Appendix 5

Risk Number	Category	Risk- cause/event	Impact of Risk	Probability of Risk (P) Score 1-5	Impact of Risk (I) Score 1-5	Score (PxI)	Red (R) Amber (A) Green (G)	Risk Control Measures	Owner	Review Period
14	Financial and Budget Management	Non pay inflation increase insufficient.	Overspend against budget requiring either in year savings or use of housing revenue account balance.	1	2	2	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monthly monitoring at service level and quarterly monitoring to Members.</li> </ul>	Director of Finance	Monthly
15	Service Demands	Increased demand for services including the impact of social and demographic pressures on demand for services.	Overspend against budget requiring either in year savings or use of housing revenue account balance.	1	2	2	G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As part of the 2022-2023 budget process budgets were reviewed and revised accordingly taking account of known and anticipated increases in demand.</li> <li>Monthly monitoring at service level and quarterly monitoring to Members.</li> <li>Monitor at Financial Issues Group</li> </ul>	Budget Holders	Monthly

<b>CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL</b>	<b>Cabinet</b> <b>19 January 2022</b>
----------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------

<b>Report title</b>	<b>SEND Inspection Outcome Written Statement of Action</b>	
<b>Decision designation</b>	RED	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Dr Mike Hardacre Education, Skills and Work	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	Emma Bennett, Executive Director of Families	
<b>Originating service</b>	SEND Inclusion and Empowerment	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Brenda Wile	Deputy Director of Education
	Tel	01902 552553
	Email	brenda.wile@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Joint Children's Leadership Team	9 December 2021
	Cabinet Member Briefing	14 December 2021
	Strategic Executive Board	16 December 2021
	Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel	6 January 2022

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**Recommendation for decision:**

The Cabinet is recommended to approve:

1. The Local Area Written Statement of Action (WSOA) that is required to be submitted to Ofsted by the 16 February 2022 in response to the outcome of the Joint Inspection of the Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services and provision conducted by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) between 20 and 24 September 2021.

**Recommendations for noting:**

The Cabinet is asked to note:

- 1 That the Written Statement of Action requires some final detail to be added following feedback from Parent/Carer surveys, the Clinical Commissioning Group. The Written Statement of Action will be prepared as a final designed document prior to submission to Ofsted by the 16 February.

2. That the Written Statement of Action will also need sign off by the Clinical Commissioning Group governance structures as it is required to be developed as a co-produced document including input from a range of stakeholders following their engagement in the process through focus groups and surveys undertaken since the publication of the Inspection report and the DfE Senior Officials meeting with Local Area Leaders on the 29 November 2021.
3. The '6 Focus Areas' which will outline the actions to be taken to address the 'Areas of Significant Weakness' as identified in the SEND inspection report in Appendix 1.
4. The Joint SEND Strategy developed by the Wolverhampton SEND Partnership Board in 2020 and approved by the Cabinet and the Children and Families Together Board sets out the vision and key priorities of the Council and partners in the city to improve the lives of children and young people with SEND. Additional actions to those set out in the WSOA are also being closely monitored
5. The Strategy reflects the vision that Wolverhampton is an inclusive City where we work with children, young people, and their families with SEND so that they can achieve their full potential. It recognises that all children with SEND are individuals with aspirations to lead their own lives. While life for a child or young person with SEND and their family is anything but ordinary, the ordinary life principles are what extraordinary achievements are built on.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The report is presented to Cabinet to provide assurance to Ofsted and the DfE that the Written Statement of Action developed as the Local Area response to the SEND Inspection outcome has the support of the City Council.
- 1.2 The report also provides assurance to families that the Local Area is committed to improving services and provision for children, young people and families with SEND.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Between 20 and 24 September 2021, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) undertook an on-site inspection of Local Area SEND services in Wolverhampton to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the disability and special educational needs (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.
- 2.2 Inspectors spoke with children and young people with SEND, parents and carers, and local authority and NHS officers. They visited a range of providers and spoke to leaders, staff and governors about how they were implementing the SEND reforms. Inspectors looked at a range of information about the performance of the area, including the area's self-evaluation. Inspectors met with leaders for health, social care and education. They reviewed performance data and evidence about the local offer and joint commissioning.
- 2.3 The report of the findings was published on the 12 November 2021 (Appendix 1).
- 2.4 As a result of the findings of this inspection and in accordance with the Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has determined that a Written Statement of Action (Written Statement of Action) is required because of significant areas of weakness in the area's practice. HMCI has also determined that the local authority and the area's clinical commissioning group (CCG) are jointly responsible for submitting the WSOA to Ofsted.
- 2.5 The WSOA will outline how it will tackle the following areas of significant weakness:
  - a) weaknesses in identifying SEND when difficulties emerge for those at primary and secondary-school ages
  - b) the lack of accuracy in Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans and the delays in assessment, writing and review of those plans
  - c) the underdeveloped arrangements for jointly commissioning and providing the services that children and young people with SEND and their families need
  - d) weaknesses in implementing strategically planned co-production at every level when evaluating provision
  - e) weaknesses in the planning and support of transitions both within statutory school age and from statutory school age to post-19 and post-25

f) weaknesses in how the area shares information, including regarding support systems and the local offer.

- 2.6 It should also be noted that the inspection reported a significant number of strengths in the local area's provision of SEND services including how well the local area leaders were able to accurately self-evaluate these services and know what needs to be done to ensure timely improvements in the areas of weaknesses, building on existing action plans that were already in place prior to the inspection.
- 2.7 An initial meeting with the DfE was held on the 29 November to outline the requirements of the local area in producing the WSOA as well as the monitoring arrangements following Ofsted's agreement to the plan which is expected in early March 2022. Following approval of the WSOA the local area will work through the actions in the plan over a period of 18 months by which time there should be sufficient evidence for the regulators that the weaknesses have been addressed. The DfE will regularly monitor progress of the WSOA throughout the duration of the 18 month plan.
- 2.8 There may or may not be a further inspection visit to assess the local area arrangements as the DfE has not yet determined arrangements for monitoring of local areas with WSOA's when the current inspection framework expires in April 2022. This will be determined by central government with Local Areas advised by the DfE on next steps.
- 2.9 This item was considered as pre-decision scrutiny on 6 January 2022 by CYP Scrutiny Panel and will therefore not be available to call in once a decision is made by Cabinet.

### **3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.**

- 3.1 Cabinet are asked to consider if they accept that the actions outlined in the WSOA are those that will lead to an improvement in SEND services and provision in the Local Area.
- 3.2 Consultation with children, young people and families as well as schools and other stakeholders has been undertaken throughout the development of the WSOA through focus groups and surveys.

### **4.0 Evaluation of alternative options**

4.1 Example wording could be as follows:

- Option one would be to agree to the content of the WSOA. This would result in the WSOA being submitted to Ofsted by the required date of the 16 February 2022.
- Option two would be to not agree to the content of the WSOA and request further detail to be included. This could result in a delay to the submission of the WSOA to Ofsted.



## **5.0 Reasons for decision(s)**

- 5.1 The benefits of a favourable decision would provide confidence in the Local Area's determination to improve services and provision for SEND as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice and the SEND reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.
- 5.2 Risks in not taking the decision include increased oversight by Ofsted, the DfE and the CQC and a lack of confidence in the council and the CCG by parents, carers, children, young people and schools.

## **6.0 Financial implications**

- 6.1 At this stage there are no financial implications as the Written Statement of Action has been drafted by officers already employed by the Council and the CCG. Some local areas have opted to contract external consultants to undertake this work due to the time-consuming nature of the task however this was not considered necessary for Wolverhampton local area.
- 6.2 As the WSOA plan is delivered there may be a requirement for additional financial support for the procurement of a fit-for-purpose SEND IT system and an automated QA audit programme for EHC plans and annual reviews, in addition to that which may be available through the High Needs Block funding stream. The cost of replacing the overarching IT system has not yet been quantified as various system demonstrations and options are currently being appraised. The CYP Scrutiny panel have requested that they would fully support investment in a fit-for purpose IT system for SEND.
- 6.3 The cost of the QA audit programme for EHC plans and annual reviews including licence fees will be £25k per annum  
[TS/21122021/Q]

## **7.0 Legal implications**

- 7.1 The WSOA is necessary and in accordance with relevant legislation, under the Children's Act 2014 and Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015, following the recent SEND inspection.  
[TC/10012022/A]212021/A]

## **8.0 Equalities implications**

- 8.1 There is not a requirement for the Written Statement of Action to have an Equality Impact Assessment however during the development of the plan advice will be sought from the Equality & Diversity service within the local authority. This is particularly important since the purpose of the Written Statement of Action is to address weaknesses in provision in the local area for a vulnerable and protected group. These SEND CYP are often disproportionately affected through exclusions and can also be considered as 'hard to place' in respect of school admissions and in other areas of school and wider life opportunities. For this reason we place additional focus on the monitoring of

performance data against all areas for development within the service areas ensuring that where there are gaps there are mitigations to address these.

## **9.0 All other implications**

- 9.1 The WSOA outlines some key appointments that will be made to address the issues that led to the Key Areas for Development and these will be funded through the High Needs Block funding stream or health funding provided by the CCG.

## **10.0 Schedule of background papers**

- 10.1 [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Wolverhampton CYP Scrutiny Presentation](#) 13 October 2021.
- 10.2 [Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel Paper](#), 6 January 2022

## **11.0 Appendices**

- 11.1 Appendix 1: The report of findings by Ofsted of the Local Area's effectiveness in delivering SEND support and provision.
- 11.2 Appendix 2: Wolverhampton Local Area Written Statement of Action

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**28 October 2021**

Emma Bennett  
Director of Children's Services, Wolverhampton  
St Peter's Square  
Wolverhampton  
WV1 1SH

Sally Roberts, Chief Nursing Officer, Clinical Commissioning Group  
Brenda Wile, Local Area Nominated Officer and Deputy Director of Education

Dear Ms Bennett and Ms Roberts

### **Joint area SEND inspection in Wolverhampton**

Between 20 September 2021 and 24 September 2021, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) conducted a joint inspection of the local area of Wolverhampton to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the disability and special educational needs (SEND) reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

The inspection was led by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors from Ofsted, with a team of inspectors including a children's services inspector from the CQC.

Inspectors spoke with children and young people with SEND, parents and carers, and local authority and NHS officers. They visited a range of providers and spoke to leaders, staff and governors about how they were implementing the SEND reforms. Inspectors looked at a range of information about the performance of the area, including the area's self-evaluation. Inspectors met with leaders for health, social care and education. They reviewed performance data and evidence about the local offer and joint commissioning.

As a result of the findings of this inspection and in accordance with the Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has determined that a Written Statement of Action (WSOA) is required because of significant areas of weakness in the area's practice. HMCI has also determined that the local authority and the area's clinical commissioning group (CCG) are jointly responsible for submitting the WSOA to Ofsted.

In reaching their judgements, inspectors took account of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on SEND arrangements in the area. Inspectors considered a range of information about the impact of the pandemic and explored how the area's plans and actions had been adapted as a result.

This letter outlines the findings from the inspection, including some areas of strengths and areas for further improvement.

## Main findings

- Changes in staffing and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly affected how quickly the area has implemented the SEND reforms since 2014. Leaders, many recently appointed, are committed to catching up as soon as possible. It is evident that SEND is now appropriately high on the area's agenda. However, long-standing and embedded weaknesses and systemic failings in implementing the reforms mean that the area's aim of every young person achieving an 'ordinary life' remains some distance off.
- Children in their pre-school years have their additional needs spotted swiftly and have timely access to high-quality support. However, too many older children and young people do not, and their parents and carers told inspectors of having to fight to get their child's needs identified and then waiting too long for their child's needs to be assessed. This causes a great deal of upset for many parents and carers. In addition, these children do not make the progress they should because the support they need is not in place quickly enough.
- The quality and timeliness of education, health and care (EHC) plans are too variable, from very poor in some cases to positive and helpful in others. An annual review backlog contributes to a lack of urgency in identifying additional and changing needs. Parents and carers, school leaders, and special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) have raised concerns over the lack of detail and individuality in the plans. EHC plans do not accurately reflect the child's developing needs and desired outcomes in life. It will regularly take too long to publish the agreed final EHC plan after it has been updated. A significant number of health and education professionals said that EHC plans often did not reflect their contributions and recommendations.
- Transitions at crucial points in a child's or young person's life are frequently not well planned, nor considered. Leaders say that their work in providing high-quality transitions has been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. While transitions from early years into statutory school years are well planned, transitions within statutory school age and from school age to post-19 and post-25 are not as positive. Parents' and carers' confidence in the ability of mainstream primary and secondary schools to offer support for their children is low. Too many parents and carers do not take up the voluntary offer of Nursery placements for their two-year-old child. This means that many children with emerging additional needs start early education later than others, putting them at an immediate disadvantage. Equally, a lack of access to employment, supported internships, apprenticeships or independent life opportunities limits effective transitions into life beyond the statutory school years.

- Co-production (a way of working where children and young people, families and those that provide services work together to decide or create a service that works for them all) is not embedded in the area's approach to improving children's and young people's outcomes. During the inspection, health partners demonstrated more co-production at a strategic level than their multi-agency partners, but this pertained to health-specific issues only and not across the board in relation to implementing this core aspect of the SEND reforms. Therefore, co-production is not as widespread as it should be. This means that many families, schools, nurseries, colleges and most importantly, young people do not know how to contribute their views or share their lived experiences. Those children and young people inspectors spoke with or who responded to the surveys are unsure whether anyone hears their voice.
- Joint strategic commissioning is in its infancy but developing. The emotional health and well-being work shows that there is potential across the partnership. There are positive relationships between education, health and social care services. Leaders have identified critical areas for improvement through their accurate self-evaluation. However, systems and protocols for joint strategic commissioning still need to be further developed and consistently implemented.
- Too many families do not know where to turn for support and guidance. Many parents and carers find the online local offer too difficult to use and navigate. Lack of an accessible platform means that many parents and carers cannot access information about the variety of available services. Many children and young people inspectors spoke with have very little awareness of the website.
- Provision for children with SEND in early years is a strength. Here, services overcome initial barriers to learning by combining well to get an accurate identification and assessment of the child's needs. Families feel well supported by advice and guidance from a range of professionals across the partnership.
- Specialist settings provide high-quality provision for children and young people with a range of needs. Leaders in these settings are creative in compensating for weaknesses identified in the area partnership. Parents and carers feel well supported, and young people speak positively about what they are doing and achieving.
- The development of school outreach service three years ago is a significant strength of the local partnership. Mainstream and specialist settings are unequivocally positive about the difference this makes. This service supports 109 of the 110 schools in the area. Leaders talk of the prompt response to concerns raised and the high quality of advice and bespoke support.
- Wolverhampton Impartial Advice and Support Service (WIASS) is a 'lifeline' to many parents, carers, young people and schools. When these stakeholders are aware of this service, they speak of the life-changing effect on the quality of

provision for young people. However, too many families are not yet aware of the service and what it offers.

- The Gem child development unit provides an opportunity for professionals from health and social care to be co-located and work closely together to assess the needs of children and young people in their care.
- The implementation of the healthy child programme across Wolverhampton is helping to identify additional needs at the earliest stages of a child's life. Health visitors support families by acting swiftly to refer children to specialist services that will ultimately assess the child's needs.
- The designated medical officer (DMO), supported by leaders within the CCG, provides clear oversight of services based at the Gem unit and across Wolverhampton in the early identification of need. This ensures that practitioners based at the unit and those using its services remain at the forefront of the early help offer.
- Both the DMO and CCG now need to provide more challenge to hold all multi-agency partners to account, as inspectors did not observe any evidence of this during their review. For example, they did see evidence of health undertaking single-agency co-production, but multi-agency co-production remains in its infancy. More challenge by health to multi-agency partners regarding co-production would strengthen the overall support package available to vulnerable children and young people across the area.
- The emotional, health and well-being board (EHWB) provides ever-increasing support for children's and young people's emotional health and well-being needs across the area. This structure results in support such as, for example, Base 25, the children, young people and family support charity.

### **The effectiveness of the area in identifying children and young people's special educational needs and/or disabilities**

#### **Strengths**

- In early years, close partnerships between services mean that children with additional needs are identified and assessed quickly. In these cases, the quality of identification is positive and results in effective provision.
- The delivery of the healthy child programme by health visitors helps identify a child's needs at the earliest stages, especially at the two- to two-and-a-half-year developmental stage. It includes, for example, supporting homeless families and those families residing in refugee accommodation. Families agree that this provides them with vital support at a crucial time in their child's life.
- The Gem child development unit provides opportunities for multi-disciplinary professionals to work closely together to identify the needs of children and

young people in their care. Here services from education and health complete joint assessments, complying with the 'tell it once' principle of the reforms. Parents and carers speak positively about being able to access all the different services in the same place.

- School leaders agree that the outreach service provided by specialist settings is making a significant difference to how well they can identify, assess and meet the needs of children and young people. This service provides swift and bespoke support and advice for individual children in a range of settings. Leaders and practitioners speak highly of the quality and accessibility of this support.

### **Areas for development**

- Processes to apply for EHC plan assessments are confusing and not always understood by families. Parents and carers say that this causes unnecessary anxiety and feelings of isolation for their children and themselves. This confusion also slows and limits the effective identification of needs.
- There is currently a backlog of 200 annual reviews that have not been completed or updated within the necessary timescales. Such delays significantly affect provision planning within the area for children and young people with SEND. This ultimately affects children's and young people's outcomes.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected waiting times for therapeutic interventions in some specialist therapeutic and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). However, aside from this, waiting times remain too long. Families told inspectors that this affects their lives as they are unaware of how to obtain assistance or support for their children while they remain on long waiting lists.
- Transitions within the statutory school years from primary to secondary, secondary to further education and from further education to post-19 and post-25 are not well planned or implemented. Too many parents and carers say that this causes anxiety and has a detrimental effect on their child's education, progress and development.
- Systems to communicate with a range of stakeholders, including parents and carers, are not transparent. Too few parents, carers and professionals are aware of the developments within the area aimed at benefiting children and young people with SEND. Too many parents and carers told inspectors that they do not know how to access essential support and services.
- Area leaders, parents and carers agree that social care support does not get involved early enough in identifying needs. They also agree that this would reduce the need for more formal interventions later in a child's or young person's life. Leaders also recognise that social care contributions to EHC plans are limited and inconsistent.



## **The effectiveness of the area in meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities**

### **Strengths**

- The proportion of good primary schools and specialist settings in the area is higher than the national figure.
- Specialist settings are well equipped to provide high-quality provision for children with a range of needs. Parents, carers and children speak highly of the provision that they receive. They are proud of what these children and young people achieve.
- As a result of long-standing positive relationships between services, co-production in early years is strong. Services work well with parents and carers and settings to achieve positive outcomes for children.
- The children in care (CIC) team has altered its service specifications regarding children and young people placed outside the Wolverhampton area. For example, in some cases, CIC practitioners are supported to travel up to and over 50 miles outside of the area to undertake health assessments, recognising the additional vulnerabilities of this cohort of children and young people.
- WIASS is a valuable source of support to many parents and carers, children, young people and schools. Individual case studies tell of previously isolated parents who have benefited from the help they received from this body. However, awareness of this service is not citywide. This means that too many children, young people and their families do not access the service.
- The emotional health and well-being offer is an emerging strength across the area, although there is more to be done to communicate this to families across Wolverhampton. Multi-agency input at the EHWP helps partners better understand, for example, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and young people, so that support to meet their needs can be developed and put in place.
- The open referral system across therapies, for example, means that people with parental responsibility can self-refer to a service if they have concerns about their child's development without having to seek help first from other health partners. Consequently, children's needs can be met at the earliest opportunity. However, this is currently hampered by the lengthy waiting times to enter therapeutic interventions across some services.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, area leaders ensured that risk assessments were completed for all children and young people with EHC plans to minimise risk and reduce barriers to school attendance. Consequently, many children and



young people with EHC plans continued to attend their educational setting throughout periods of national lockdown. Different services, such as schools, nurseries and Voice4Parents, provided food packages, ICT equipment and resource packs to those who could not attend school. Area leaders established a helpline that was staffed throughout the COVID-19 pandemic; this proved a valuable resource for families.

### **Areas for development**

- As a result of inconsistencies around the EHC plan identification and assessment process, the provision in schools and settings does not always precisely meet the individual needs of the child or young person. Lack of clear expectations in the EHC plan means that barriers, at best, are only partially overcome, and progress is limited.
- Some setting leaders and multi-agency practitioners say that they find 'the hub', the online assessment, and review and recording system for EHC plans easy to access and helpful in updating documents. However, parents and carers find the hub challenging to navigate and complicated to use. Some health professionals explain that it is difficult to access. As a result, many do not use it. Area leaders are in the process of reviewing this platform.
- Parents, carers and young people say that leisure and social opportunities, particularly swimming, are difficult to access within the area. In particular, teenagers with SEND will often find it challenging to know what to do when they are not at school or college. Leaders have started to address this gap in provision. The area provided a programme of activities for children and young people during the recent summer holidays, and some teenagers accessed these activities.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively affected waiting times across several health services, including speech and language therapies (SALT), specialist CAMHS and autism spectrum disorder (ASD) pathways. In some circumstances, families are resorting to obtaining privately funded assessments and diagnoses. However, these diagnostic assessments do not always mirror the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance and extend waiting times further while additional NHS assessments are pending.
- Health leaders and professionals recognise that offers of support while children and young people wait to access services are limited or not effectively promoted to parents, carers and families. Parents and carers told inspectors of their frustration at managing their children's difficulties, often unsupported, which can affect their own and their child's mental health.
- There are too few cases of positive co-production at a strategic level. Some parents and carers and school leaders are involved in meetings about

developments in the area. However, the same parents, carers and school leaders are not confident that their contributions are heard or make a difference.

- Many parents and carers do not know about the local offer. Others find it difficult to access information via the online version, and most who have used it do not find it helpful. While some professionals feel that it helps with their work, they agree that it is difficult to navigate. Very few children or young people inspectors spoke to understand the local offer. Area leaders are in the process of reviewing the website.
- Only a few parents and carers access personal budgets. Too many parents say that they do not know about personal budgets or how to access them. Those who do know about the budgets say that the process is over-complicated and confusing.
- The uptake of children and young people accessing short breaks across the area is low. The area does not communicate the current offer effectively to parents and carers. Area leaders are aware of this and have plans to address the shortfall in the provision and how opportunities are shared.
- Despite long-term relationships between services, joint strategic commissioning is in its infancy within the area. Previous examples of joint working, such as the emotional, health and well-being strategy and individual place funding for high needs, are favourable. However, area leaders are still to transfer this success into strategic, formalised agreements. Membership of joint commissioning groups is not well considered and lacks balance between different services. Consequently, priorities for different bodies, such as education or social care, will not be adequately represented in this process.
- Area leaders, young people and their families express their concern about the limited offer for further education. The only significant offer is education in a further education college, which could be in the city or many miles away. There are too few opportunities for supported internships, apprenticeships or employment. Young people and their parents and carers agree that this is a very anxious time, and they have little idea of what the future may hold for them.

## **The effectiveness of the area in improving outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities**

### **Strengths**

- The number of young people with SEND not in education, employment or training (NEET), at post-16 and post-18, is reducing significantly. Since 2017, the number of young people who are NEET has declined from 40% to 20% currently. This NEET figure is now one of the lowest nationally compared with

other areas. During the same period, the number of young people where education, employment or training is 'not known' dropped from 25% to 8%.

- School leaders speak positively of the support of the inclusion team. As a result of focused interventions from the inclusion team, the number of exclusions has reduced over the last three years: 95% of those previously at risk of permanent exclusion and subsequently referred to the service remain in full-time education. However, this success was during the COVID-19 pandemic, where many children and young people had not attended school for an extended time.
- The number of young people with SEND completing college courses is high and increasing. Currently, 96% of all young people with SEND who start courses within the area complete them successfully. Successful completion of courses implies that the chosen pathway is appropriate to their needs.
- By the end of primary school, pupils with SEND make strong progress in reading and writing.
- Children up to age five who access health care and support are experiencing improved outcomes. Inspectors spoke with parents and carers of children who received help at nursery schools with input from, for example, speech and language practitioners and support workers. They told inspectors that their children's communication and social skills had improved noticeably over a short period at those nurseries.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Leaders have now secured a clear understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses of local provision for SEND. There are examples of area leaders engaging with services, such as Voice4Parents, to enhance their understanding of the real-life experiences of children, young people and their families. Feedback from Voice4Parents demonstrates confidence in the area's new leadership team to address weaknesses in the local provision. However, more work is needed to engage with a greater range of stakeholders in this process. Leaders are refining processes to ensure that current work across all services is brought together into one strategic plan.
- The number of young people entering supported internships, apprenticeships and/or employment is low. Leaders say that this is because few businesses within the area are willing to offer these opportunities. When school and college leaders have attempted to build these links, they have proven unsuccessful.
- In some cases, the variation in health-care provision between paediatric and adult health services negatively affects improving outcomes for young people transitioning into adulthood. Parents and carers whom inspectors spoke with said that, in the case of ASD, families feel that the support offered to their children declines as they transition, so families feel unsupported and alone.

- Young people often understand what they want to do when they are older, but the pathways to achieve this are unclear. Many young people whom inspectors spoke to have a vision for their lives beyond school or college, but too many say that no one talks to them about what they could do to achieve that vision. Consequently, access to employment, independent living and the 'ordinary life' that the area expects for children and young people is limited.

### **The inspection raises significant concerns about the effectiveness of the area**

The area is required to produce and submit a WSOA to Ofsted that explains how it will tackle the following areas of significant weakness:

- weaknesses in identifying SEND when difficulties emerge for those at primary- and secondary-school ages
- the lack of accuracy in EHC plans and the delays in assessment, writing and review of those plans
- the underdeveloped arrangements for jointly commissioning and providing the services that children and young people with SEND and their families need
- weaknesses in implementing strategically planned co-production at every level when evaluating provision; identifying strengths and weaknesses, and identifying and implementing improvements
- weaknesses in the planning and support of transitions both within statutory school age and from statutory school age to post-19 and post-25
- weaknesses in how the area shares information, including regarding support systems and the local offer.

Yours sincerely

Chris Pollitt  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

<b>Ofsted</b>	<b>Care Quality Commission</b>
James McNeillie, HMI Regional Director	Victoria Watkins Deputy Chief Inspector, Primary Medical Services, Children Health and Justice
Chris Pollitt, HMI, Lead Inspector	Daniel Carrick, CQC Inspector

Wayne Simner, HMI	
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Cc: DfE Department for Education  
Clinical commissioning group  
Director Public Health for the area  
Department of Health and Social Care  
NHS England

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Wolverhampton  
SEND Partnership Board



Joint Area SEND Inspection

in

Wolverhampton

**Written Statement of Action**

December 2021



Between 20<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC), conducted a joint inspection of the local area of Wolverhampton to judge the effectiveness of the area in implementing the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2021 the inspection report for Wolverhampton was published and on 29 November 2021 a Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) took place with DfE and NHS England and local area partners in Wolverhampton to outline their expectations enabling the local area to formally document their improvement journey through a Written Statement of Action (WSOA). As a result of the findings of this inspection and in accordance with the Children Act 2004 (Joint Area Reviews) Regulations 2015, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) has determined that a Written WSOA is required because of 6 significant areas of weakness in the local area's practice. The local authority and the area's Clinical Commissioning Group are jointly responsible for submitting the written statement to Ofsted by 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022. Following approval of the WSOA by Ofsted the document will be jointly owned by the Local Authority and the CCG who are also responsible for its implementation, with oversight from the SEND Partnership Board and the relevant leadership governance groups of the Local Authority and the CCG, both political and managerial. Other local area partners such as schools, colleges, health provider services, public health and voluntary organisations also have a key role in delivering the actions within the WSOA plan.

These areas of weakness are:

- weaknesses in identifying SEND when difficulties emerge for those at primary and secondary-school ages
- the lack of accuracy in EHC (Education Health Care) plans and the delays in assessment, writing and review of those plans
- the underdeveloped arrangements for jointly commissioning and providing the services that children and young people with SEND and their families need
- weaknesses in implementing strategically planned co-production at every level when evaluating provision, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and identifying and implementing improvements
- weaknesses in the planning and support of transitions both within statutory school age and from statutory school age to post-19 and post-25
- weaknesses in how the area shares information, including regarding support systems and the local offer.





Wolverhampton  
SEND Partnership Board

The Local Area is committed to improving support, services and provision for children, young adults, parents, and carers in Wolverhampton. We are committed to working in partnership, increasing co-production, and harnessing the expertise within the system; including parents, carers, children, young people, and the staff who work to support them.

We are also committed to ensuring that the parents, carers and the children and young people with SEND themselves are directly and transparently involved in co-producing the services that support them; so that that they receive high quality education, care, and health provision.

We will work across our wider partnership to understand experiences, improve services, and to secure the trust of families. Senior leaders in Wolverhampton as outlined above such as those within the local authority and the area's clinical commissioning group will prioritise the delivery of the actions outlined within this statement of action and will ensure robust scrutiny of progress by the SEND Partnership Board resulting in improved services and making the best use of the resources available.



Wolverhampton  
SEND Partnership Board

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\*To be completed upon final design



Wolverhampton  
SEND Partnership Board

## Section 1 – Introduction



**Wolverhampton** is an inclusive City where we work with children, young people, and their families with SEND so that they have a good quality **'ordinary life'** and achieve their full potential

### Our Vision

Wolverhampton Joint SEND Strategy 2020-23

In October 2020, Wolverhampton SEND Partnership Board published a revised and co-produced Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Strategy, in partnership with the City of Wolverhampton Council, Black Country and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group and the local Parent Carer Forum, Voice 4 Parents. The strategy was informed by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for SEND published in 2019. The strategy was agreed by the SEND Partnership Board and was subject to final sign-off through the governance of the CCG and the Local Authority. The launch of the new strategy coincided with a time of unprecedented challenge for all services, compounded by the Coronavirus pandemic. In September 2021 Wolverhampton was inspected by Ofsted and Care Quality Commission, and although many strengths were recognised as well as good work taking place across services and between services and parents and carers the inspection outcome letter identified some actions that urgently need to be addressed.

The central role that parents and carers have in shaping the experience for their children and young people with SEND is highlighted within the SEND and Inclusion Strategy. The SEND Partnership Board in Wolverhampton is also committed to working with young people and wider communities to raise aspirations and build resilience.

The Ofsted/SEND inspection outcome letter also highlighted a number of strengths within the Local Area, including:

- Leaders, many recently appointed, are committed to catching up as soon as possible. It is evident that SEND is now appropriately high on the area's agenda
- Children in their pre-school years have their additional needs spotted swiftly and have timely access to high-quality support
- The emotional health and well-being work shows that there is potential across the partnership. There are positive relationships between education, health and social care services
- Leaders have identified critical areas for improvement through their accurate self-evaluation
- Provision for children with SEND in early years is a strength
- Families feel well supported by advice and guidance from a range of professionals across the partnership
- Specialist settings provide high-quality provision for children and young people with a range of needs. Leaders in these settings are creative in compensating for weaknesses identified in the area partnership



Wolverhampton  
SEND Partnership Board

- Parents and carers feel well-supported, and young people speak positively about what they are doing and achieving
- The development of school outreach service three years ago is a significant strength of the local partnership. Mainstream and specialist settings are unequivocally positive about the difference this makes
- Wolverhampton Information, Advice and Support Service (WIAS) is a 'lifeline' to many parents, carers, young people and schools
- The Gem child development unit provides an opportunity for professionals from health and social care to be co-located and work closely together to assess the needs of children and young people in their care
- The implementation of the healthy child programme across Wolverhampton is helping to identify additional needs at the earliest stages of a child's life. Health visitors support families by acting swiftly to refer children to specialist services that will ultimately assess the child's needs
- The designated medical officer (DMO), supported by leaders within the CCG, provides clear oversight of services based at the Gem unit and across Wolverhampton in the early identification of need
- The emotional, health and well-being board (EHWB) provides ever-increasing support for children's and young people's emotional health and well-being needs across the area

These many identified strengths demonstrate that there are firm foundations and excellent practice on which to build, and there is a clear determination across the SEND partnership to ensure that services, support and provision for children, young people with SEND as well as their families is of the highest standard within the available resources.

### **SEND Improvement Programmes**

Within Wolverhampton there are multi-faceted transformation projects such as the Culture of Inclusion, Culture of Belonging and delivery of the action plan for the SEND Health Strategy underway, supported by the wider partnership in the local area which aims to transform the SEND system to ensure a better experience for children, young people with SEND and their families as well as the most efficient use of resources.

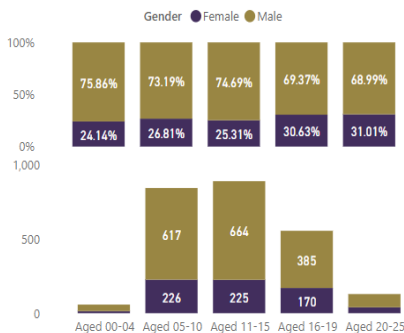
These programmes provide a platform for improvement, linked to the SEND Strategy. Many of the areas for development that the inspectors highlighted in the Ofsted report are already being addressed through the workstream activity of these projects and were outlined in the local area self-assessment provided to Ofsted prior to the inspection.



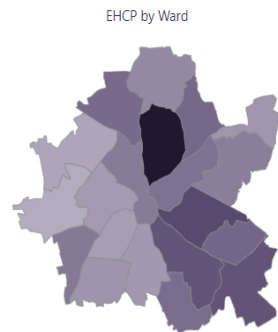
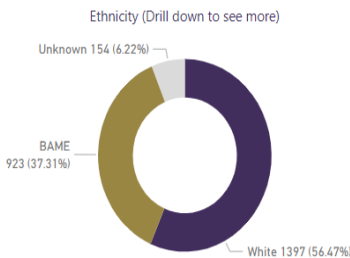
Wolverhampton SEND Partnership Board

# Section 2 – SEND Dashboard

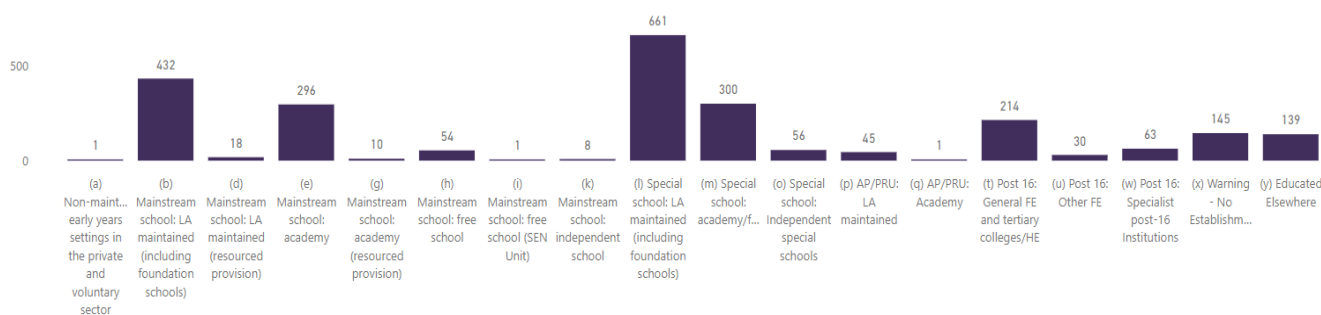
Select an option, then click go



Showing data for 2474 EHCPs  
This is as of the 20/01/2022 snapshot

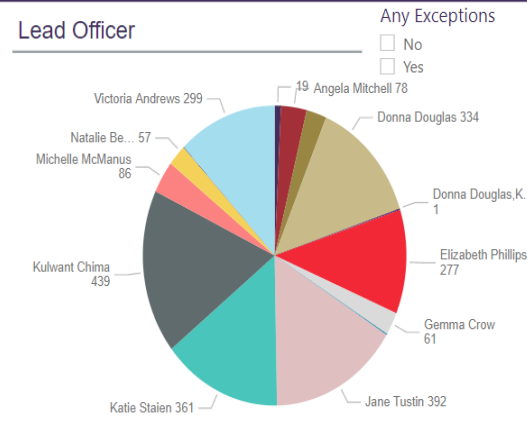
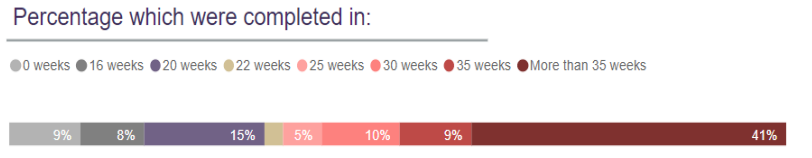
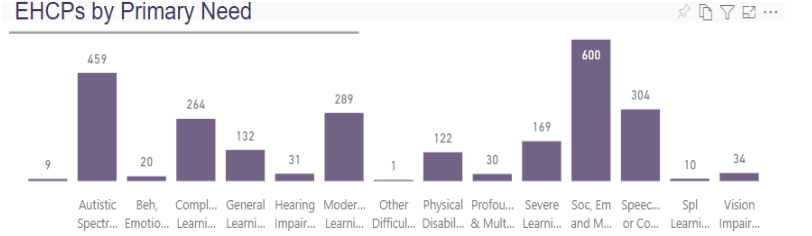
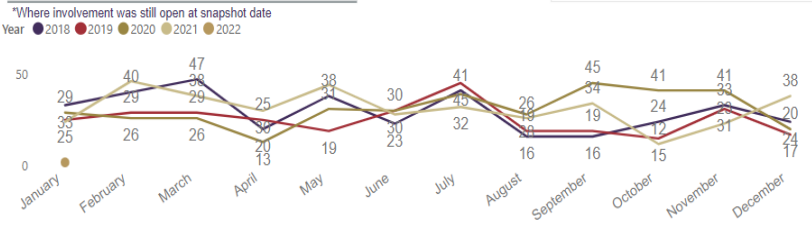


## Educational Settings



## CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL SEND Performance Dashboard EHCP Caseloads

Funding LA: 
 Resident LA: 
 Total: **2474**
 Personal Budget (Education): 
 CYP in Care:



Case Type	Count
EHCP Needs Assessment	687
EHCP Needs Assessment (LDA)	1
Initial Assessment	1541
LA Transfer (EHCP)	207
LEA Transfer (Statemented)	1
Re-Assessment	15
Transfer Mid-Ass (No Advice)	7
Transfer Mid-Ass (With Advice)	15

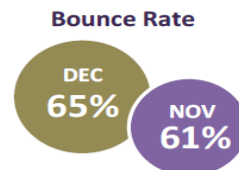
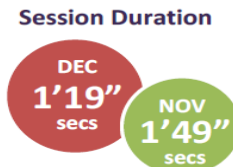
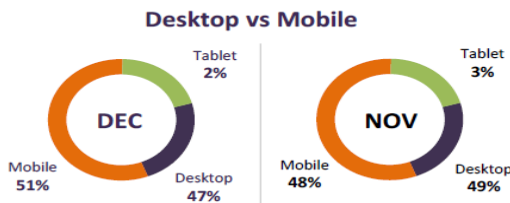
Exception	Count
Exception 1	14
Exception 2	651
Exception 3A	32
Exception 3B	46



Wolverhampton  
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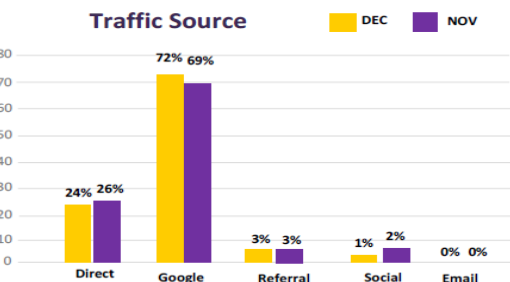
Website Performance  
**Local Offer Wolverhampton**  
December 2021

CITY OF  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
COUNCIL



**Top 10 Sections (Page Views)**

Section	December
1. Landing Page	408
2. Education, Health and Care Plans	280
3. Advice and Support	78
4. Leisure	46
5. Health	37
6. Care	24
7. SEN Assessment and Support Services	21
8. Equipment	19
9. Moving into Adult Life	11
10. Preparing for Adulthood	2



**Glossary of terms**

**Unique Visits** – Number of single visits to the site. **Page Views** – Number of pages viewed during visits. **Session Duration** – Length of a site visit. **Bounce Rate** – Those users who landed on a page and left without any further interaction. **Traffic Source** – How visitors came to the site: **Direct** go straight to the web page; **Social** come via social media; **Google** via search engines, **Referral** from other websites.

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## Section 3 – Feedback from our families

### Young People’s Feedback 2021



**Who we are...**

HY5! is a group of young people aged 11-25 who live in Wolverhampton.

We are passionate about disabled children and young people and those with special educational needs, being involved in things that affect them.

We will shine a light on what’s important, driving change where it matters most.

We do this because young people and their families are experts in their own lives.

The following show’s our views on the Written Statement of Action through using ‘Mentimeter...’



Wolverhampton  
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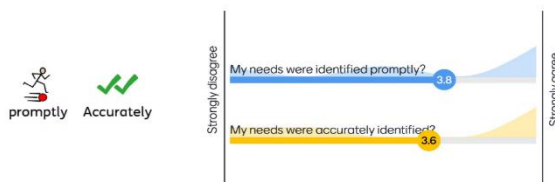
Do you understand what is meant by the graduated response?



How old were you when you were identified as having additional needs/SEN?



How much do you agree with the following statements



How could we (schools and other services) identify your needs earlier?



What were the barriers to the identification of your needs (if any)?



it was clear for me  
awareness  
okay  
draware  
earlier  
training

Which health services helped you most in meeting your needs?



How can health services better support your needs?

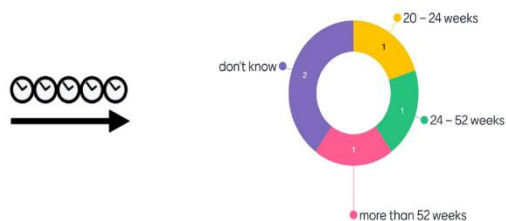
children and woman hospit  
birmingham children hospi  
areas live in best not parents  
services differ less of a battle  
birmingham hospital knows  
i get them on ok  
walsall manor hospital

What was the main reason that you, your parents or your school requested an EHC Needs assessment for a plan?

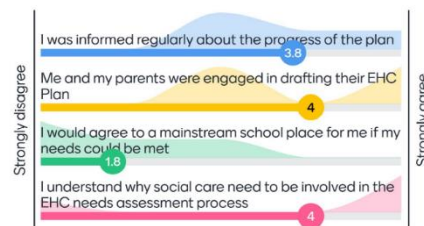


health cerebral palsy  
learning my disability  
epilepsy

Do you know how long your EHCP took?



Please mark how much you agree with the following statements:







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What is the key strength of the EHCP Process



middle  
hard allows for a bespoke plan  
it helps with most items  
know what support you need

What is the key issue with the EHCP Process

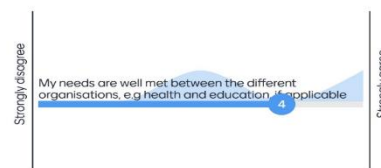


rushed takes to long for re writ  
very tough  
change time resistance  
delays with physio's part

Have you been involved in the annual review process?



How much do you agree with the following statement:



What has been your experience of changes from infants to primary school or primary to secondary or secondary to college?

rushed last min changes	takes too long for them to re write the EHCP	I've Transition from school and college and my experience has been positive
Lose concentration Takes to long for the EHCP	Positive from secondary to college better than from primary to secondary- preferred not to have tug of war	

What do you think would have helped ?

training to teachers about children's care plan  
talk through together  
nhs joint meeting more sen time less back and forth communication awareness hospital care plan

have you access adult care from health or social care?



How much do you agree with the following statements?

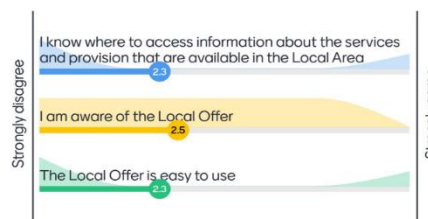


What could the local area do to make you feel more engaged?



asking our views more activites  
activities inside  
physio hydro for adults  
adult physio not immediat  
adult service harder  
fun activities  
training  
phisio awareness more access

How much do you agree with the following statements?







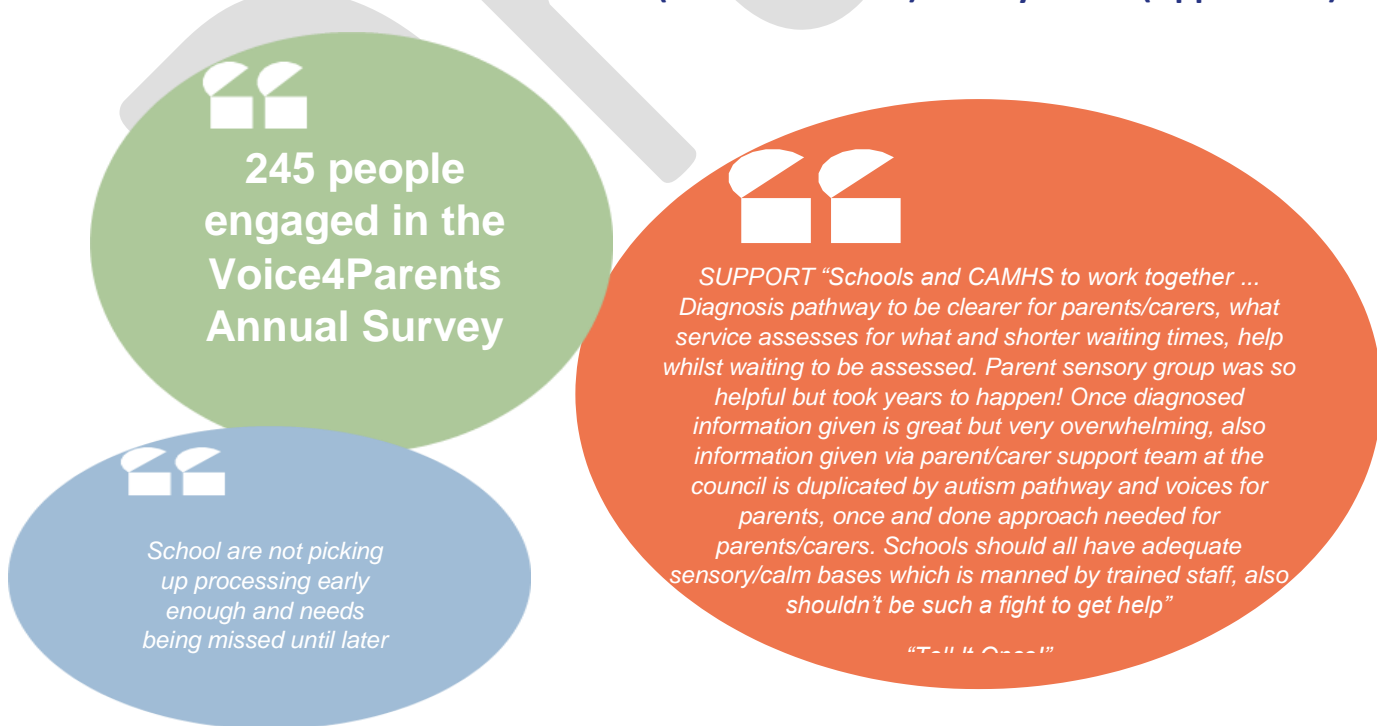
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How do you think we could improve information sharing?



HY5! Priorities in the City	Task And Progress
<p>1. HY5! Is well known by people living and working in Wolverhampton</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build relationship with SEND Partners in the local area</li> <li>• Meet with other young people and families including:</li> <li>• HY5! Event</li> <li>• YO! Inclusive activities</li> <li>• Create HY5! Logo and promotional materials Social Media campaigns HY5! Info on key websites – Local Offer, WIN, YO! IASS</li> </ul>
<p>2. A workforce that understands the needs of young people and the importance of Co-production</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop training offer for people working with children and young people with SEND. To be delivered by young people</li> <li>• Improved use of co-production and communication tools 'Shaping the Conversation/Power of Words' Project</li> <li>• HY5! To be involved in recruitment of SEND professionals</li> </ul>
<p>3. Young people are heard and included in decisions that affect them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop audit tool to show that young persons voice is clear in EHCP's, annual reviews as well as school based SEN support plans</li> <li>• Regular communications to raise awareness of opportunities for young people to get involved (Strategic Co-production)</li> <li>• Co-production Audit Tool for services to self assess see how well they co-produce</li> </ul>
<p>4. Improve the cities Outlook on SEND</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make parks and leisure more Inclusive</li> <li>• Be involved in Short Breaks Review work</li> <li>• Improve training and Job opportunities</li> <li>• HY5! Is represented on Culture of Inclusion workstreams</li> </ul>
<p>5. Young people have access to good quality information &amp; services to support them</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of Local Offer for SEND how can this be improved?</li> <li>• Develop Young Inspector Programme to rate the quality of services and support available to children and young people</li> <li>• Easy read Information and Collaboration with IASS and Advisory Board</li> </ul>
<p>6. HY5! has a regional and national presence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Link with regional and national forums including Council for disabled Children</li> </ul>

Families Feedback from the online V4P (Voice 4 Parents) Surveys 2021 (Appendix 4)





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## You said ...

### Support

35% of parents and carers feel that they are not supported by the local authority  
4% said that they feel very supported  
40% say that they receive some support  
24% feel very supported by education  
13% told us that they are not supported by education  
41% told us that they are not supported at all by social care  
3% feel very supported  
16% feel they get some support  
25% felt it was not applicable  
40% of parents and carers felt that education, health, and social care work poorly together  
22% feeling it is satisfactory  
5% feeling that the services work very well together  
12% of parents and carers feel supported by mental health services  
44% saying they are not supported at all by these services

### Covid

58% of parents and carers felt that their mental health has got worse since March 2020  
4% felt that it had got better  
53% feel that their child or young person's mental health has got worse since the pandemic  
8% feel that it has got better  
49% of parents and carers felt their general wellbeing had got worse since March 2020  
3% said it had got better  
45% said that their child or young person's general wellbeing had got worse  
3% feeling it had got better

### With the easing of the lockdown restrictions:

25% of parents and carers felt that education provision had got worse  
21% reported it as having got better  
49% reported that access to health services has got worse  
7% felt it has got better  
35% of parents and carers said it had stayed the same  
27% of parents and carers felt access to social care got worse  
27% said it had stayed the same  
4% said it had got better

45% of parents and carers feel they receive some support from health  
19% saying they are not supported at all by health  
23% of parents and carers feel very supported by support groups in Wolverhampton  
29% say they are supported by these groups  
24% feel they get some support  
15% feel they are not supported at all by support groups

### Parents and carers were asked what would help them to feel more supported by services in Wolverhampton:

60% said to only have to tell their story once  
56% felt that a keyworker helps to support them  
65% would like a one stop hub where all services are coordinated from in one place  
56% felt an updated local offer would help  
69% told us that a health passport that lists the needs of their child or young person and how best to interact with them would be beneficial  
63% would feel more supported if there was a parent carer community support officer and/or group.

20% are still waiting  
2% had to wait 1 to 5 weeks  
7% had to wait 6 to 12 weeks  
4% had to wait 6 months to 8 months  
56% of parents and carers feel that family members including siblings have been impacted by mental health of the child or young person with SEND  
11% have said they were offered support

### When asked how supported parents and carers had felt during the pandemic

52% said not at all by the local authority  
23% not at all by education  
45% said not at all by health  
48% not at all by social care  
18% said not at all by support groups  
2% said they felt very supported by the local authority  
3% saying they had received some support  
17% felt very supported by education  
3% said they felt very supported by health  
32% saying they had received some support  
2% felt very supported by social care  
17% saying they had had some support  
25% felt very supported by support groups.



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### Mental Health

23% of parents and carers know what support is available in Wolverhampton for their family's mental health

47% said they didn't know what was available

28% were not sure

26% of families have been denied or didn't meet the mental health criteria when seeking support for mental health

Of those refused 8% have been offered other advice or support to help their family with

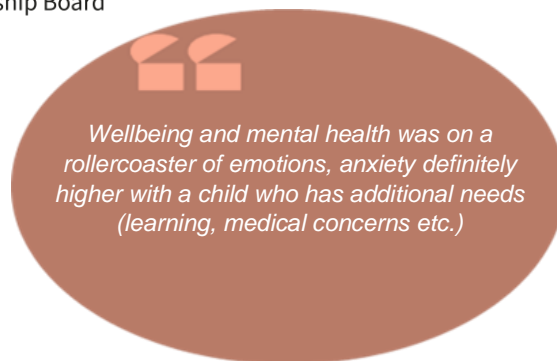
32% said they were not offered anything

43% of parents and carers have been told that their child or young person would have to go on a waiting list for mental health therapy that has been recommended to them

7% have been waiting over a year to receive this therapy

### What Parents would like to see on the Local Offer

- Support available
- Funded private therapists (SALT)
- Support groups
- Family friendly activities for the whole family
- Local groups and clubs for SEND children and young people
- Sibling support groups
- Transport for days out
- Pathways
- Transitions – schools and adulthood
- How to get medical health assessments
- Support while waiting for assessments i.e., EHCP
- Direct Payments
- Personal Budgets
- Post 16 support
- Future support and preparing for adulthood
- SEN (Special Educational Needs) childcare
- Funding
- How to get support when applying for funding e.g., DLA
- An explanation of the Local Offer
- Clear Social Care criteria
- Service processes
- Information on education and after school
- Leisure
- An easy way to access all information
- How to access services
- The mental health offers
- Easy to understand criteria's
- Signposting
- A section for parent carers to ask questions and share information e.g., best place to buy shoes for AFO
- To be more specific
- Too wordy
- All information in one place
- A link to the EHC Hub
- Legal advice



*Wellbeing and mental health was on a rollercoaster of emotions, anxiety definitely higher with a child who has additional needs (learning, medical concerns etc.)*

### Health

How well health services met the needs of children and young people:

35% of parents and carers felt that GP were poor

6% of GPs were excellent

20% of paediatricians were excellent

9% being poor

24% parents and carers felt that Occupational therapy was poor

12% told us they are excellent

15% of parents and carers felt that opticians had been excellent at meeting the needs of their child or young person

11% felt they were poor.

### Local Offer

38% of parents and carers said that they had heard of the Local Offer

59% haven't

3% were not sure

27% of parents and carers have accessed the local offer

64% haven't

8% weren't sure

Of those who had accessed the local offer:

3% found it very easy to find the

information they needed on there

26% told us that they found it difficult.



*LOCAL OFFER " ... It is not a friendly and pleasing layout. I couldn't find any information on post 16 despite clicking on the icon"*



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### Transition and Preparing for Adulthood

When asked how well parents and carers feel their child or young person is being prepared for adulthood:

6% felt they were

51% felt that they aren't

17% said maybe

12% not sure

1% of parents and carers said that their child or young person over the age of 14 with an EHCP (Education and Health Care Plan) have plans made within their annual review to start preparing them for adulthood

18% said nothing had been planned

4% were not sure

1% thought that maybe plans had been made

75% said it wasn't applicable.

4% of parents and carers feel they are having meaningful discussions with professionals about what their young person needs to be successful in adulthood

47% felt that they hadn't had these discussions

7% said they had possibly had them

6% were not sure.

2% said that services are working together across child and adult services to prepare their child or young person for adulthood

34% said that they are not and 11% didn't know

### Education

52% of parents and carers told us that they feel that the educational setting meets the need of their child or young person

26% don't feel this to be true

18% were not sure

60% reported that their child or young person is happy in their educational setting

25% told us that they aren't

10% were not sure

54% feel that the educational setting is inclusive for their child or young person

25% said it isn't

16% were not sure

### Access to services

25% of parents and carers told us they had to wait over a year for their child or young person to access occupational therapy

12% said they had to wait over a year for speech and language therapy

56% said they had to wait 1 to 2 months for their GP

34% had to wait for 1 to 2 months to access the opticians.

1% of parents and carers told us that their child or young person has received an annual health check by their GP

68% felt it was not applicable

3% were not sure

27% told us that their child or young person hadn't received an annual health check by their GP

40% of parents and carers feel they are heard by educational professionals

38% said they didn't

17% were not sure

47% of parents and carers feel that the education setting provides sufficient resources to ensure their child and young person makes good progress

30% said that they didn't

19% were not sure

24% of parents and carers feel that the educational setting is very aware of SEND

25% felt that they are somewhat aware

13% said that they are not so aware

10% feel that the educational setting is not at all aware of SEND

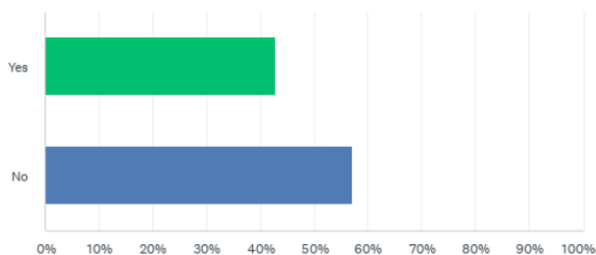




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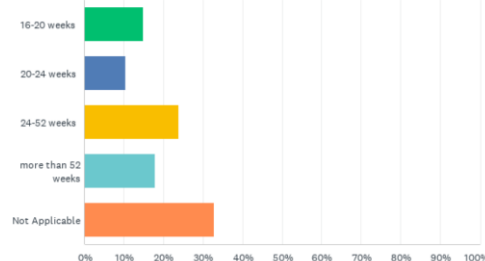
**Q12: Do you feel your child or young person's needs were accurately identified?**

Answered: 70 Skipped: 3



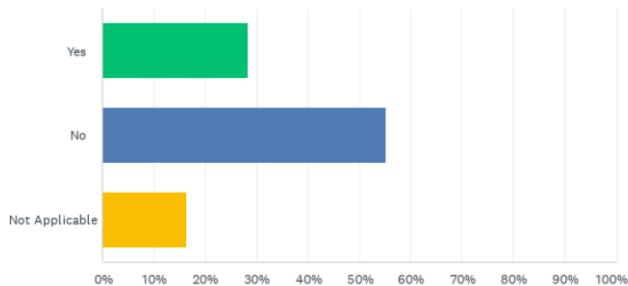
**Q14: From submission of the needs assessment request, how many weeks did it take to complete and be issued to you?**

Answered: 67 Skipped: 6



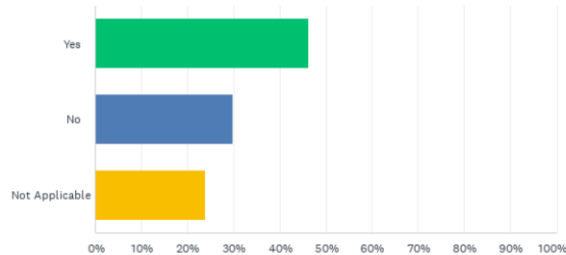
**Q15: Were you informed regularly about the progress of the plan?**

Answered: 67 Skipped: 6



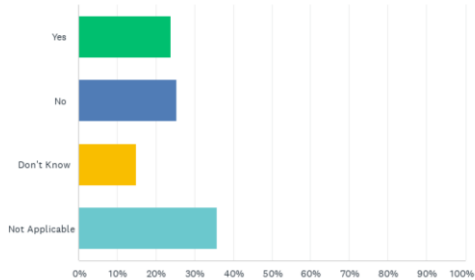
**Q16: Did you feel that you were involved in your child or young person's plan and was your voice heard?**

Answered: 67 Skipped: 6



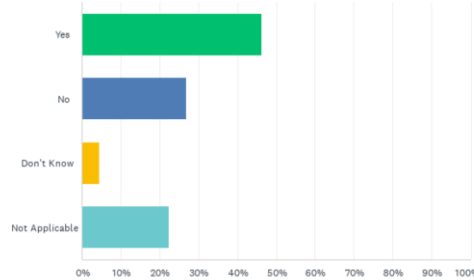
**Q17: Do you feel your child or young person was involved in their plan and was their voice heard?**

Answered: 67 Skipped: 6



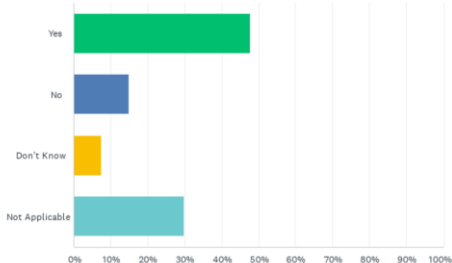
**Q18: Has your child or young person had an annual review in the last 12 months?**

Answered: 67 Skipped: 6



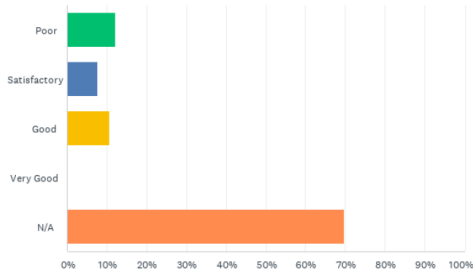
**Q19: Have you been involved in the annual review process for your child or young person's plan?**

Answered: 67 Skipped: 6



**Q24: If applicable, how would you describe transitions between child and adults services for education?**

Answered: 66 Skipped: 7

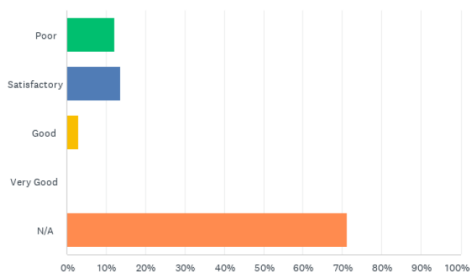




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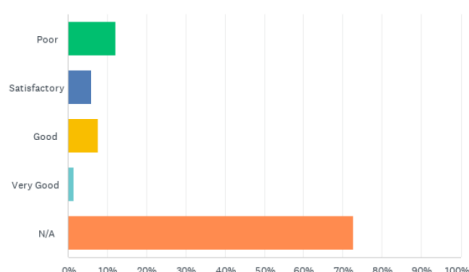
**Q25: If applicable, how would you describe transitions between child and adults health services?**

Answered: 66 Skipped: 7



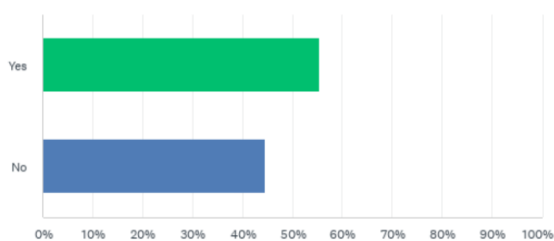
**Q26: If applicable, how would you describe transitions between child and adults social care?**

Answered: 66 Skipped: 7



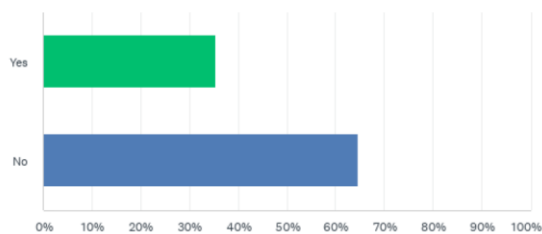
**Q28: Have you been involved in making decisions regarding your child or young person's support and provision?**

Answered: 65 Skipped: 8



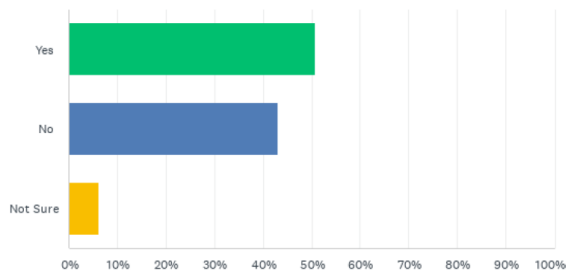
**Q29: Has your child or young person been involved in having a say about their support and provision?**

Answered: 65 Skipped: 8



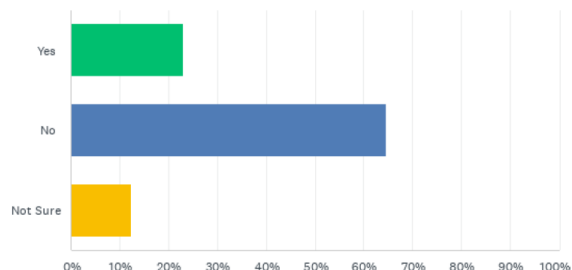
**Q31: Have you heard of the Local Offer?**

Answered: 65 Skipped: 8



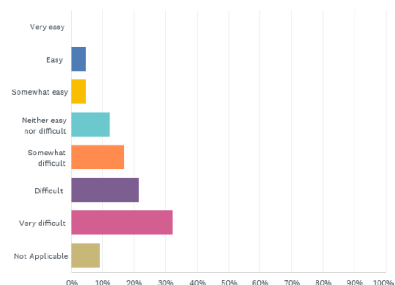
**Q32: Have you accessed the Local Offer?**

Answered: 65 Skipped: 8



**Q33: How easy do you find it to get information about what services are available and what they do or offer?**

Answered: 65 Skipped: 8



**Q34: On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being poor and 10 being excellent, please rate Wolverhampton's Local Offer**

Answered: 65 Skipped: 8





## Section 3 - Purpose of Plan

This Written Statement of Action (WSOA) will provide a framework for addressing the key issues and areas for development identified by Ofsted and the CQC in their inspection of SEND support and services in the local area of Wolverhampton in September 2021. This plan links directly with the revised SEND Strategy (2020-23) which details the required workstreams and actions to support children and young people to achieve the best possible outcomes within the available resources.

The WSOA is a dynamic document that will remain under constant review and therefore change over time as work is progressed. Progress against actions within each priority will be rated as follows:

<b>RED</b>	Action significantly delayed ( requiring intervention)
<b>AMBER</b>	Action in progress, minor delays
<b>GREEN</b>	Action on track
<b>BLUE</b>	Completed and embedded
<b>PINK</b>	Action not yet started, as dependent on or awaiting other actions to be completed first

The RAG rating above will be used as part of the monitoring process going forward which will be undertaken by the Wolverhampton SEND Partnership Board.

At the start of the improvement journey some significant issues required immediate action and have either been completed or are underway at the point of submission of this WSOA. Milestone completion dates will be included in the WSOA as the plan is monitored, which will act as a critical measure over the next 18 months.

Wherever quantifiable, percentages of improvement will be recorded within the progress columns along with milestone measures and a narrative to explain the journey towards completing the actions.

Impact measures will also be quantified where appropriate, for example, percentage of parental satisfaction as the actions are delivered and become embedded.



## **Section 4 – Wolverhampton’s local area response to the six areas of development**

### **AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT ONE**

To better identify SEND when difficulties emerge for those at primary and secondary-school ages.

### **AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT TWO**

To improve the accuracy in EHC plans and reduce delays in assessment, writing and review of those plans.

### **AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT THREE**

To develop and implement a joint commissioning strategy which outlines the arrangements for providing the services that children and young people with SEND and their families’ needs.

### **AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT FOUR**

To eliminate weaknesses in implementing strategically planned co-production at every level when evaluating provision; identifying strengths and weaknesses, and identifying and implementing improvements.

### **AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT FIVE**

To improve the planning and support of transitions both within statutory school age and from statutory school age to post-19 and post-25.

### **AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT SIX**

To develop better practices for the sharing of information, including regarding support systems and the local offer.

The following actions have been co-produced with young people, families and professionals across Wolverhampton to respond to the SEND Strategy, but also align to the required developments highlighted within the Written Statement of Action.

Together we will....

Area for development 1								
To better identify SEND when difficulties emerge for those at primary and secondary-school ages.								
Actions for implementation	Lead Officer	Evidence	Accountability measures	Intended outcome/Impact	Resources (Additional – A) (Existing – E)	Key Milestones	Completion date	Progress
1.1 Develop a strengthened graduated response to assist all education settings to correctly identify SEND	Principal Educational Psychologist  (Emma Thornbery)	Graduated approach published	Improved outcomes for children at SEN Support	Education settings able to correctly identify SEND, without relying on label or diagnosis, and enabled to support every child with SEND within their placement implemented.  Families have improved confidence around the support available from schools to meet child's individual need and not having to wait for diagnosis before support is in place  Appropriate and timely referrals to be made for EHC Needs Assessments	£200K inclusion grant funding (E)  Staff support for developing Graduated Response toolkit (E)  Staff support for training on Graduated Response within schools (E)	Core group to review examples and agree model/approach	October 2022	Blue
						Workshops held for each of the 4 areas of code of practice plus medical/health needs guidance.	January 2022	Green
						Core group to identify sections needed for introduction/context - agree who will draft sections.	January 2022	Green
						Share draft with core group (including YP and parents/carers) for feedback	February 2022	Pink
						Training for schools	March – July 2022	Pink
						Work with ICT on website ready version for LO	September 2022	Pink
						Implementation in schools and support services	September 2022	Pink
1.2 Develop a clear All Age Autism pathway for diagnostics and support (under and over 5) shared on the Local Offer	Head of Service Inclusion and Empowerment (Helen Bakewell)  Head of Service – Adult Service (Paula Morris)	All Age Autism Strategy	Families to have a better understanding of how to access pathway and for support to be in place while CYP are on diagnostic journey	Simple to navigate  Consistency in diagnosis decision making process  Better communication between professionals and with families – 'tell it once'	Existing resource (E)	Review previous strategy Re-establish Autism Board Review updated data Consultation on strategy Launch strategy	Feb 2022	Green

<p>1.3 Improve the waiting times for specialist therapeutic services i.e. SLT and OT and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for both new appointments and review appointments.</p>	<p>Specialist CAMHS Operational Manager (James Reeley)</p> <p>Commissioner (Sally Sandel)</p> <p>CCG (Ros Leslie)</p>	<p>Revised delivery models / service specifications for specialist therapeutic services in line with National guidelines.</p> <p>Specialist CAMHS Waiting times for new appointments and also reviews are under 18 weeks with few exceptions.</p>	<p>Quantitative and qualitative data monitoring, reported to relevant governance groups</p> <p>Monitored via Trust Performance meetings and SEND Health Steering group and subgroup meetings</p>	<p>Waiting times will be improved following the negative affects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on waiting times for therapeutic interventions in some specialist therapeutic and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Waiting times will decrease to within 18 weeks for new appointments. This will improve the experience of families which told inspectors that this affects their lives as they are unaware of how to obtain assistance or support for their children while they remain on long waiting lists.</p>	<p>WLI clinics (A)</p> <p>Recruitment of new CAMHS staff funded to address the issues of the wait for allocation to individual therapy (A)</p> <p>Seeking to spend non recurrent further money on staff for a time limited project to reduce our second waits (A)</p>	<p>Compliance with 18-week wait target</p> <p>Scope out opportunities for a CYP workstream (to include specialist therapeutic services and SEND) to be picked up through the Place-Based Partnership (One Wolverhampton) work (first meeting planned for 1 Feb 2022)</p> <p>Identify any 'quick wins' for specialist therapeutic services, whilst work is underway on a longer-term delivery model</p> <p>Review specialist therapeutic services delivery models / service specifications in line with National guidelines</p> <p>Commission specialist therapeutic services as appropriate</p>	<p>Unknown due to impact of Covid-19</p> <p>Short-, medium- and long-term dates to be determined.</p>	
<p>1.4 Ensure the capacity is fit for purpose and NICE compliant across several health services, including speech and language therapies (SALT), specialist CAMHS and autism spectrum disorder (ASD) pathways</p>	<p>Commissioner (Sally Sandel)</p> <p>Head of CAMHS Commissioning (Mags Courts)</p>	<p>Revised delivery models / service specifications for specialist therapeutic services in line with National guidelines</p>	<p>Quantitative and qualitative data monitoring, reported to relevant governance groups</p> <p>Monitored via Trust Performance meetings and SEND Health Steering group and subgroup meetings</p>	<p>Improved waiting times meaning children and young people are receiving appropriate interventions at the right time.</p> <p>Improved parent/carer and young person satisfaction</p> <p>This is important as these diagnostic assessments do not always mirror the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance and extend waiting times further while additional NHS assessments are pending.</p>	<p>(E)</p>	<p>Scope out opportunities for a CYP workstream (to include specialist therapeutic services and SEND) to be picked up through the Place-Based Partnership (One Wolverhampton) work (first meeting planned for 1 Feb 2022)</p> <p>Identify any 'quick wins' for specialist therapeutic services, whilst work is underway on a longer-term delivery model</p> <p>Review specialist therapeutic services delivery models / service specifications in line with National guidelines</p> <p>Commission specialist therapeutic services as appropriate</p>	<p>Short-, medium- and long-term dates to be determined.</p>	

1.5 Waiting times to be brought down to within NICE guidance (under 5's and over 5's and adults for ASD)	Specialist CAMHS Operational Manager (James Reeley)  (Ros Leslie)	Waiting times reduced for each service to within NICE guidelines  Waiting list reports  Revised delivery models / service specifications for specialist therapeutic services in line with National guidelines	Quantitative and qualitative data monitoring, reported to relevant governance groups  Monitored via Trust Performance meetings and SEND Health Steering group and subgroup meetings	Waiting times will be improved following the negative affects the COVID-19 pandemic has had on waiting times for therapeutic interventions in some specialist therapeutic and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). Waiting times will decrease to within 18 weeks for new appointments. This will improve the experience of families which told inspectors that this affects their lives as they are unaware of how to obtain assistance or support for their children while they remain on long waiting lists.	WLI clinics (A)	Compliance with 18-week wait target  Scope out opportunities for a CYP workstream (to include specialist therapeutic services and SEND) to be picked up through the Place-Based Partnership (One Wolverhampton) work (first meeting planned for 1 Feb 2022)  Identify any 'quick wins' for specialist therapeutic services, whilst work is underway on a longer-term delivery model  Review specialist therapeutic services delivery models / service specifications in line with National guidelines  Commission specialist therapeutic services as appropriate	Unknown due to impact of Covid-19  Short-, medium- and long-term dates to be determined.	
1.6 Have clear processes in place for signposting families to universal offer, from 0-19 services including health, LA and community services, whilst children and young people are on an existing waiting list.	Specialist CAMHS Operational Manager (James Reeley)  Deputy Chief Nurse, RWT (Nicki Ballard)  Head of Service Strengthening Families (Louise Anderson)	Signposting to appropriate services at referral, at assessment and during treatment when this is indicated.  Guide to useful services available for those on the ASC assessment pathway.  Fewer parental complaints	Black Country Partnership Foundation Trust/CCG/LA	Improved offers of support while children and young people wait for diagnosis	(E)	Updated information on Local Offer  Guide to useful services developed	Feb 2022	
1.7 Contact with families during the diagnostic process during waiting for CAMHS and ASD	Specialist CAMHS Operational Manager (James Reeley)	Regular check in with families (minimum 12 weekly)	BCPFT	Parents are reminded that we are aware they are waiting,  Risks are reviewed and families are made aware of who and how to contact in the event of a deterioration.  Review appointments offered for those waiting if a concern is highlighted that needs further triaging.	(E)	Rigorous process in place	Jan 2022	

1.8 Continue to increase the number of families participating in the 2-2.5 year old health and developmental review (ASQ).	Consultant Public Health (Bal Kaur) Senior Matron,RWT (Jane Lawrence)	More families taking up 2/2.5-year-old health check	Earlier Identification through health checks	More children identified as requiring additional support or provision earlier	Current capacity in Public Health (E)	Updated list of families not engaging in 2/2.5 year old offer regularly updated  Additional opportunities/appointments offered to families.	Ongoing	
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**Outcomes**

- Earlier identification
- Improved outcomes
- Reduced exclusions
- Schools are better connected
- Better understanding of how to access pathways and support prior to diagnosis for families
- Families feel better supported, empowered and know who to approach

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**Area for development 2**

**To improve the accuracy in EHC plans and reduce delays in assessment, writing and review of those plans.**

<b>Actions for implementation</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>Evidence</b>	<b>Accountability measures</b>	<b>Intended outcome/Impact</b>	<b>Resources (Additional – A) (Existing – E)</b>	<b>Key Milestones</b>	<b>Completion date</b>	<b>Progress</b>
2.1 Full review of existing statutory assessment processes from receipt of request for assessment to issue of plans where appropriate	Service Manager – SEND Assessment, Planning & Provision (Deborah Beasley)  Business Analyst (Misba Akhtar)	Regular update meetings (recorded) to demonstrate progress against KPIs	New ways of working piloted and assessed, where successful for feeding into revised needs assessment and EHC plan process	Improved timeliness and quality of plans  Improved parental and young people satisfaction	Current officer capacity (E)	Workshops for experts to include V4P  Visits to other LAs with best practice  Trial of new processes	April 2021	
2.2 Revised process and pathway developed	Service Manager – SEND Assessment, Planning & Provision (Deborah Beasley)  Business Analyst (Misba Akhtar)  School SEND Improvement Advisor (Anna Vrahimi)  Designated Medical Officer (Cathy Higgins)  Designated Clinical Officer (awaiting appointment)  Service Manager – Children’s Services (Lisa Whelan)	Process and pathway agreed and embedded by all partners (including health, social care, schools, settings, parent/ carers and young people)	Quality SEN support in place through Graduated Response, as well as EHC plans that accurately reflect a child’s needs with co-produced clear outcomes included for monitoring of achievement	Rollout of training and support on Graduated Support in schools through SENCos  Easily accessible information available with a clear pathway outlined for all partners and stakeholders	Current officer capacity (E)	Multi-agency workshops held	June 2022	
2.3 Revised EHC plan co-produced, with advice providers, CYP and parent/carers, and implemented	Service Manager – SEND Assessment, Planning & Provision (Deborah Beasley)	Evidence of co-production with key stakeholders	EHC plans fit for purpose and easily accessible to all service users and professionals	Improved plans that are accessible and have clear SMART targets leading to improved outcomes for children and young people	Current officer capacity (E)	Workshops with relevant stakeholders and SEND professionals	April 2022	



2.4 Implementation of evaluation process to assess parent/carer/young person satisfaction and to ensure that there is a feedback mechanism for comments related to the statutory process and the quality of plans	Head of Service Inclusion and Empowerment (Helen Bakewell)	100% of families will have the opportunity to feedback on EHC needs assessment and plan development processes with targets for improvement in satisfaction levels set	Analysis of evaluations will demonstrate improving satisfaction of families who feel listened to, heard, and fully engaged in co-production of plans. Reduction in requests for Mediation and referrals to Tribunal	Improved EHC plans that are clearly co-produced  Parental and young people satisfaction with plans	Current officer capacity (E)	Process in place to be implemented by restructured SENSTART team in place (July 2021)	September 2022	
2.5 Revised training opportunities for all staff in education, health and social care including online e-learning modules	Service Manager – SEND Assessment, Planning & Provision (Deborah Beasley)  Designated Medical Officer (Cathy Higgins)  Designated Clinical Officer (awaiting appointment)  Service Manager – Children’s Services (Lisa Whelan)	Percentage of relevant colleagues who have completed training (including current and any new staff will be 100%)	Better quality support and provision in place including high quality co-produced plans, evidenced by improved stakeholder feedback and satisfaction  Improved advice from professionals incorporated into clear, effective plans	Quality and consistency of plans improved  Timeliness of plans within legislative requirements	Current officer capacity (E)  Training through region (E)	Training to commence from February 2022	September 2022	
2.6 To agree and implement a co-produced QA framework with health, education and social care colleagues including requirements for audit and moderation panels and processes	Service Manager – SEND Assessment, Planning & Provision (Deborah Beasley)  Head of Service Inclusion and Empowerment (Helen Bakewell)	QA framework and quality standards agreed by SEND Partnership Board  Health, education and social care colleagues trained on requirements for audit and moderation panels and processes	Improved services, provision and plans acknowledged by stakeholders	Regular cycle of plans audited and moderated with improved quality and consistency across all phases  CSC (and ASC) TMs ensure SW completed SC section and the timeliness and quality of this  Preparation for Adulthood clearly incorporated into plans	QA officer dedicated to SEND services to oversee audit programme (c40k)(A)	2 cycles completed (Sept. 2021)  Reinstate Jan. 2022	March 2022	
2.7 Develop and implement a ‘Continuous Improvement and Learning Programme’	Head of Service Inclusion and Empowerment (Helen Bakewell)	Cycle of feedback and training from QA of plans in place  Bi-yearly ‘Learning from Complaints’ workshops	Audits of plans	Improved quality and timeliness of plans  Fewer parental complaints  Reduced LGO complaints and Tribunals	Existing officer capacity (E)	Cycle of workshops planned  Practice week scheduled to audit EHCPs	April 2022	
2.8 Training for plan writers, advice provision and outcomes writing in conjunction with revised	Head of Service Inclusion and Empowerment (Helen Bakewell)	Schedule of training with attendance of officers recorded	Improved, personalised SMART outcomes included in EHC plans	Consistent high-quality plans produced in timescale	Existing officer capacity (E)	Training schedule in place (Feb. 2022)	July 2022	

and improved systems and processes	Service Manager – SEND Assessment, Planning & Provision (Deborah Beasley)	Outcomes able to be easily measured with progress towards achievement clearly able to be evidenced	Plans more accessible with clear evidence of co-production					
2.9 Procurement of preferred IT solution to enable collaborative electronic EHC plan process	Head of Digital and IT (Jai Ghai)	Steering group with task and finish groups established and meeting regularly to develop clear specification  Parent/carer and partners included in development and decisions  Parent/carer and partners included in development and decisions re IT system processes with issues and mitigations recorded in meeting minutes	improved processes in place to deliver good quality EHC plans	Efficient and effective SEND IT system	Capital investment in system - £TBC	Completion of procurement exercise, implementation of new system, training completed, and system embedded	January 2023	
2.10 Ensure successful processes are in place for Health professionals to successfully input into preferred IT solution to enable collaborative electronic EHC plan process.	Designated Clinical Officer (awaiting appointment)	Attendance at planning meetings by key health professionals including the DCO to ensure health element fit for purpose  To directly input to electronic EHCP when it is rolled out	Attendance log at meetings  Link with LA accountability measures	Health professionals will use the portal once issues with the difficulty in access are resolved.	Awaiting substantive appointment of DCO (A)	In line with LA timescales	January 2023	
2.11 Delivery of a timely annual review process	Service Manager – SEND Assessment, Planning & Provision (Deborah Beasley)  Head of Service Inclusion and Empowerment (Helen Bakewell)	Co-produced revised process developed and made available to schools/ colleges, parents and carers  Regular monthly update reports on performance re annual reviews made available to strategic leaders	Annual review process/workflow improved in terms of timeliness, consistency, appropriate professionals attending reviews or submitting a timely report. Improved EHC plans secured through AR process  Improved parental satisfaction with annual review process	Improved outcomes for CYP as a result of effective annual review process feeding into EHC plans  Timeliness of annual reviews in line with Code of Practice	Existing officer capacity (E)	New templates developed and agreed  Revised processes embedded	April 2022	



2.13 Develop a strengths-based approach to EHC plans and Annual Reviews embedding values of inclusion and independence through delivery of the Local Area SEND Strategy	Head of Service Inclusion and Empowerment (Helen Bakewell)	Right support and provision at the right time, for the right children and young people in place	Increasing demand able to be met through available budget and resources  EHC plans will include information on what is working well and encourage families to build upon their unique strengths  Preparation for adulthood starts from an earlier age in the child's journey	SEN support strengthened to meet CYP's SEND needs within mainstream school wherever possible  High quality and timely EHC plans issued for those with highest levels of need	Existing officer capacity (E)	Quarterly improvement visible through monitoring of KPIs within Leadership meetings and through SEND Partnership Board	Ongoing through cycle of continuous improvement	
2.14 Implementation of the DSCO action plan	Service Manager – Children's Services (Lisa Whelan)	Engagement of SEND champions  Training and meetings with champions set up  DSCO attending regional/national workshops  Increased multi-agency engagement of partners at DCYP resource panel	Reviewed quarterly within C&YPiC Managers.  Reviewed monthly within supervision between SM/DSCO and HOS  Reviewed quarterly within CYPLT	Upskilling staff  Increased/enhanced understanding of SEND across Children's Social Care.  Increase/Enhance contribution to EHCP at referral/assessment/review stages	E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monthly SEND Champion meetings ongoing</li> <li>- Develop a SEND Champions Newsletter</li> <li>- Continue to build engagement from SEND champions</li> <li>- Further develop specific training – whilst training invites can be sent, flyers to highlight training opportunities across are routinely shared to SEND champions network with an expectation that champions are proactive in signing up to further enhance understanding/expertise.</li> <li>- DSCO to attend CDC National/Regional workshops/conferences etc ongoing</li> </ul>	Training - 31/3/22 and ongoing – The DSCO role is currently part of Service Manager role – C&YPiC and thus progress in line with significant competing demands.	
2.15 DSCO and WIASS training of Social Care SEND Champions	Service Manager – Children's Services (Lisa Whelan)  IASS Officer (Elaine Westwood)	MCA/LPS Overview completed 11/11/21 IASS/EHCP – planned Feb/March 2022	Reviewed quarterly within C&YPiC Managers.  Reviewed monthly within supervision between SM/DSCO and HOS  Reviewed quarterly within CYPLT	Upskilling staff  Increased/enhanced understanding of SEND across Children's Social Care.  Increase/Enhance contribution to EHCP at referral/assessment/review stages	E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Monthly SEND Champion meetings ongoing</li> <li>- Develop a SEND Champions Newsletter</li> <li>- Continue to build engagement from SEND champions</li> <li>- Further develop specific training – whilst training invites can be sent, flyers to highlight training opportunities across are routinely shared to SEND champions network with an expectation that champions are proactive in signing up to further enhance understanding/expertise.</li> <li>- DSCO to attend CDC National/Regional workshops/conferences etc ongoing</li> </ul>	Training - 31/3/22 and ongoing – The DSCO role is currently part of Service Manager role – C&YPiC and thus progress in line with significant competing demands.	
2.16 Highlight good EHCP	Principal Social Worker	QA Audits	Identify and share	Upskill staff to be able to	E	Cycle of workshops planned	April 2022	

practice development in CSC Excellence plan	(Jenny Rogers)		with staff teams factors that indicate 'good' 'outstanding practice'  Contribute to multi-agency audits	contribute to EHCP assessments  Develop a shared understanding of measurable outcomes for children and young people		Practice week scheduled to audit EHCPs		
2.17 Extended role of the virtual school head to include children known to social care	Head of Virtual School (Darren Martindale)	Strategic plan in place and progressing to extend role of the VSH	Attendance and Inclusion data, feedback from schools	Improve awareness and tracking of children and young people known to social care to improve educational outcomes	A – New Inclusion Manager being recruited to enable VSH to incorporate new extended responsibilities, new School Improvement Advisor (SIA) being recruited to provide quality advice to schools in line with DfE guidance	Inclusion/Attendance Manager recruited  SIA recruited  Extended role discussed at key forums with schools/social care  Conference delivered for schools and flexible training package in place	Feb 2022  Feb 2022  Feb 2022  May 2022	

#### Outcomes

- Education, Health and Care Plans meet the special educational needs of each child or young person, to secure the best possible outcomes for them across education, health and social care and, as they get older, prepare them for adulthood
- EHC needs assessments and plans establish and record the views, interests and aspirations of the parents and child or young person as well as providing a full description of the child or young person's special educational needs and any health and social care need
- There are clear outcomes within EHC plans based on the child or young person's needs and aspirations and help to prepare them for adulthood
- EHC Plans specify the provision required and how education, health and care services will work together to meet the child or young person's needs and support the achievement of the agreed outcomes
- Person-centred approaches, transparent systems and decision-making processes are used with clear lines of governance involving Education, Health and Care
- EHC plans are effective in identifying and addressing the holistic needs of children and young people
- Statutory SEND processes and decision making are fully compliant with statutory guidance (Code of Practice) and timescales
- Timeliness for all needs assessment requests and EHC Plans, begins to improve immediately
- Needs Assessments and EHC Plans are of good quality; co-produced with parents/ carers and children and young people; person- centred and outcome focused
- Parent and carer confidence and satisfaction in the system is increased through the development of a family centred approach with an identified key worker available to families as they progress through the needs assessment process and the delivery of the plan.
- The Local Offer will perform the function of a one stop shop.

Area for development 3								
To develop and implement a joint commissioning strategy which outlines the arrangements for providing the services that children and young people with SEND and their families' needs.								
Actions for implementation	Lead Officer	Evidence	Accountability measures	Intended outcome/Impact	Resources (Additional – A) (Existing – E)	Key Milestones	Completion date	Progress
3.1 Co-produce a Joint Commissioning Strategy between Local Authority and CCG	Commissioning Manager (Steven Larking)  Commissioner (Sally Sandel)	Strategy agreed by governance boards	a) 100% of colleagues aware of the areawide commitment to joint commissioning and their individual responsibilities towards the development and delivery of the strategy b) Published strategy will outline commissioning principles to maximise opportunities for aligned and joint commissioning intentions	A wide range of high-quality services jointly commissioned providing best value and parental choice and higher levels of satisfaction	To be achieved within existing resources (E)	Approval of Strategy at Strategic Commissioning Steering Group (Nov. 21) Sign off in principle at SEND Partnership Board (Dec. 2021) Full sign off and implementation (Feb. 2022) Development of Joint Strategic Commissioning Tracker from Nov. 2021	Feb 2022	
3.2 Undertake a joint baseline assessment of current commissioned SEND services and identify opportunities for joint commissioning of existing or new provision needs with an action plan prepared to address the gaps	Senior Commissioning Officer (SEND) (Mai Gibbons)  Commissioner (Sally Sandel)  Voices for Parents (Jayne Evans)	Plan in place for future commissioning activity linked to identified needs and priorities identified within JSNA	a) Services and provision match need in local area according to local intelligence b) Local offer clearly outlines services and provision available including how these can be accessed c) Information on Local Offer regarding timescales for commissioning new services	All stakeholders aware of provisions available to support CYP with SEND including details of how to apply for and access relevant services	SEND Local Offer and Communications Lead Officer (to be appointed) circa £40k (A)	a) Review of existing services commissioned (April 2022) b) Identify opportunities for joint commissioning of services, both existing and new, to meet local need (September 2022) c) Develop and implement plan for new and recommissioning services (January 2023) d) Updated information available re services on Local Offer (March 2023)	March 2023	
3.3 Identify all budgets (including EPP and Continuing care) that are allocated to services that could be jointly commissioned	Finance Manager (Terry Shaw)  Senior Commissioning Officer (SEND) (Mai Gibbons)  Commissioner (Sally Sandel)	Budgets identified	Oversight and audit of budgets to ensure fair contributions with accountable managers aware of and fulfilling their responsibilities	Resources allocated appropriately from across partnership	Funding and finance officer in post within SEND (A)  CCG finance officer (E)  LA corporate finance support (E)	Initial audit of financial contributions (Jan. 2022)  Appointment of new resource (Dec. 2022)  Embedded system for funding in place across the partnership	Sept. 2022	
3.4 Establish a format and schedule for monitoring contracts ensuring compliance and outcomes for CYP are achieved.	Senior Commissioning Officer (Mai Gibbons)	Multi agency QA group established	Regular reporting to SEND Partnership Board	Improved outcomes for CYP  KPI's monitored and challenged regularly	Multi-team officers (E)	QA monitoring group established (Sept. 2021)  Finalised QA framework agreed (Feb. 2022)	September 2022	

	Head of Service – Inclusion and Empowerment (Helen Bakewell)  Commissioner (Sally Sandel)			Best value evidenced		Data and information available (Nov. 2021)  Process embedded (April 2022)		
3.5 EPP to be included within joint commissioning strategy	Children's Commissioning Transformation Lead (Steven Larking)	EPP referenced and included within the Joint Commissioning Strategy under the Placement Commissioning section	Clear reporting to Joint Commissioning Group	To ensure that high-cost placements that require joint funding are considered as part of the joint commissioning strategy and activity.  To ensure a multi-agency understanding and involvement in	E	Draft Joint Commissioning Strategy approved at SEND Partnership Board	08/12/2021	
3.6 Consistent and appropriate attendance across all partners at joint strategic commissioning Board	Children's Commissioning Transformation Lead (Steven Larking)	Minutes and agendas from the Joint Strategic Commissioning Group	Clear reporting to Joint Strategic commissioning group and SEND Partnership Board	An engaged and meaningful group for decision making and consideration in regards joint commissioning that has meaningful involvement from all partner agencies.	E	Review attendance and decisions made after 6 months	01/06/2022	
3.7 Public Health to work with early years workforce and parent carers to encourage take up of terrific for twos placements for children with SEND	Consultant in Public Health (Bal Kaur)	Plan in place coproduced with parent carers and Terrific for Twos leads.	Reporting to Send Partnership Board and evidence of parent carer engagement.	Increase In uptake of placements from current baseline  Better understanding of barriers to accessing placements	E- with some additional resource from Public Health	Insights and engagement work.  Targeted communications on terrific for twos	Sept 2022	
<b>Outcomes</b>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To better meet children and young people's Special Educational Needs/ Disabilities through an agreed understanding of population level of need and the implementation of a joint commissioning strategic plan</li> <li>Joint commissioning activity delivered through the above plan enables the procurement of services that meet needs and provides good value for money, whilst using available resources efficiently</li> <li>Children and Young People's needs are assessed and met in a timely and purposeful manner, with health, education and social care needs identified at the earliest point and appropriate support put in place (right support, right time)</li> <li>There are clearly defined roles and responsibilities to address the health needs of CYP with special educational needs</li> <li>There is a clear, consistent and equitable outcome-based universal, targeted and specialist-level offer for children and young people with SEND</li> <li>Families are well informed about available services and provision and know how to access this support. This is reflected in service user feedback</li> </ul>								

**Area for development 4**

**To eliminate weaknesses in implementing strategically planned co-production at every level when evaluating provision; identifying strengths and weaknesses, and identifying and implementing improvements.**

Actions for implementation	Lead Officer	Evidence	Accountability measures	Intended outcome/Impact	Resources (Additional – A) (Existing – E)	Key Milestones	Completion date	Progress
4.1 Work with providers of specialist and universal provision to share the Co-Production Charter and support its implementation into those settings	Co-production and Youth Engagement Manager (Alice Vickers)  Voices for Parents (Sarah Baker)  WASS (Lucy Harris/ Elaine Westwood)	Settings awarded with co-production charter status  Training to be rolled out between March and May 2022 to promote the co-production charter	Updates to SEND Partnership board	To ensure clear 'buy in' of all stakeholders that work and support children and young people with SEN support needs	E	Award settings with #YES Co-Production Charter Status.	May 2022	
4.2 System introduced to ensure that all children are heard and feel included through engagement and participation	Participation Officer (Alison Baggs)	Relevant directorate and heads of service to attend HY5! meetings annually and when items need to be shared to inform planning  EHC plans clearly articulate the young person's voice  HY5! Directly contribute to the SEND Strategy  'Make Your Mark' to be promoted through special schools	Updates of HY5! priority plan updated through SEND board  Minutes of SEND Youth Forums which will be posted through the YO! Website and #YES website  Children and young people within Special Schools engage in Make Your Mark voting	Young person voice heard in EHCPs and wider strategic developments	E	Attend provisions and share the opportunities for Children and Young people with SEND  Establish a SEND Youth Forum  Develop links to SPB to deliver HY5! Priority plan  Open Co-production Hub  Make Your Mark Elections	Sept 2021      March 2022	
4.3 Develop process to embed wider co-production with parents/carers	Co-production and Youth Engagement Manager (V4P – Sarah Baker)	Parents will be able to input to the Culture of Inclusion via representatives from V4P, V4P will communicate actions with wider parent's support groups	V4P and IASS to monitor attendance and engagement of parent representatives	Engage and support regular wider voices from the parent community	(A)	Recruitment of Parent Participation Officer Parents to attend decision making groups	Jan 2022	



4.4 Procurement of accessible communication tools to assist co-production	Co-production and Youth Engagement Manager (Alice Vickers)	Purchase of a widget accessible tool  Purchase of training to support the use of the widget  Development of comms plan to promote the tool	Annual monitoring over 3 years in line with contractual obligations	Accessible information and language to enable engagement of families	(A)	Purchase of Widget, an online accessibility tool. Trial of Widget Development of training Communications issued to raise awareness of availability of Widget Roll out of Widget	Jan 2022	
4.5 Include celebrations of co-production within communication plan including recognition of individuals involved.	Co-production and Youth Engagement Manager (Alice Vickers)  Communications Manager Paul Brown	Comms plan developed to include raising the profile of co-productions across the city and the promotion of the YO! website	HY5!, V4P SEND Partnership Board and Comms group to monitor the comms plan	To promote the co-production and developments around SEND	(E)	Produce the Comms plan Develop SEND News Letter Deliver and monitor the plan through the Comms group	Jul 2022	
4.6 WIASS Advisory Board and Hi 5 to develop and deliver 'Total Respect Programme' to provide insight for professionals around their experiences	Participation Officer (Alison Baggs)	Target audience/number of CSC staff undertaking this training.	CSCLT to monitor and drive this.	To raise the awareness to professionals of what it is like to have additional needs living in the City of Wolverhampton	(E)	To come up with a new name for the training to reflect the view of children and young people with SEND	Mar 2022	
4.7 Provide support for workforce development in schools and to professionals around co-production and engagement with children and families.	Co-production and Youth Engagement Manager (Alice Vickers)	To train 25 practitioners in the first year	Strategic partnership with Children's services	To raise the profile and share resources with professionals to develop co-production in their establishments	(E)	Training with health and changing our lives to understand what co-production is and isn't	Jun 2022	
4.8 Extend co-production charter engagement sessions at parents/carers forum meeting	Co-production and Youth Engagement Manager (Alice Vickers)	Attend V4P engagement sessions to promote the Charter	Children Families Together Board	Parents/Carers are aware of the charter	(E)	Charter Promoted through V4P groups	Feb 2022	
4.9 Co-production event held with CYP, Families and professionals and relaunch of co-production charter	Deputy Director, Education (Brenda Wile)  Voices for Parents (Sarah Baker/Jayne Evans)  Designated Medical Officer (Cathy Higgins)	Event planned and scheduled	Voice 4 Parents	Increased of co-productions awareness amongst CYP, Families and professionals	(A)	Funding identified Event Planned Event held	March 2023	
4.10 Lived experience from CYP and Families shared at all SPB Meetings	Voices for Parents (Sarah Baker)	Young people are able to articulate their lived experience into the SEND partnership board	Discussed and recorded through SEND partnership board	Board members are reminded of who they are there for and keep the young person central to the development and	(E)	Voice of children and young people are heard at each partnership board	March 2022	

Co-production and Youth Engagement Manager (Alice Vickers)			monitoring of the strategy					
<b>Outcomes agreed</b>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Genuine collaborative working and co-design with parents, ensuring they are fully included at a strategic level.</li> </ul>								

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Area for development 5								
To improve the planning and support of transitions both within statutory school age and from statutory school age to post-19 and post-25.								
Actions for implementation	Lead Officer	Evidence	Accountability measures	Intended outcome/Impact	Resources (Additional – A) (Existing – E)	Key Milestones	Completion date	Progress
5.1 Processes to plan, support and share information together throughout transitions, when life changes for children and young people	Head of SEN Early Identification and support  (Sarah Reynolds)	Professionals will have access to a transition pathway  Reduction in suspension and exclusions in Autumn term of SEN support students  Evidence on maintaining mainstream placements for children and young people with SEND	Culture of Inclusion Program monitoring	Professionals will have access to a transition pathway that follows a graduated response from a 'common transition plan' to specialise transition plan arrangements  Young people are able to engage meaning in transitions and adulthood	(E)	Process to including the development/role of Multi-agency Transition Forum  Resource materials made available to support transition of children and young people receiving SEN support  Join regional 'Preparing for adulthood' Meeting  Development of year 9 Preparation for Adulthood Tool  Amend EHC paperwork to ensure PfA is part of the planning process	Sept 2022	
5.2 At key transition points Connexions will provide IAG through the EHC/annual review process	Lead Practitioner NEET (Niginder Kaur)  Connexions Personal Advisor (Vicky O'Connor)	Reviews attended  More links with local employers  GRS for all year 9 young people with EHCP's completed  CPP's completed for all young people at transition points  List of NEETs and unknowns provided for follow up	Professional conversation meetings  Reduction in SEND NEETs  Young people better informed  Young people and parents more aware  Reduction in number of Unknowns	Parents informed of support they can receive for their son daughter through the transition process  Greater partnership working through additional resource.  Employers open to employing young people with disabilities  Young people becoming aware of preparing for adulthood and the options open to them  Young people aware of their vocational pathway and the options open to them  Greater knowledge of destinations of young people with additional resource for NEETs	Additional Connexions PA for SEND (additional)  Dedicated college PA with SEND experience (E)	Transition at year 11 and post 16  Connexions advocacy stepped up with employers, training providers and supported employment providers to increase awareness and numbers of young people with SEND into training and employment.  Year 9 SEND will be supported by connexions to produce 'Getting Ready - Preparing for Adulthood'  Year 11 and Post-16 SEND young people will be supported to co-produce a career pathway plan with Connexions  Regular up to date data provided by Prospect Services	On-going	



5.8 Review the health processes to ensure that health can contribute to the Team Around the Child and Preparing for Adulthood processes to support transition between settings/services.	Designated Clinical Officer (awaiting appointment)	Health presence into Team around the Child meetings where transitions are planned  Preparing for Adulthood Health outcome included in EHCP's	Dip sampling of Health input into EHCP's	Transitions within the statutory school years from primary to secondary, secondary to further education and from further education to post-19 and post-25 will be well planned and implemented. Anxiety will be reduced, and a child's education, progress and development will improve.	SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) in place for Health Professionals	April 2022 SOP to be finalised  July 2022 Dip-sampling to be undertaken	September 2022	
5.9 Improve the number of LD health checks and action plans.	Commissioner (Sally Sandel)	Number of LD Annual Health Checks completed with health action plans in place for individuals aged 14-25  Individual's experience of completing the annual health check process and the benefits realised.	An increase from the 2021/22 baseline in the number of Annual Health Checks with health action plans completed for individuals aged 14-25	The variation in health-care provision between paediatric and adult health services will be reduced improving outcomes for young people transitioning into adulthood. This will address concerns of parents and carers whom inspectors spoke with said that, in the case of ASD, families feel that the support offered to their children declines as they transition, so families feel unsupported and alone.	Existing Resources	Baseline Data established for 2021/22.  Targeted work with practices to ensure LD registers are up to date and capture individuals with a LD as they turn 14.  Targeted work with individuals aged 14-25 on LD registers who have not taken up the offer of an AHC to promote benefits and encourage uptake.	March 2023	
5.10 Ensure preparing for adulthood health outcomes are included in health advice from the earliest stage.	Designated Medical Officer (Cathy Higgins)  Designated Clinical Officer (awaiting appointment)	Training for health professionals about PFA outcomes  Preparing for Adulthood Health outcomes included in EHCP's	Training records	Young people and their families will feel better prepared for adulthood	DCO – recruitment in progress	Staff training in place September 2022	March 2023	
5.11 SEND Development Lead embedded in Healthy Child programme	Senior Matron, RWT (Jane Lawrence)  Consultant in Public Health (Bal Kaur)	Recruitment to additional post within the 0-19 team at RWT	0-19 healthy child teams continue to develop their expertise and knowledge to ensure clear, consistent and equitable outcome-based universal, targeted and specialist-level offer for children and young people with SEND	Improved working across teams and schools to support transition.	Additional resources aligned to the 0-19 Healthy Child programme.	Contribution to development of pathways and improved health outcomes outlined in the WSOA	June 2022	
<b>Outcomes</b>								

- Preparation for adulthood from the earliest years is embedded
- Effective planning and support available for robust transition at all stages.
- Reduction in SEND NEETs through more proactive engagement with Connexions.

Draft

Area for development 6								
To develop better practices for the sharing of information, including regarding support systems and the local offer.								
Actions for implementation	Lead Officer	Evidence	Accountability measures	Intended outcome/Impact	Resources (Additional – A) (Existing – E)	Key Milestones	Completion date	Progress
6.1 Redevelopment of the Local Offer	Co-production and Youth Engagement Manager (Alice Vickers)  SEND Support Officer (Lauren Terry)  Digital Experience Officer (Chris Nicholls)  Head of Service – Inclusion and Empowerment (Helen Bakewell)	Relaunched Local Offer Website	CYP and Parent satisfaction rates	Local Offer content is relevant and refreshed  The Local Offer, through co-production with children, young people and families meets the needs of users.	New Platform to host the Local Offer website (A)  Recruitment of Local Offer and Communication Officer (A)  Digital Experience Team (E)	Develop clear process to ensure Local Offer content is relevant and refreshed  Review suitability of current Local Offer platform taking into account that the customers journey should be paramount.  Develop Local Offer Service Specification with young people families and providers.  Recruitment of Local Offer Development Officer  Arrange workshop with HY5, V4P, and Advisory Board to co-design branding for LO.  Redevelop the Local Offer and migrate to new platform  User testing  Launch of new Local Offer website	Jan 2022  November 2021  December 2021  February 2022  February 2022	
6.2 Put in place a rolling programme of inviting local providers and services to update their information. This to be a permanent feature of website management and Local Offer review	Local Offer & Communication Officer (awaiting appointment)	Up to date Local Offer website	Parent/carer feedback	Increased usage	Recruitment of Local Offer and Communication Officer (A)	New LO website user tested and launched  Regular programme of updates		
6.3 Raise awareness of the Local Offer	Communications Manager (Paul Brown)  Local Offer & Communication Officer (awaiting appointment)	Increased usage of Local Offer Website	Usage statistics  Annual Parent/carer survey	Awareness of where to find information and support.	Recruitment of Local Offer and Communication Officer (A)	Develop communication strategy including Blogs/Vlogs, signposting, parent meet parents' area. Webinars, talking heads about the process, parents chat health.  Education, health and care professionals to signpost families to WIASS and Local Offer  Local Offer Live event to be held	May 2022  Ongoing  October 2022	

6.4	Connexions will provide IAG through Local Offer on all options available to young people with SEND.	Lead Practitioner NEET (Niginder Kaur)	Career Pathway Plans completed for all young people with EHCP's at transition points	Reduction in SEND NEETs and young people with EHCP's in provision	Young people will be better informed about the options open to them	Existing officer capacity (E)	Transition points at year 9, 11 and post 16	On-going	
6.5	Sharing of information with SENCOs to help them signpost families	School SEND Improvement Advisor (Anna Vrahimi)	SENCo network meetings scheduled	SENCOs regular updates through meeting notes and newsletters	Upskilled SENCOs with network providing peer support	Existing officer capacity (E)	In place October 2021	October 2021	
6.6	Complaints will be used as an opportunity for learning and development across the local area.	Customer Engagement Manager (Sarah Campbell)	Regular training schedule in place	Fewer repeat complaints	Complaints will be used as an opportunity for learning and development across the local area.	Existing officer capacity (E)	Training schedule in place April 2022	April 2022	

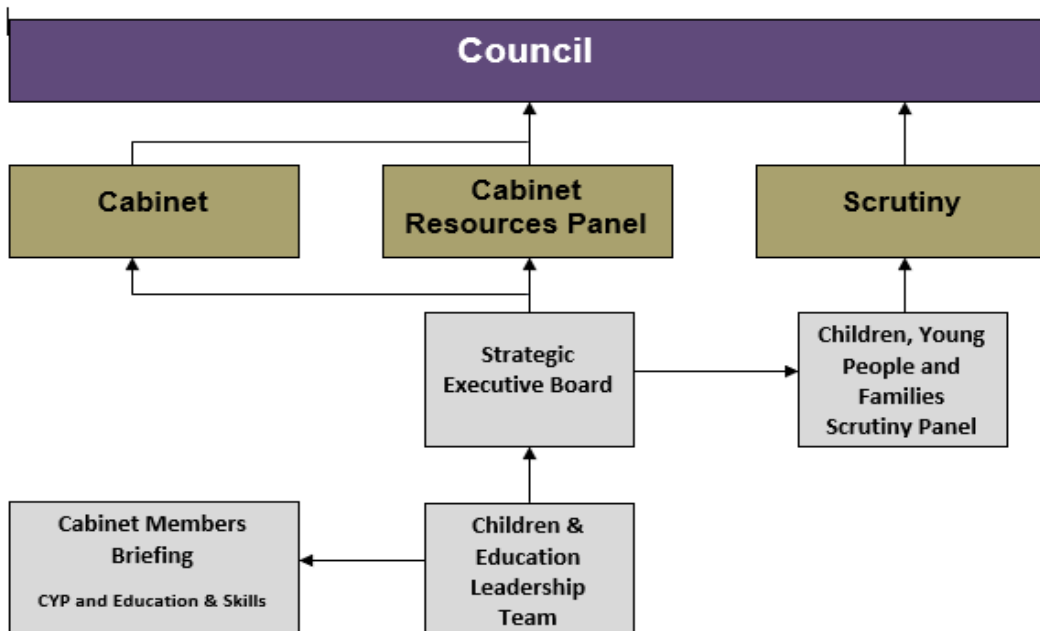
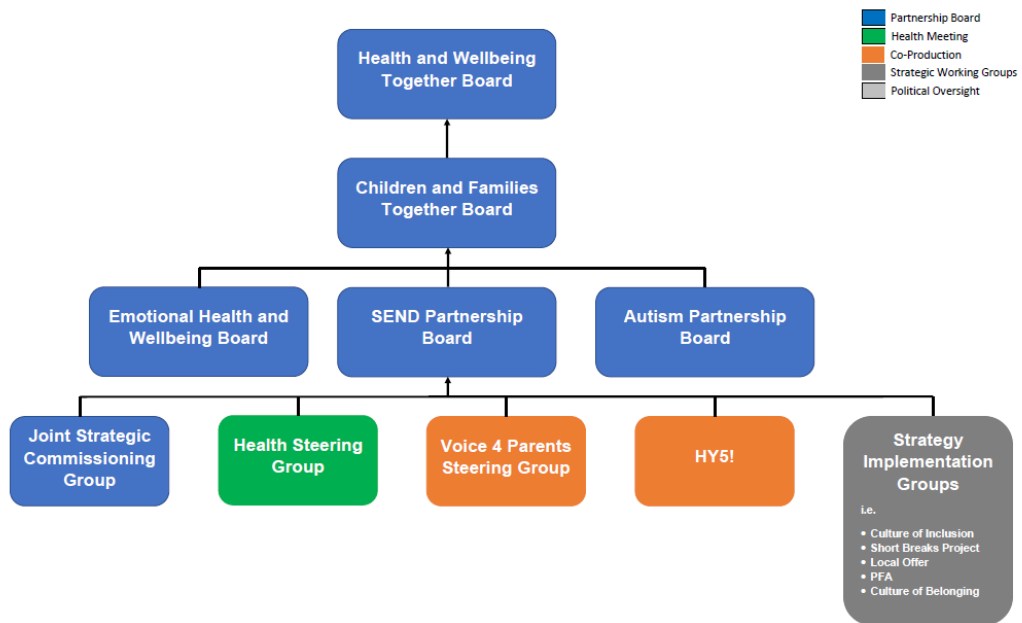
#### Outcomes

- Families are aware of where to find information and support
- Develop and launch approved Local Offer which is easily accessible and negotiable for all.
- Local Offer is regularly updated
- Co-produced Local Offer.
- Consistent and updated Local Offer in place.
- To make it a visually exciting, inviting and engaging website.
- The Local Offer will perform the function of a one stop shop.
- The 'tell it once' approach will be adopted and embedded across all services.

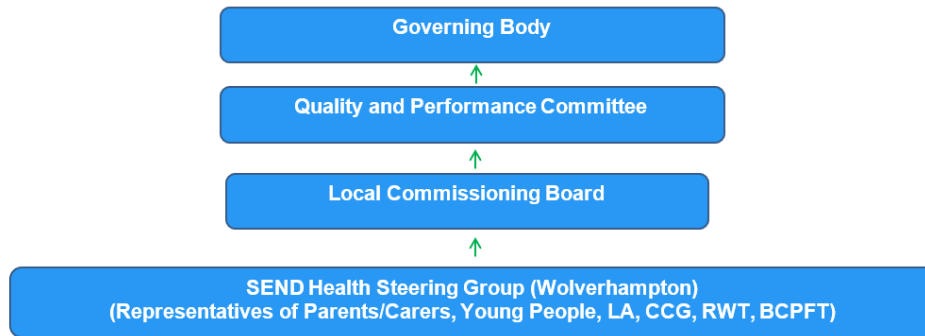
## Section 5 – Local Area Monitoring Arrangements and Governance

The SEND Partnership Board provides the governance structure and strategic oversight of the implementation of the Written Statement of Action.

SEND Partnership Board Governance Structure



## SEND Reporting Structure



The [SEND Strategy \(2020 – 2023\)](#) which sets out the vision for the local area, the key priorities and the actions required to improve services, support and provision for children and young people with SEND (and their families) in Wolverhampton

<b>CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL</b>	<b>Cabinet</b> <b>19 January 2022</b>
----------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------

<b>Report title</b>	Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement and Draft Budget Update 2022-2023	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Ian Brookfield Leader of the Council	
<b>Key decision</b>	No	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	Claire Nye, Director of Finance	
<b>Originating service</b>	Strategic Finance	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Alison Shannon	Chief Accountant
	Tel	01902 554561
	Email	Alison.shannon@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Strategic Executive Board	6 January 2022

**Recommendations for noting:**

The Cabinet are asked to note:

1. The outcome of the 2022-2023 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.
2. That the final budget report presented to Cabinet on 23 February 2022 will reflect the outcome of the settlement and detailed budget work for 2022-2023, including a review of all budget reduction proposals and the risks associated with their delivery.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an overview of the 2022-2023 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, which the Government announced on 16 December 2021.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 On 27 October 2021, the Government announced the outcome of the Spending Review 2021, the headlines of which were reported to Cabinet 8 December 2021. The Spending Review covered the period from 2022-2023 to 2024-2025.
- 2.2 On 16 December, the Government announced the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022-2023. The announcement was for one year only and further details on the proposed funding reform and consultation are expected to follow in 2022.
- 2.3 The key points arising from the announcement and the impact on the Council's 2022-2023 Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) are detailed in the paragraphs below.

## **3.0 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement**

### **Council Tax Referendum Limit**

- 3.1 The Government are proposing that the Council Tax Referendum Limit remains at 1.99% for 2022-2023. This is in line with the assumptions built into the MTFS.

### **Adult Social Care Precept**

- 3.2 The Government have announced that local authorities with social care responsibilities can increase their council tax by an additional 1% Adult Social Care (ASC) precept, plus up to a further 3% where local authorities opted to defer the precept flexibility that was available in 2021-2022.
- 3.3 The MTFS currently assumes no additional ASC precept is levied beyond 2021-2022. In order to fund the increasing pressures across Adult Social Care, it is necessary for the Council to apply the ASC precept. The Final Budget report which will be presented to Cabinet in February 2022 and Full Council in March 2022, will recommend this increase.

### **Business Rates Multiplier**

- 3.4 The Government have announced that there would be a freeze on the business rates multiplier for 2022-2023. Therefore, businesses will not see an inflationary increase in their business rates for 2022-2023, which would have been based on the September Consumer Price Index (CPI) at 3.1%. Local authorities will be compensated for the shortfall in income via a section 31 grant. The provisional amount included in the Core Spending Power (the amount of resources available to the local authority to fund service delivery), is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) which is 3.1%, however, the increase in the final settlement is expected to be based on the Retail Price Index (RPI), which is 4.9%. This would mean an increase in the Core Spending Power figures for the



final settlement. The Final Budget Report which will be presented to Cabinet and Full Council will be updated to reflect this change.

- 3.5 It was also confirmed that local authorities in 100% business rates retention Devolution Deals will continue in 2022-2023. This is in line with the assumptions built into the MTFS.

### Adult and Children's Social Care

- 3.6 The Government have announced £700 million of new grant specifically for social care. The Government have estimated that these grants, together with the ASC precept flexibility, means that local authorities would be able to make use of over £1 billion of additional resources specifically for social care in 2022-2023.

**Table 1 below provides a summary of these grant, with further detail in the paragraphs below:**

Grant	Description	Assumptions in October 2021 MTFS £000	2022-2023 Provisional Allocation £000
Social Care Grant	Includes the roll forward of existing adults and children's social care grants, along with an additional £636 million of funding for the equalisation against the 1% ASC precept and an inflationary uplift.	11,390	15,376
Improved Better Care Fund	Local Authorities are required to pool this grant as part of the Better Care Fund with Health. £63 million uplift on 2021-2022 levels.	14,323	14,761
Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund	£162 million for 2022-2023 to support local authorities to prepare their markets for care reform and the move towards a paying	-	929
<b>Total Social Care Grant</b>		<b>25,713</b>	<b>31,066</b>

- 3.7 Of the £700 million, the Government proposes to increase the Social Care Grant allocations by £636 million compared to 2021-2022 levels. This increase includes £80 million for the equalisation of the impact of the distribution of the 1% ASC precept. This takes into account the amount that local authorities are able to raise through the ASC

precept against their assessed need, and then equalises local authorities for their relative ability to raise ASC precept. The remaining £556 million to be allocated directly through the existing Adults Social Care Social Care Grant for inflationary uplift to support integrated working with the National Health Service. Wolverhampton's provisional allocation is £15.4 million, this is an increase of approximately £4.0 million.

- 3.8 The remaining balance relates to the improved Better Care Fund (iBCF). Government proposes to increase the iBCF allocations by £63 million, an inflationary uplift on the 2021-2022 allocations. The MTFs currently assumes that the iBCF is rolled forward based on 2020-2021 allocations, as this grant has remained flat since 2019-2020. Wolverhampton's provisional allocation is £14.8 million, an increase of £438,000.
- 3.9 In addition, as announced on the 7 September in the 'Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care', the Government announced their proposal to allocation £162 million to support local authorities in preparing their markets for adult social care reform and to help move towards paying a fair cost of care. Adult Services and Finance are working collectively to estimate the additional costs associated with the reform when compared to the provisional allocation. Wolverhampton's provisional allocation for the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care Fund is £929,000. There are a number of conditions attached to this funding, including the submission of plans to the Department of Health and Social Care by September 2022 for formal approval; detailed guidance and supporting templates are expected to be published in early 2022. Funding for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 will be conditional upon satisfying these grant conditions.
- 3.10 The Final Budget Report which will be presented to Cabinet and Full Council will be updated to reflect these changes along with updated assumptions on the pressures across social care, including the impact of any fee uplift, the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the costs pressures associated with supporting additional reablement and discharges from hospital - which are currently funded by Health, and the cost of the Adults Transformation Service redesign. As outlined in the Performance and Budget Monitoring 2021-2022 report presented to Cabinet on 17 November 2021, Adult Services is currently forecasting cost pressures across care purchasing budgets due to an increase in demand.

### **2022-2023 Services Grant**

- 3.11 The Government are proposing to introduce a one- off 2022-2023 Services Grant worth £822 million to support a range of additional services provided by local government. This new grant will provide funding to all tiers of local government in recognition of the vital services, including social care, delivered at every level of local government. This grant also includes funding for the cost of increasing the employer National Insurance contribution by 1.25%.
- 3.12 The Government propose that this grant will not be ringfenced, so local authorities can provide support across the entire sector.

- 3.13 This funding will be excluded from any proposed baseline for transitional support as a result of any proposed system changes.
- 3.14 Wolverhampton's provisional allocation is £5.5 million, of which it is estimated that in the region of £1 million will be used to cover our increased costs in our National Insurance contributions. The MTFs does not assume this new grant for 2022-2023. This new allocation will be reflected in the Final Budget Report to Cabinet and Full Council.

### **New Homes Bonus**

- 3.15 The Government have announced the continuation of the New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme for a further year with no legacy payments.
- 3.16 The Council's provisional allocation for 2022-2023 has been announced at £1.6 million, which includes an additional £1.4 million. The MTFs did not assume any additional NHB being awarded for growth from 2022-2023 onwards, therefore the £1.4 million allocation represents additional income to the budget for 2022-2023. The updated allocation will be reflected in the Final Budget Report to Cabinet and Full Council.

### **Other Grants**

- 3.17 The Council receives a top up grant to 'top up' funding as the business rates baseline funding level determined by the Government for the Council is greater than the forecast level of business rates that the Council can collect. The Council's provisional allocation of Top up Grant for 2022-2023 has been uplifted by inflation, this is an increase of approximately £697,000.
- 3.18 The Government have announced the continuation of the Lower Tier Services grant for 2022-2023. The Council's provisional allocation is £478,000, this allocation will be reflected in the Final Budget Report to Cabinet and Full Council.
- 3.19 In addition, the Council also receive a number of grants which fall outside the Provisional Settlement. On 20 December 2021, the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) for 2022-2023 was confirmed. Wolverhampton's allocation is £1.9 million. This is a ringfenced grant to enable local authorities to provide free places at holiday clubs during Easter, Summer and Christmas school holidays in 2022. This will be made available for children who are eligible for and receive benefits-related free school meals.
- 3.20 On 21 December, the Homelessness Prevention Grant allocations for 2022-2023 were announced. The allocations for the grant remain the same as 2021-2022 at £310 million nationally, with a further £5.8 million to cover new burdens funding for those forced into homelessness by domestic abuse. Wolverhampton's total allocation is £915,120.
- 3.21 The allocations for 2022-2023 for the Public Health Grant, Independent Living Fund, Local Reform and Community Voices and War Pension Disregard Grant have not yet been announced by the Department of Health and Social Care. The MFTS currently

assumes these grants will continue at the 2021-2022 level. The MTFS will be updated once confirmation is received.

- 3.22 Government have also recently announced a number of grants for 2021-2022 to support the Covid-19 pandemic. An update on these grants will be provided in the quarterly Performance and Budget Monitoring 2021-2022 report to Cabinet.

#### **4.0 Government Consultation and Updating the System**

- 4.1 The Government have released a consultation on the Provisional Settlement with responses to be provided by 13 January 2022.
- 4.2 The data used to assess funding allocations has not been updated in a number of years, dating from 2013-2014 to a large degree, and even as far back as 2000. Over the coming months, Government will work closely with the sector and other stakeholders to update this and to look at the challenges and opportunities facing the sector before consulting on any potential changes.
- 4.3 Government have announced that they will look at options to support local authorities through a transitional protection. No further details have been provided at the time of writing this report as to what form the transitional protection will take. However, it is anticipated that for those local authorities that see a reduction in their funding following the review, will receive some protection at their current funding levels for a period of time in order to allow them to develop and implemented plans to reduce expenditure. However, as detailed above, the 2022-2023 Services Grant will be excluded from any potential transitional protection.

#### **5.0 Evaluation of alternative options**

- 5.1 This report provides Cabinet with the outcome of the 2022-2023 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, to consider the impact on the City of Wolverhampton Council and medium term planning.

#### **6.0 Reasons for decision**

- 6.1 Cabinet are asked to note the outcome of the 2022-2023 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

#### **7.0 Financial implications**

- 7.1 The financial implications are discussed within the body of the report and will be reflected fully in the Budget Report to Cabinet on 23 February 2022 and Full Council on 2 March 2022.

[AS/10012022/V]

## **8.0 Legal implications**

- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 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 (CFO).
- 8.3 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the CFO 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 decisions. The CFO'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 assessment of all the circumstances considered likely to affect the Council.
- 8.4 The relevant guidance concerning reserves is Local Authority Accounting Panel Bulletin 77, issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (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).
- 8.5 In addition, Section 114 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires the CFO 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 on item of account then entry if unlawful
- 8.6 The CFO 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.

- 8.7 These statutory requirements will have to be taken into account when making final recommendations on the budget and council tax requirements for 2022-2023.  
[SZ/11012022/P]

## **9.0 Equalities implications**

- 9.1 The Government publish a draft policy impact statement which covers the Government's proposals for the Provisional Local Government Settlement for 2022-2023. It focuses on the impact of the proposals on people who share protected characteristics. Explanation of the measures announced in the settlement can be found in this document.
- 9.2 The method by which the MTFS is developed is governed by the Council Plan priorities, which itself is guided by consultation and equality analysis. All of this will enable Councillors to pay, "due regard" to the equalities impact of their budget decisions at the point in the budget development process. The resulting and final report to Cabinet will contain a supporting equality analysis that will offer information across the whole range of proposals and in doing so enable Councillors to discharge their duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010

## **10.0 All other implications**

- 10.1 There are no other direct financial implications as a result of this report.

## **11.0 Schedule of background papers**

- 11.1 [Draft Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022-2023 to 2023-2024](#), report to Cabinet on 20 October 2021.

<b>CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL</b>	<b>Cabinet</b> 19 January 2022
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<b>Report title</b>	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2024	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Paula Brookfield Governance and Equalities	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer	
<b>Originating service</b>	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Jin Takhar	Head of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion
	Tel:	
	Email	Jin.Takhar@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Cabinet Member	4 October 2021
	Strategic Executive Board	12 October 2021
	Our Council Scrutiny Panel	30 June, 12 October, 17 November 2021

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**Recommendation for decision:**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2024 as attached in Appendix 1.

## 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To invite Cabinet to approve the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy following detailed consultation with our workforce and residents.
- 1.2 To provide a summary of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy priorities /objectives and inform the Council of provisional timescales for publication of the strategy following Cabinet's approval.

## 2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Council is fully committed to ensuring fairness and inclusion throughout its actions both internally and externally and this forms one of the key principles underpinning the Relighting the City Plan adopted by the Council in September 2020.
- 2.2 The Equality Strategy 2022-24 is a statutory document setting out the Council's vision, ambitions and proposed objectives for promoting equality, diversity and inclusion over the next three years.
- 2.3 Regulation 5 of the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 requires public bodies to publish one or more equality objectives at up to four-year intervals to support the key aims of the public sector equality duties, namely to a) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; b) advance equality of opportunity between different groups, and c) foster good relations between different groups.
- 2.4 The Strategy draws out our key commitments, current activities, and future activities in relation to equality and diversity.
- 2.5 It recognises that our equality and diversity vision is fundamental to our overall vision of *'to be a fairer, inclusive and a more equal city, where no-one is left'* and highlights the synergies between equality, diversity, inclusion, and inclusive growth.
- 2.6 It brings together all key actions required and highlights all different activities that are likely to have direct or indirect positive equality impact under ten directorate equalities action plans.

The Strategy takes a holistic approach, recognising that true commitment to equality and diversity goes beyond just the nine protected characteristics, with a strong focus on positive socio-economic outcomes.

- 2.7 The scheme is also fully aligned with the Council's corporate plan priorities.
- 2.8 We acknowledge that the Council has a key role to play to promote a fair and more equal society by putting equalities considerations central to the decisions we make about service delivery, contract arrangements and employment. The Council has made substantial progress in its work on equalities, building on a strong position, previously



having achieved excellence in the Local Government Association (LGA) equality framework for Local Government in October 2018.

- 2.9 The need for a renewed focus on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy (EDI) was highlighted following the murder of George Floyd, Black Lives Matter, the release of disparity reports and Covid-19. As a result, phase one consultation involved the engagement of the staff equality forums, meetings were held in July – Dec 2020 where employees were consulted on what the priorities of our EDI strategy should be. Phase two consultation (June – September 2021) involved engaging with our residents and key community partners, leaders, and organisations.
- 2.10 A number of priorities and actions have emerged and have informed the final strategy as attached in appendix 1.
- 2.11 Impact of Phase Two Consultation – As a result of the consultation we have made the following changes:
- We have revised our EDI Policy to incorporate our responsibilities on meeting the needs of employees, service users and residents with hidden disabilities
  - We have updated the Governance Equality Plan to include the review of our British Sign Language (BSL) offer and explore local providers
  - We have updated the Governance Equality Plan to include the review of our interpretation and translation contract and explore local providers
  - We have updated the Public Health Equality Plan to include the review of the perceived concerns on the disproportionate levels of infant mortality amongst Black African/Caribbean women.
- 2.12 Please note that the majority of issues identified and raised during the consultation process in relation to our services (Education, ASC/Mental health, Employment, Financial Inclusion, Digital Inclusion, Funding Support for community groups) had already been identified and already incorporated into the relevant Service Equality Plans.
- 3.0 Progress to date**
- 3.1 The Council's final Equality Strategy is structured around four key objectives – three are internal, focusing on the organisational culture and leadership, the workforce and organisational development and one which is externally focused, looking at ensuring services continue to remain accessible, inclusive, and responsive.
- 3.2 The Council's Equality Strategy objectives comprise several themes and deliverables and is accompanied by ten directorate equality plans to support positive equality outcomes for employees, service users and residents.

3.3 The priorities/objectives are outlined below:

- **Priority one:** Our handling of equality and inclusion through visible leadership, strong organisational culture and partnerships will reach the high standards we expect of ourselves and others will look to us as a source of good practice.
- **Priority two:** To be an inclusive employer and build an inclusive organisation where the workforce reflects the diversity of the city we serve, ensuring our commitment to address the disproportionately at senior levels is a top priority.
- **Priority three:** To build an inclusive workplace culture where everyone can thrive and flourish and reach their full potential through training and development, where employees from across all equality groups show high levels of engagement and satisfaction with the council as an employer and where colleagues feel confident about being themselves at work.
- **Priority four:** To provide inclusive, responsive and accessible services which actively seek to address inequality and exclusion and enable all of Wolverhampton Citizens to realise their potential and to live safely. This includes tackling discrimination and longstanding inequalities that significantly and disproportionately impact on marginalised communities.

3.4 The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy as well as the consultation findings have been previously considered by:

- Our Council Scrutiny Panel – 30 June 2021, 12 October 2021, 17 November 2021
- Cabinet Member – 4 October 2021
- Strategic Executive Board – 12 October 2021

#### 4.0 Evaluation of alternative options

##### **To consider approving the EDI Strategy from 2022 to 2024.**

4.1 This would result in clear direction and guidance on actions we will undertake to build an inclusive culture within our workforce and organisation. The strategy will also set out how we continue to shape services to actively address inequality and exclusion as well as address the progressive building of good relations between different communities. This will positively impact residents across the City who share protected characteristics as well as residents who do not share protected characteristics.

##### **To not approve the EDI Strategy 2022-2024**

4.2 The implications of taking this decision would be the removal of the four key priorities outlined in the strategy and the outline of how equalities will be embedded in the daily business of the Council.

- 4.3 We are aware that the City includes some of the most deprived areas in the country with significant inequalities facing certain neighbourhoods and communities of identity. This is why it is imperative that we work hard to ensure that the right services meet diverse needs at the right times, in the right ways.
- 4.4 Should this decision be taken, it would negatively impact the ability to do the above.
- 4.5 Under the Equality Act 2010 we are required to publish our equality objective. If this decision was taken we would not be fulfilling our duty under this act and would not be compliant.

## **5.0 Reasons for decision**

- 5.1 The City of Wolverhampton is committed to equality, diversity and social inclusion. Promoting and advancing equality, tackling all forms of discrimination and harassment as well as fostering good relations is at the heart of our goals as a Council.
- 5.2 While we are a diverse city that pulls together to celebrate our differences, we know that many residents still face disadvantage and discrimination.
- 5.3 This Strategy therefore aims to guide us in our understanding of the different community needs, enable us to act to tackle inequality, discrimination and disparities where they exist and look to strengthen good relations between our different local communities to bring better outcomes for the people we serve.
- 5.4 Should this Strategy be endorsed it will help us ensure we maintain our Excellent status and further embed equality, diversity and inclusion into our daily policies, practices and procedures.

## **6.0 Financial implications**

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation in this report.  
[MH/10012022/I]

## **7.0 Legal implications**

- 7.1 There is a clear legal duty to comply with the equality duty under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 – this provides that public authorities are now required, in carrying out their functions, to have regard to the need to achieve the objectives set out under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010 to:
- a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010.
  - b. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
  - c. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

7.2 In addition to ensure transparency, and to assist in the performance of this duty, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 require public authorities, named on, to publish equality objectives, at least every four years and information to demonstrate their compliance with the public sector equality duty. The proposed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy will meet those duties.  
[TC/06012022/B]

## **8.0 Equalities implications**

8.1 The aim of this strategy is to ensure that fairness and inclusion are embedded into all the functions of the Council and that is the intention of the authority.

8.2 The Strategy is likely to have positive impact on the Equality Act protected characteristics as outlined in the main body of the document and the accompanying action plans.

## **9.0 All other implications**

9.1 There are no other implications

## **10.0 Schedule of background papers**

10.1 Previous reports on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022-2024 presented to:

- [Our Council Scrutiny Panel](#) - 30 June 2021, 12 October 2021, 17 November 2021.

## **11.0 Appendices**

11.1 Appendix 1: Corporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2022 – 2024.



CITY OF  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
COUNCIL

Corporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy  
2022 – 2024

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## Foreword

We are very pleased to introduce City of Wolverhampton Council's new Corporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy which sets out our commitment for advancing equality, diversity and inclusion in our City over the next three years.

We're determined to make Wolverhampton fairer. To create a place where everyone, whatever their background, can reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life. This deeply held vision is at the very core of how we work and we're relentless in our determination to reduce inequality and improve the lives of our most vulnerable residents.

We're an incredibly diverse borough that pulls together and proudly celebrates our differences – but we know that many residents still face disadvantage and discrimination.

Everyone who lives or works in Wolverhampton is valued for the unique contribution they make to our borough and we won't rest until everyone can achieve their potential and live their lives free of discrimination.

**The strategy** therefore aims to guide us in our understanding of the different community needs, enable us to act to tackle inequality, discrimination and disparities where they exist and look to strengthen good relations between our different local communities to bring better outcomes for the people we serve. We will remain fully committed to achieving continuous improvement and equality across all our services and functions.

As part of this process our Corporate EDI Strategy aims to ensure we maintain our Excellent status and further embed equality, diversity and inclusion.

Finally, we would like to express our support for and commitment to the strategy and look forward to seeing positive outcomes and benefits emerge from its implementation.



**Leader**  
**Councillor Ian Brookfield**



**Chief Executive**  
**Tim Johnson**

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

## Plan On A Page

### Context – Drivers for Strategy

Diverse City made up of 249,470 citizens.	Legislative requirements; Equality Act 2010 .  Our moral duty and social responsibility.	In October 2018 awarded Excellence in LGA Equality Framework for Local Government.	Renewed focus and commitment since George Floyd / Black Lives Matter / Release of Disparity Reports / COVID-19. 26 <sup>th</sup> June 2020 Meeting with Chief Executive Officer.	Embedded Equalities into Council Plan and Relighting our City Plan
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### Message from our Leader and Chief Executive

We're an incredibly diverse City that pulls together and proudly celebrates our differences – but we know that many residents still face disadvantage and discrimination. Everyone who lives or works in Wolverhampton is valued for the unique contribution they make to our City and we won't rest until everyone can achieve their potential and live their lives free of discrimination. We will ensure that no matter how difficult the challenges become, we will protect our most vulnerable residents and ensure that 'no-one' is left behind.



Leader of the Council  
Councillor Ian Brookfield



Chief Executive  
Tim Johnson

### Objectives – What do we aim to achieve?

Our handling of equality and inclusion through visible leadership, strong organisational culture and partnerships will reach the high standard we expect of ourselves.	To be an inclusive employer and build an inclusive organisation where the workforce reflects the diversity of the city we serve.	To build an inclusive workplace culture where everyone can thrive and flourish and reach their full potential through training and development.	To provide inclusive, responsive and accessible services which actively seek to address inequality and exclusion .
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### Priorities – Key Issues we want to tackle (You Said; We Are Doing)

<b>Visible Leadership &amp; strong Organisational Culture</b>  Improve and Foster our understanding of our communities and employees.  Continue to work closely with the business, employees, community and voluntary sector to ensure that discrimination is eliminated.  Develop an organisational culture where everyone is valued, respected and treated fairly.	<b>Inclusive Employer where its workforce is reflective of the City</b>  Push hard to employ staff that reflect the boroughs diversity.  Improve the diversity of the workforce at senior levels – key action is to set aspirational targets and agree vision for 2030.  Close the 'pay gap' on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, disability and LGB&T.	<b>Targeted professional Training &amp; Development</b>  Take action that supports career progression for employees from diverse backgrounds.  Actively promote staff development opportunities targeting under-representative groups.	<b>Inclusive, Responsive and Accessible Services</b>  Understand the barriers to equality, experienced in Wolverhampton and act to remove them.  Bridging the gap between the levels of deprivation and prosperity in the borough.  Provide more accessible, responsive and inclusive services.
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### Our Vision

To be a fairer, inclusive and a more equal City – where no-one is left behind. To achieve our vision, we will lead by example, work with our partners, invest in our communities, develop and empower our workforce- and listen and act when our communities and our employees tell us how we can do better .

### Our Values

Put people first	Raise the city's profile & reputation	Inspire trust & confidence	Deliver together	Empower people to innovate
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### Measurables (work in progress)

Consultation with our employees, councillors and citizens (staff and resident survey results – parity in service satisfaction and engagement)	Monitoring the data that we hold both for our staff and our customers; make use of the data to determine service satisfaction and change.	Directorate Equality Plans to define measurables (In Progress)
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### Directorate Equality Plans

Regeneration	Adult Social Care	Children and Young People	Governance	Strategy	Communication	Finance	City Assets	City Environment	Public Health
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Ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion is at the heart of everything we do, when planning, delivering and monitoring our services - for our citizens.



## 1. Context and legislation

The Equality, diversity and Inclusion Strategy sets out the council's four key priority areas for action in one document and outlines how we will embed equalities considerations into our day-to-day business.

Under the Equality Act 2010 Wolverhampton has a Public Sector Equality Duty to ensure that in exercising our functions and delivering services and partnership work we:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a protected characteristic and persons who do not share a protected characteristic
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

The Act also introduced nine 'Protected Characteristics.

age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation.

In addition to these 'general' duties, there are also 'specific' duties – requiring us to prepare and publish equality information annually and equality objectives every four years.

We acknowledge that the Council has a key role to play to promote a fair and more equal society by putting equalities considerations central to the decisions we make about service delivery, contract arrangements and employment.

In producing this strategy, we have developed the four key priority areas that will promote greater equality and promote community cohesion in Wolverhampton by addressing issues of concern in the borough.

The Equality Act underpins the strategy and the priority areas for action and apply to all the protected characteristics.

## 2. Introduction – Wolverhampton’s population.

We are proud of our people and the contributions our diverse communities make

Our city is diverse and cohesive with a total population standing at 260,00 residents.

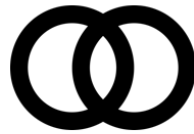
- One third (36%) of our population is from Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups
- 19% of our residents were born outside the UK.
- There are around 90 languages spoken within the city.
- The most-followed religion in the city is Christianity (56%), and the second-most followed is Sikhism (9%). However, over a quarter of residents (26%) have disclosed having no religion.
- In the city there are 51,258 people who have disclosed having limitations in their ability to carry out day-to-day activities, which equates to 21% of the city's population. Higher rates are observed amongst females, people aged 50-64 and people aged 65+.
- Interestingly data sourced from the last census provides information on the marital status of our residents, showing that 43% of all residents aged over 16 were either married or in a civil partnership.
- The Office for National Statistics (ONS). estimated that 2.8% of adults identified themselves as Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual. Applying this estimate directly to Wolverhampton's most recent Mid-Year Population Estimate, this equates to 5,787 LGB residents.
- ONS have not produced local data on gender re-assignment for Wolverhampton. This will be a question in the 2021 census. A link to ONS's work in this areas is [here](#) Govt Equalities Office figures for the UK estimate that 0.007% is Trans. This would give a Wolverhampton estimate of 18 people.

Wolverhampton's diversity is the fabric which holds our city together and our people are proud of our friendly and supportive communities. Already home to over a quarter of a million people, we expect our population to rise as more people and new communities choose to live in the City of Wolverhampton.

Our city is home to a thriving voluntary and community sector with individuals and groups dedicating their time to improve their communities. We value the contribution of the sector and recognise the critical role it plays in delivering the city's priorities. The sector generates over £140 million with over 12,000 volunteers.



**37** is the average **age** of the population.



43% of residents are **married**.

**35%** of residents are from a **BAME** background.  
Total Population – 245,426

0.2% of residents are in a **same-sex civil partnership**.



11% do not speak English as a first language.

0.007% of the UK population has a **gender reassignment** certificate.

This equates to



**18**

residents within Wolverhampton.

**74%** of residents have a **religion**



56%  
Christian



9 %  
Sikh



4%  
Muslim



4%  
Hindu

2.8% of the population according to the ONS Survey which equates to



**5787**

residents as defining as **LGB** or other.

**6th** highest **birth rate** in the West Midlands.



3257 Births in 2019

**51%** of residents define as **female**.



**21%** of residents have a **disability**.



**61%** of **65+** have a disability compared to **10%** of **16-49**.

### 3. Our successes and our Journey so far

Over the past three years progress has been made towards embedding equality practice throughout the Council and promoting community cohesion.

Outlined below are some of our successes:

- Listening to the views of diverse communities through our membership of city-wide partnerships and engagement activities  
CWC has good relationships with partners which ensure that equality issues are raised and shared, resulting in better outcomes for the people of Wolverhampton. Many examples of excellent joint working with key partners include:
  - The Health and Wellbeing board which is making a difference to the prioritisation of health inequalities in Wolverhampton.
  - Head start - a project with partners to improve young people's mental health
  - Tackling Hate Crime – The Safer Wolverhampton Partnership has identified and established 18 hate crime reporting centres in Wolverhampton. West Midlands Police support the centres by delivering hate crime training to key staff at the centres.
  - WEDP- Wolverhampton Equality and Diversity Partnership continue to play a key role during the pandemic, supporting the council to reach out to vulnerable groups, distributing information on latest government guidelines on how to stay safe and access support.
  - The Council's initiatives that impacted beyond the local authority area has been the Paulette Wilson Windrush Project. The project was named after the late Paulette Wilson a Wolverhampton resident. The Windrush Project was developed to support the human rights of individuals from the Commonwealth who were in danger of being wrongfully deported and then broadened to all those at risk. CWC provided funding to the city's Refugee and Migrant Centre in April 2018, to assist and support those who came from the Commonwealth prior to 1973.
  - Working with the British Deaf Association to provide accessible services to D/deaf people.
- Retaining our commitment to complete Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to inform service and budget changes
- Inviting external and independent assessment of our work by taking part in equality charters such as the, Stonewall and the Local Government Association's Equality Framework for Local Government
- Introducing a culture change programme to enhance managers' leadership skills, to model and demonstrate our corporate culture, values and equality principles continues to help us deliver improved services across the city
- Improving the collection and analysis of our workforce and recruitment data has given us a better understanding of the issues affecting our workforce so that we can focus our work in those areas that are key to delivering improved, tangible equality outcomes for our staff
- Mainstreaming equality and inclusion principles into our Corporate, Directorate and Service plans
- Development of the "WV Insight" website continues to provide staff and the public access to information and data sets). The data is aligned to the Equality Framework for Local Government. It enables users to drill down to consider trends and compare CWC to its near neighbour councils and conduct gap analyses on equality criteria.

- The Council continues to use data to inform its services and target initiatives, these include Rough Sleepers Initiative, the Managed Offender Pilot and “Wolves at Work” is another example of a service that uses data to identify and target key groups.
  - Strong commitment from councillors, senior executive board (SEB) and senior managers to equality and diversity. Equality and diversity is firmly on the agenda for all Strategic SEB, leadership and operational managers meetings. Representatives from the Staff Equality Forums attend strategic SEB meetings and have appointed SEB sponsors to each staff equality forum to listen to views.
  - Strong organisational structure in place to ensure EDI remains integral in everything we do. Corporate Equality Steering Group (CESG) is chaired by the Director of Governance, with membership from each of the directorates and the chairs of the Staff Equality Forums. There are clear plans to support the delivery of equality and diversity, each service produces an annual service equality plan and performance on each service equality plan is reported through the relevant governance processes. Progress reports on all equality action plans are presented to the Members Equality Advisory Group, Strategic SEB and shared with the cabinet portfolio holder for governance. There is also a dedicated equality team whose work is valued by the organisation and further investment made to expand the team.
  - Improving the diversity of elected members - we continue to host activities targeted at ethnic minority groups, disabled people, our LGBT+ community and women – this includes the “Be a Councillor” event.
  - Improving the diversity of our workforce – A range of actions have been introduced over the past two years to address lack of workforce representation at senior levels. These include having diverse selection panels in on all recruitment activity; mandatory unconscious bias training for all staff involved in selection decisions including members; requiring recruitment agencies to produce diverse shortlists; having anonymised applications for all posts; giving guaranteed interviews for all disabled applicants meeting the vacancy criteria. A Leadership Development Scheme and graduate scheme introduced encouraging/targeting BAME applications; mentoring programme; Wrap Around Support Programme and Brilliant Leaders programme – all targeted at supporting underrepresented groups.
- Providing a Safe Space for our employees, in order to raise concerns if they feel that they have been treated unfairly - Safe Space Scheme launched 18<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021.

In October 2018, the City of Wolverhampton Council was awarded the Excellence level of the LGA's Equality Framework for Local Government and our Chief Executive has continued the pace of work on equality and diversity. Feedback from our most recent assessment, the Equality Framework has been built into this strategy.

## 4. Our Challenges along the way

We have and continue to face many challenges which have influenced our equality, diversity and inclusion objectives. The main ones have been due to responding to financial constraints, effects of deprivation, demographic change and the impact of Brexit. Most recently, since March 2020 we have been in unprecedented times responding to the Coronavirus pandemic. In May 2020, following the killing of George Floyd many Black Lives Matter protests were held across the world, including UK. However, **we will ensure that no matter how difficult the challenges become, we will protect our most vulnerable residents and ensure that 'no-one' is left behind.**

**Coronavirus Pandemic (Covid-19)** - National emerging data has found that Covid-19 does not affect all population groups equally. Public Health England (PHE) report 'Disparities in the risk and outcomes of Covid-19' (published in June 2020) found that the largest disparity was age, people who were 80 or over were seventy times more likely to die than those under 40. Risk of dying among those diagnosed with Covid-19 was higher in males than females; higher in those living in the more deprived areas than those living in the least affluent and higher in those in Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups than in White ethnic groups. People of BAME communities are more likely to be at increased risk of acquiring the infection.

The pandemic has exposed and exacerbated longstanding inequalities affecting BAME groups in the UK. BAME groups tend to have poorer socioeconomic circumstances which lead to poorer health outcomes. Data from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) and the Public Health England (PHE) analysis confirmed the strong association between economic disadvantage and COVID-19 diagnoses, incidence and severe disease. Economic disadvantage is also strongly associated with the prevalence of smoking, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, which all increase the risk of disease severity. Moreover, BAME communities are more likely to live in urban areas, overcrowded households and have jobs that expose them to higher risk.

Our Response – safeguarding our workforce: We adopted an inclusive individual approach to supporting colleagues across the workforce. Staff health, safety and wellbeing has been a top priority for us. Managers have supported their teams to adapt to different ways of working and risk assessing individual circumstances (e.g. underlying health conditions, caring responsibilities) signposting colleagues to a wealth of resources offered by HR (e.g. general wellbeing and mental health, working from home).

Our Response – safeguarding our communities: Equality of access in our communication has been a priority to ensure key messages (accessing our help line, food hub, social distancing and safeguarding information) on Covid-19 reached all of our diverse communities. We engaged with key partners through our Wolverhampton Equality & Diversity Partnerships and other boards.

**Black Lives Matter** - The killing of George Floyd on 25 May 2020 in the United States brought to bear the stark reality of the persistent presence and impact of racism in our global society. We recognise the distressing impact of these events on our BAME workforce and our BAME communities. We also recognise that racism affects many groups within society and within the BAME communities, in different ways. We are very proud of the diversity within our workforce and the communities we serve. We will continue to embrace and celebrate diversity – and we will continue to work hard collaboratively with our partners and employees to better understand the different ways

that our diverse population experiences life and will do all that we can to make Wolverhampton a welcoming, more inclusive and safe place for all .

The **national and international context** for the council and city is challenging. Changes to welfare and benefit systems and the costs of living and especially housing in the city are putting many people under pressure. The result of the referendum on leaving the EU raises many questions about how the city and the country will interact with the rest of the continent and the wider world. Events across the UK and the world have local consequences and impacts on individuals and communities for good or ill, affecting community cohesion and relations between people.

Having an **in-depth, current understanding of our communities**, their diversity, identities, assets and needs helps us to consider how best to design and deliver our services. We know that the city includes some of the most deprived areas in the country with significant inequalities facing certain neighbourhoods and communities of identity. This means we will have to work even harder to ensure that the right services meet diverse needs at the right times, in the right ways.

## 5. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion remains a top priority for the City of Wolverhampton Council

### Our ongoing Commitment

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To secure the benefits of diversity, we are building an inclusive organisation that actively recognises the contribution that people from different backgrounds make to all aspects of the council's work and the city's communities. The values and behaviours set out in our Corporate plan will help us build this inclusivity.

Being truly inclusive is not just about welcoming different contributions. Inclusion also means actively tackling inequalities and advancing greater equality, as well as fostering good relations between different people. Inclusion means removing the barriers – physical, economic or social – that hold people back, so we build a city in which everyone feels a part of. Creating a successful inclusive city also means recognising that there are other causes of inequality or exclusion, often inter-connected - people can be excluded because they have low income, are socially isolated, live in poor housing or due to poor health. Refugees and migrants, those with caring responsibilities or who those have been in care are likely to face inequality or exclusion.

A key reason why many people in Wolverhampton are held back is because of 'existing inequalities' , discrimination and lack of opportunity connected to one or more of the characteristics that are protected under the Equality Act 2010. These are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. This strategy re-states our long-held commitment to tackling inequality on these grounds, not just because it's our legal duty but also because

doing so helps create a more successful city- it's **the right thing to do, we will continue to protect the most vulnerable and we will leave no-one behind.**

### Our Vision

To be a fairer, inclusive and a more equal city – where no-one is left behind.

We will continue to work hard to.

- provide inclusive services, value and respect diversity and ensure fairness for both our employees and our communities.
- remove inequalities in the provision of services and employment.
- Listen to our people and our communities

To achieve our vision for inclusion, equality and fairness in the city, we will lead by example, work with our partners, invest in our communities, develop and empower our workforce- and listen and act when our communities and our employees tell us how we can do better.

We will take a leading role in seeking to increase equality, inclusion and fairness in our city.

Whilst the Council is starting from a very good place – having obtained excellence in equality framework for Local Government in October 2018 – details [here](#) – we know that there is a lot more to do to ensure that equalities is fully at the heart of everything we do. As a result, we have launched this new Equalities Strategy and supporting action plans that will aim to tie our work on equalities to the overall aims and objectives of the Council, as set out in the **Council Plan** and our **Relighting Our City Plan**.

The Council is firmly committed to pushing equalities forwards and making sure that it is fully embedded in every it does. The Council Plan and the Relighting Our City Plan recognises this.

As set out within the Council Plan, the six key priorities include:

- Children and young people get the best possible start in life
- Well skilled people working in an inclusive economy
- Re 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

Our Relighting Our City Plan, launched in September 2020, sets out how we will put recovery in place as a result of the impact of the Covid- 19 – “The council’s five point ‘relight’ recovery plan will:

- Support people who need us most
- Create more opportunities for young people
- Generate more jobs and learning opportunities
- Grow our vital local businesses
- Stimulate vibrant high streets and communities

Our recovery commitment was developed with the people of the City of Wolverhampton at its heart. “We have engaged with over 2,500 of residents to understand key priorities and the outcomes our residents want to see.”

This is underpinned by 3 principles – namely – climate focused, driven by digital and fair and inclusive – on the last the following is stated:

‘We will continue to tackle the inequalities in our communities which impact on the opportunities of local people. The Council’s ‘Excellent’ rated equalities framework is at the heart of our recovery commitment. No community will be left behind as we transform our city together’.

#### Our role as a community leader in maintaining positive community relationships

Wolverhampton has a strong history of building positive community relationships and partnerships and this strategy recognises that no one agency can tackle the inequalities in the city in isolation. By working together, much more can be achieved to make Wolverhampton a more equitable city. Collectively, we want to make sure our city enables all individuals to realise their potential to work productively and be rewarded appropriately, to feel comfortable, healthy and happy. A great city allows all its residents, people with different experiences, beliefs and perspectives the chance to make a contribution to their community, bringing a sense of achievement and belonging. We are proud that, for many, this is already the case in Wolverhampton. We want it to be so for everyone – and we will leave no one behind.

The council and its residents will continue to work closer together to ensure that all forms of discrimination are eliminated, that none of our communities are left behind or unable to access the opportunities that our city has to offer. We aspire that everyone has the same life

chances irrespective of their diversity. Our targeted approach will enable us to support communities to thrive and improve our understanding of the needs of our diverse and culturally rich city. It is vital, in such a diverse and culturally rich city.

As part of the consultation plan for this strategy, we will encourage active participation, involvement and co-production, this to ensure this strategy is shaped and informed by our people and our communities.

#### Our role as a service provider

The council is responsible for providing a range of services that directly affect people's everyday life. The council will tackle disadvantages by addressing the substantive issues being experienced by both the majority and minority communities in the borough- whether levels of deprivation and under- achievement, or a wider lack of opportunity.

We will work hard to ensure services delivered remain accessible and responsive to the needs of our diverse communities we serve. We will make sure we provide an equal focus on all the protected characteristics and make services available to all. By improving the **equality monitoring information**, we collect, we can tailor services and better understand the barriers to equality.

#### Our role as a large employer

The council will avoid unlawful discrimination in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, opportunities for training, pay and benefits, discipline and selection for redundancy. The council is also committed to recruiting the best person(s) and would therefore actively recruit and support high potential individuals regardless of their background.

We will ensure that all employees and potential employees are treated equally and fairly and will ensure that no applicants are discriminated against in the recruitment and selection process. We will review the recruitment, promotion, training and development of our staff and the composition of our workforce, in line with our statutory obligations. The council will also make reasonable adjustments to its standard working practices to overcome barriers caused by disability. We are committed to investing in our staff and will provide training to support the development of our workforce. We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment and victimisation of any kind within the council and will take prompt and effective action whenever it occurs.

We will continue to develop our workforce to ensure they have the tools necessary to provide effective services to our diverse community. We will also continue to recognise and celebrate the strengths that our diversity and inclusion brings.

## 6. The Corporate EDI Strategy

Our strategy sets out how we will deliver the high standards we expect of ourselves. It sets out the action we will undertake to build an inclusive culture within our workforce and organisation. It sets out how we will shape services which actively address inequality and exclusion and address the progressive building of good relations between different communities. It has also taken account of the recommendations following the LGA's Equality Framework (peer assessment 2018) findings report.

Our proposed Corporate EDI Strategy and supporting actions plans underpin and flow from the council's *Relighting Our City Plan*, our pride values, Our People Strategy and the partnership aspiration to create a 'Wolverhampton for Everyone'.

The strategy will provide direction to our employment and service delivery activities and functions – as well as help to deliver against our corporate priorities in relation to; building stronger, safer, resilient communities, tackling health inequalities, social deprivation, poverty and social exclusion.

For this strategy, we have identified **four equality priority areas** to focus on over the coming three years. We are keen to ensure the broad equality priorities that we are pursuing will deliver real improvements for people, rather than focusing solely on the process itself.

### Our priority areas for action

As part of the Public Sector Equality Duty Wolverhampton City Council must publish its equality objectives setting out our priorities for the next three years.

**Priority one: Our handling of equality and inclusion through visible leadership, strong organisational culture and partnerships will reach the high standards we expect of ourselves and others will look to us as a source of good practice.**

This means our senior leadership will continue to be visible in promoting a culture where positive relationships are built and where people can be themselves and are supported, valued and respected.

We know that our strategic leadership – both political and managerial – is key to maintaining a strong vision for equality and improving equality outcomes. Our strategic leadership will continue to play a central role in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

We also place an importance of working in partnership with local partners in health, police, fire and rescue services and the voluntary and community sector. Therefore, we will continue our focus on working together to narrow equality gaps and improve the life chances of different groups.

Key issues we want to tackle

- Improve our understanding of the boroughs diversity and changing communities and foster better understanding and relationships between communities.
- Continue to work closely with our business sector, community sector and voluntary sector organisations to ensure that all forms of discrimination are eliminated, that none of our communities are left behind or unable to access the opportunities and services that our city has to offer.
- Develop an Organisational culture where everyone is valued, respected and treated fairly and promotes a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for the future
  - Provide a working environment where all employees can be themselves and are given the space to be listened to and heard
  - To make clear that supporting equality in the workplace is the responsibility of all leaders and managers
  - To agree our 2030 vision for workforce representation

Our actions will include:

**Visible leadership, strong organisational culture and partnerships**

- SEB sponsors to support all staff equality forums
- Staff forums involved in strategic SEB decision making
- Appoint SEB sponsors for Race, LGBT, Disability and Gender
- Quarterly reporting on workforce equality monitoring and respond to areas where we are not achieving
- Set workforce targets to increase representation at senior levels on the grounds of Race, Disability, LGBT and review/stretch each year
- EDI on the agendas for all leadership, operational managers and teams' meetings
- Launch corporate leadership Pledge
- Narrow the ethnicity pay gap (standing at 5.13% mean average) and gender pay gap (4.24% mean average) – capture data and publicise progress each quarter
- Introduce LGBT and Disability pay gap reporting from April 2021
- Stonewall WEI Accreditation/ Submission June 2021
- Sign up to the BITC Race at Work Charter in 2021
- SEB to make clear that supporting equality in the workplace is the responsibility of all leaders and managers

- Strengthen and maintain key organisational partnerships with community and voluntary sector organisations who represent the needs of protected groups

**Priority two: To be an inclusive employer and build an inclusive organisation where the workforce reflects the diversity of the city we serve, ensuring our commitment to address the disproportionately at senior levels is a top priority.**

This means we will look at how we make sure we have people with a diversity of different characteristics and backgrounds working for the city council. Having a diverse workforce is important to make sure we represent the people we serve. The council also benefits from being able to draw upon a range of different approaches and points of view. One area we will particularly focus on is making sure we have a diversity of people with different characteristics at senior leadership positions within the council to reflect the population of Wolverhampton which is becoming more diverse.

Key issues we want to tackle

- Continue to push hard to employ staff that reflect the boroughs diversity
- To improve the diversity of the workforce at senior levels – key action is to set targets and agree vision for 2030.
- To close the 'pay gap' on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, disability and LGBT.

Our actions will include:

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**To be an inclusive employer and build an inclusive organisation where the workforce reflects the diversity of the city we serve, ensuring our commitment to address the disproportionately at senior levels is a top priority.**

Employment Matters

- To ensure recruitment practices are designed to attract and recruit for increased representation at senior levels.
- To support the business to embed effective succession planning to help retain and progress talented individuals
- To provide employees with a 'safe space' to report incidences of unfair /unequal treatment – and monitor impact
- Provide Wrap around support programme which aims to help individuals who have not secured a career progression - and monitor impact
- To have 100% diverse recruitment panels for all grades from January 2021
- Review of grievance, disciplinary and management of attendance processes to ensure 100% diverse panels involved in decision making
- Provision of information at both application and induction stage about the council's inclusion commitments covering all protected characteristics and other information about the staff networks.
- Ensure progression, secondment and other opportunities are fairly available and that policies are fairly applied

- Communicate zero tolerance of harassment and bullying - ensuring performance objectives for leaders and managers cover their responsibilities to support fairness for all staff.

**Priority three: To build an inclusive workplace culture where everyone can thrive and flourish and reach their full potential through training and development, where employees from across all equality groups show high levels of engagement and satisfaction with the council as an employer and where colleagues feel confident about being themselves at work.**

The Council's Organisational development team provide a blended approach to equality and diversity learning and development, using both online learning and skills workshops. Equality and diversity is integrated into all modules of the councils organisational development programmes to help staff provide fair and consistent customer services and to work effectively within a diverse workforce.

Equality and diversity is mainstreamed into all organisational development programmes and activity to ensure employees understand their individual responsibilities and have the knowledge and skills to meet the needs of the diverse communities they serve and are able to work effectively in a rich diverse workforce – respecting people's uniqueness.

Key issues we want to tackle

- Take action that supports career progression for employees from diverse backgrounds
- Actively promote staff development opportunities targeting under-representative groups

Our actions will include:

**Build an inclusive workplace culture where everyone can thrive and flourish and reach their full potential through training and development opportunities**

Organisational / Workforce Development

- Take action that supports career progression for underrepresented groups - on the grounds of Race, Disability, LGBT+
- Rollout of Mentoring programme targeting underrepresented groups – and monitor impact/outcomes
- Rollout of Brilliant Leaders Programme targeting underrepresented groups – and monitor impact/outcomes
- Active EDI Leadership programme for heads of service to be delivered early 2021 and monitor impact
- No Offence training for all managers/leaders to be delivered during 2021 and evaluate impact
- Ensure training programmes relating to discrimination, harassment and bullying include specific examples of incidences of unacceptable behaviour across all equality strands
- To provide additional support via Coaching and Wrap around support to those who have not been successful in securing a promotion/ career progression and monitor impact and outcomes
- Ensure all learning and development offers are inclusive, with targeted strategic interventions on specific equalities initiatives.

**Priority four: To provide inclusive, responsive and accessible services which actively seek to address inequality and exclusion and enable all of Wolverhampton Citizens to realise their potential and to live safely. This includes tackling discrimination and longstanding inequalities that significantly and disproportionately impact on marginalised communities.**

This means we will work to make sure our services remain accessible, inclusive and responsive to the diverse needs of people living in Wolverhampton across all protected characteristics. This priority aims to improve access to services, improve service take up and outcomes for all.

A key priority of this strategy is to develop a greater understanding of the diverse needs, expectations and aspirations of our residents and customers and how they use our services, enabling us to better meet their diverse needs and preferences. We will collect and analyse relevant diversity information (where appropriate) to help us shape, inform and tailor our services to meet individual needs - this understanding of our service users will allow us to constantly test and challenge ourselves to ensure we are able to respond to current needs, as well as be flexible to respond to changing circumstances and tackle inequality in services identified.

We will support each directorate to help identify with their service equality priorities and develop service equality plans to support the delivery of this strategy. Please note, service specific priorities and actions have now been identified by each directorate and have been incorporated into their service equality plans for 2021.

### Key issues we want to tackle

- Understand the barriers to equality experienced in Wolverhampton and act to remove them
- bridging the gap between the levels of deprivation and prosperity in the borough particularly focusing on:
  - raising educational attainment for all children and young people and reduce attainment gaps for target groups including children with special education needs or disabilities, those who are looked after in care, specific BAME groups,
  - reduce exclusion rates disproportionately affecting CYP, specific groups of White boys and those who are excluded from school
  - tackling rising unemployment particularly among young BAME communities and disabled residents and supporting those who are long term unemployed back into work
  - Reducing health inequalities particularly the issues affecting some BAME communities, LGBT communities, disabled and older residents.
  - Support residents who may be affected by mental illness or dementia
  - increasing education and economic opportunity across the borough
  - ensuring regeneration plans increase the opportunity for all Wolverhampton's residents to fulfil their educational, health and economic potential.

- o provide more accessible, responsive and inclusive services particularly focusing on:
  - Improving our understanding of 'hidden' disabilities and the challenges that disabled residents face in all aspects of their lives. We aim to work in a cross-cutting way and take a holistic approach to more effectively address the needs of disabled residents.
  - supporting those who do not usually get involved in decision-making to better understand how they can get involved and get their voices heard
  - Supporting residents to access on-line services
  - Providing services that meet the needs of a changing population.
  - capturing diversity data on service users and use this information to better inform service planning and delivery

Our actions will include

<b>Provide inclusive, responsive and accessible services</b>	
Strategy Directorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To review data, systems and monitoring arrangements across all areas of the council, this to improve the council's understanding of local communities, its services users and better target services to meet individual needs. We will support services to record and analyse equalities related service data across the council, this to ensure services can a) demonstrate parity in service take up, usage, delivery and outcomes and/or b) propose action to tackle inequality in service- where disproportionality and/or adverse impact on protected groups has been identified.</li> </ul>
Communication Directorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communicate outcomes delivered as a result of the BLM &amp; equalities action plan and supporting service equality plans</li> <li>▪ Promote key diversity calendar dates and provide communication &amp; marketing to support high profile diversity dates and key events</li> <li>▪ Provide communication support for the council's formal submission to the Stonewall Equality Index and signing up to the Business in the Community (BITC) Race at Work Charter.</li> <li>▪ Provide communication and PR advice and guidance to the proposed development of the City Rainbow Quarter</li> <li>▪ Provide targeted marketing advice and support to HR for recruitment campaigns to ensure content and messaging encourages greater interest from diverse groups.</li> </ul>
Finance Directorate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consideration of equality issues when planning audits, risk assessments, inspections and investigations</li> <li>▪ Review &amp; implement a revised Local Council Tax Support scheme – that is both affordable and takes account of diverse needs</li> <li>▪ Work with partners (DWP, Welfare Benefits, Citizens Advice) to improve outcomes for our diverse residents affected by Welfare Reform - particularly the roll out of universal Credit</li> <li>▪ Develop discretionary policies that are fair, reasonable and accessible to all people</li> </ul>



- Incorporate EDI and social value requirements into the councils new Procurement Strategy and procedures – taking account of end-to-end process
- Ensure services are aware of the requirements to undertake an equality assessment when putting forward budget reduction and income generation proposals.
- Evaluate the social value element of all programmes, initiatives and contracts.

#### City Assets

- Corporate Assets
  - To ensure opportunities to occupy, purchase or utilise assets are community inclusive.
  - Community Asset Transfer Strategy – monitor & evidence to ensure response from diverse businesses, community organisations and individuals.
  - Review the accessibility of assets in the development of the capital investment programme.
  - Embed EDI considerations at each of the development stages in community hub/co location, refurbishment and new build projects.
- Project & Works
  - Work with procurement to develop a pre and post -contract equalities screening process
- Catering Team
  - To consult with school nutrition action group to ensure meals meet the diverse needs of children/YP. Monitor outcomes
- Housing Development
  - Increase accessibility of social housing, shared ownership and help to buy schemes to diverse communities and monitor take up /outcomes by PC's
- Introduce equality monitoring of WV Living properties

#### City Environment

- Commercial Regulations
  - Extension of the mystery shopper exercise to include people from diverse backgrounds
- Environmental Services
  - To create an inclusive burial service for all faiths
  - Create a permanent traveller transit site in City
- City Events
  - As part of the 5year events strategy – review planned events to ensure inclusivity and take account of the diversity of the city
- Housing Strategy, Policy and Homelessness

- The review of Housing Allocation Policy to ensure people with highest housing need have the greatest opportunity - monitor outcomes by PC's
- Tenant Scrutiny Contract to be awarded April 2021
- Launch & host the New Communities & Migration forum

## Regeneration

- City Development
- Work with procurement & EDI team to develop a pre & post contract award equalities screening process
- Inclusive Growth and EDI benefits to be carefully considered in all high value contracts and where high impact on communities
- **Regeneration and economic development plans to extend beyond the City centre.**
- **Develop an Inclusive Growth strategy**
- City Planning
- Ensure accessibility standards are met for new buildings (people with disabilities elderly)
- Monitor the no of planning applications refused by PC's.
- Adult Education
- Improve monitoring of LGBT+ take-up and success in learning
- Skills and Enterprise – we will ensure our communities benefit from the job opportunities created through economic growth, by supporting those who face most disadvantage in the labour market into work (apprenticeships)
- Provide services to YP 16-24 who have been disproportionately affected by unemployment due to the pandemic and monitor outcomes by PC's
- Provide services to people who are further from the job market due to health and disabilities, offenders, low skills/ no skills and monitor outcomes by PC's
  - Provide services for people over 50 people who have been disproportionately been affected by unemployment and monitor outcomes by PC's
  - Provide services for our SEND YP – outlining employment & volunteering opportunities and monitor outcomes by PC's
  - To improve access to business support for BME businesses

## Adult social Care

- Review of data
- Establish data set gap analysis (this work will be influenced by the service checklists completed by each service area) – January 21
- Prioritise for improved data set/collection and recording for ASC within 3 months February –April 21
- Undertake equalities data analysis (review of service take up, service usage and experience and service outcomes – April
- Equalities action planning
- Establish priorities to challenge key inequality concerns identified (with a smart action plan – May 21
- Develop and agree dashboard with each service area to inform future service delivery – May 21

- ASC equalities action plan consultation (our workforce & our communities)- June 2021
- Smart action plan in place with clear priorities objectives and outcomes – June 2021
  - Workforce Training – training & support for all teams – March y
- a) enable our employees to ask questions about identity
- b) importance of gathering data
- c) understand the impact of inequality on families, individuals and communities

#### Children Services

- Review Data
- Ensure we are recording and analysing the right data across all PC's in relation to a) outcomes for children and young people b) employees - March
- Further embed/build equalities data into performance reporting arrangements and dashboards
- Review at Children's monthly performance meetings to inform future EDI priorities and develop SMART action plan to tackle inequality (Re: Exclusions, Attainment Gap, Children in Foster Care, YP in Care, Youth justice System) – April
  - Children's Practitioner Forum- To be established to inform ongoing equality priorities - April
  - Children Services Equality Pledge - To support our priorities/actions both internally and with key partners -April.
  - Youth Partnership Board - Children's workforce to be reflective of the City's diversity and equip them with the right tools to challenge inequality – May.

#### Public Health

- Intervention and response to the Pandemic.
- Implement communication plan to reach diverse population
- Maintain series of accessible engagement meetings with diverse groups to understand/address needs in relation staying well, taking rapid action if symptoms develop and support to isolate
- Identify & respond to findings - following the focus group consultation with voluntary sector organisations – understanding barriers and support needs
- Support and engage new migrant communities
- Oversee implantation of the Learning community's partnership action plan
- Provide tailored support to organisations that work with homeless people
- Investigate and respond to the impact of COVID 19 on older people in the city
- Review of Data - Establish data set gap analysis, prioritise for improved data set collection. Undertake equalities data analysis, establish priorities to challenge key health inequality concerns identified. Develop smart action plan.
- Develop a Health Inequalities Strategy for the City 2021
- Support Refugee and Migrant Centre to create resilient and long-term sustainability.

Community safety to explore opportunities for more cross partnership working to divert young people from gangs/violence.

- Strengthen community cohesion forum in terms of direction and action

#### Governance

- Gender/ Race/ Disability and LGBT Pay Gap and workforce monitoring Reporting - quarterly- to assess progress on the council's commitment to have a workforce that reflects its diverse community.
- Revise Council's Disciplinary, Grievance and MOA – to ensure diverse panels in decision making and improved procedures
- Review recruitment procedures to remove unnecessary barriers/ disabling barriers to progression
- Ensure that procedures related to elections fully take account of all protected characteristics
- Increase its workforce representation for BAME and other under representative groups - particularly at managerial/senior levels.
- Develop a Workforce Equality Plan
- Undertake Stonewall WEI Accreditation 2020
- 2030 vision on workforce targets agreed and monitored
- Sign up to the Race at Work Equality Charter by April 21 – evidence the 5 calls for action.

#### 7.4 Consultation Plan – on the Strategy

This strategy has been developed in line with Our council Plan and organisations values. We consulted widely and invited a wide range of partners, staff and stakeholders to comment on our strategy. The findings from the consultation shaped and informed the final strategy document that will be put before cabinet for approval.

Workforce consultation took place in 2021.

Extensive community and external stakeholder consultation also took place in 2021 virtually and through a survey. We reached out to Wolverhampton councillors, voluntary sector organisations and other stakeholders.

A wide scale survey was undertaken and the findings from residents across the City informed the final strategy document.

During the consultation process we:

- Shared our proposed vision for equality and asked people to what extent they agreed/ disagreed with the priorities. Respondents were also asked whether they have any other ideas to inform the vision and the strategy.
- Respondents were asked what other areas of inequality they feel the council should focus on.
- We asked respondents how the council could best keep people informed about its work on equalities.
- The questionnaire was open to everyone – Wolverhampton residents, staff, businesses and voluntary and community organisations.

## 8. Monitoring the strategy

The Corporate EDI Strategy will last for three years and will be supported by the Service Equality Plans developed by each of the directorates and the BLM & Equalities plan that emerged following feedback from the Race, Religion & Belief Forum meetings held with the Chief Executive Tim Johnson in June 2020 and the Gender, Disability and LGBT+ Staff Equality Forums meetings held with Strategic SEB sponsors during June – Nov 2020.

**Our Strategic Executive Board** will have overall responsibility for the strategic delivery of the strategy. This includes making sure that Equalities remains central to all work done by the council and holding directorates to account through performance reviews.

**The Governance Director** will have responsibility for the effective implementation of the strategy and its supporting service equality plans. Robust performance management arrangements will be put in place to ensure that we track and monitor progress on a monthly basis. High level summary reports will be provided, each quarter to the members Equality Advisory Group, Strategic SEB and the councils Corporate Equality Steering Group. We will monitor the delivery against performance indicators as set within each directorate.

**The lead officer for EDI, who reports to the Director of Governance**, will have responsibility for monitoring the delivery of the strategy's commitments and where necessary highlight issues of concern and make recommendations to SEB for further improvements.

## 9. Roles and responsibilities

- **Cabinet:** To consider equality implications in its decision-making; advance equality of opportunity in each portfolio area. Cabinet will receive updates on progress against the objectives during the year.
- **All elected members** - To be a community leader for equalities.

- **Senior Executive Board (SEB)** - To provide strategic leadership in the delivery of the council's equalities objectives and will receive reports on progress during the year.
- **Director of Governance:** as indicated above
- **Senior managers:** must be familiar with the strategy and be responsible for ensuring equality and diversity is an integral part of any policy development, service design and delivery, employment practices; and procuring and commissioning of goods and services.
- **Contractors:** To comply with equality duties set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- **All council staff:** To comply with the requirements of the approach, apply good practice and foster good relations with all stakeholders.

<b>CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL</b>	<b>Cabinet</b> <b>19 January 2022</b>
----------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------

<b>Report title</b>	Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2025	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Beverley Momenabadi Children and Young People	
<b>Key decision</b>	No	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	Emma Bennett, Executive Director for Families	
<b>Originating service</b>	Children's Services	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Alice Vickers	Co-Production and Youth Engagement Manager
	Tel	01902 553010
	Email	Alice.Vickers@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Children Social Care Leadership Team	7 October 2021
	Strategic Executive Board	16 December 2021

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**Recommendations for decision:**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve and endorse the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2025.

**Recommendation for noting:**

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. Cabinet member's roles and responsibilities as Corporate Parents.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 This strategy sets out the City of Wolverhampton Council's vision and commitment and explains how we, as the Council, will be an effective and trustworthy corporate parent. Our children and young people in and leaving care are some of the most vulnerable in society. It is crucial we as Corporate Parents work collaboratively with a range of partners to ensure they are supported for them to be safe, happy and thrive.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Corporate Parenting is the term used in law to describe our collective responsibility to care for, love and champion our children in care and our care leavers and ensure they have every opportunity to reach their full potential as they grow up.
- 2.2 The concept of Corporate Parenting was introduced by the Government in 1998 as part of a drive to improve the lives of children who are cared for by the local authority. The Corporate Parenting responsibility was reiterated and reinforced in 2007 with the release of the White Paper Care Matters-Time for Change and the underpinning legislation, Children and Young People Act 2008. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 which now requires all local authorities to evidence how they meet the seven Corporate Parenting Principles as they are statutory in relation to children and young people in and leaving care.
- 2.3 The Corporate Parenting Principles for children in care and care leavers, are:
- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
  - To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
  - To take into account of the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
  - To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
  - To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
  - For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
  - To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

## **3.0 Progress and discussions**

- 3.1 This strategy has been developed and co-produced with the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Independent Collective and with the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board.



3.2 Each principle has been evaluated analysing the strengths, challenges and what needs to happen. This feedback will form the basis of the Corporate Parenting Action plan and will be reviewed annually.

3.2 The City's Corporate Parenting strengths are:

- We are dedicated and passionate
- The voice of our young people is strong and valued by all including senior leaders
- There is good emotional and wellbeing support
- Co-production on service and policy development
- We have high aspirations and everyone wanting the best
- There is strong partnership working with equal offers of support, information, forward thinking and joined up working
- Integrated approach, celebration events, awareness of achievements, stakeholder engagement
- Young people's voice is respected, support with mental health, training flat, house project, Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) award and peer support
- Support and options for accommodation for young people leaving care
- Support for Education, Employment and Training

3.3 The City's Corporate Parenting challenges are identified as:

- Communication support for young people and keeping young people up to date with support on offer
- Digital inclusion
- Transport
- Equality of opportunity and support for those young people living out of city,
- Sustainability, stability and consistency for young people
- Preparing for adulthood support to foster carer

3.4 What needs to happen to ensure we are confidently meeting the principles of Corporate Parenting?

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people:
  - Share good practice across the partnership
  - Demonstrate clearly the ways we are listening to young people
  - Communicate effectively with our children and young people what support is there.
2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings:
  - Provide different tools for engagement
  - Endorse and share with young people that there are constant feedback opportunities

3. To take into account of the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people:
    - Celebrate the views of young people
    - Share good practice
  4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners:
    - Access to affordable transport
    - Inclusive and clear use of language
    - Ensure services and provisions are accessible and financially viable for young people
  5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people:
    - Sharing the success of young people across the partnership
    - Commitment from all stakeholders to showcase and secure opportunities and consistent support
  6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work:
    - Varied offer from education providers
    - ambitious expectations for young people
    - Support for care leavers in employment to be practical and flexible
  7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living:
    - To start independent skills earlier with Children in Care,
    - All young people to complete the ASDAN award
- 3.5 In addition the draft strategy has been shared for eight weeks consultation. This consultation asked for feedback and findings were shared and the following actions taken as a result.

#### **4.0 Evaluation of alternative options**

- 4.1 Option one would be to make no change to the existing strategy. This would result in the City of Wolverhampton Council remaining with a strategy that is over three years old.
- 4.2 Option two would be to not have a Corporate Parenting Strategy leaving the Council at risk of not meeting its statutory requirements.
- 4.3 Option three would be to update the existing strategy with the proposed strategy. This strategy evidences the Council's commitment to co-production with children and young people in care and care leavers as part of the Co-Production Charter.

## **5.0 Reasons for decision(s)**

- 5.1 Option three is the preferred option. The reason for the decision to approve and endorse this strategy is not only to meet the Council's statutory duties as part of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, but also to ensure our children and young people in care and care leavers are clear that the Council takes its corporate parenting responsibility serious and are ambitious for them and their future
- 5.2 Following analysis and benchmarking with statistical neighbours Corporate Parenting Strategies, it is clear that this strategy is ambitious, clear and co-produced.

## **6.0 Financial implications**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications attached to the Corporate Parenting Strategy, as the provision is covered within existing budgets.  
[JG/15112021/E]

## **7.0 Legal implications**

- 7.1 This Strategy is to ensure that the council is clear in its commitment to meet the requirements as laid out in the Children and Social Work Act 2017.  
[SB/13112021/P]

## **8.0 Equalities implications**

- 8.1 The Corporate Parenting Strategy's purpose is to mitigate the inequalities that children and young people who are in or leaving care face, as they represent some of the most disadvantaged children and young people. A full Equality Analysis is underway.

## **9.0 All other implications**

- 9.1 None.

## **10.0 Schedule of background papers**

- 11.1 None

## **11.0 Appendices**

- 11.1 Appendix 1: Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022-2025

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**The City of Wolverhampton Council**  
**Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy 2022 - 2025**

**Forward**

Councillor Momenabadi Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Mark Taylor Deputy CEO/Emma Bennett – Executive Director for Families

Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leavers Independent Collective (CLIC)  
endorsement Statement

**Introduction**

This strategy sets out City of Wolverhampton Council's vision and commitment and explains how we, as the Council, will be an effective and trustworthy corporate parent. Our children and young people in and leaving care are some of the most vulnerable in society. It is crucial we as Corporate Parents work collaboratively with a range of partners to ensure they are supported for them to be safe, happy and thrive.

This Strategy has been co-produced with our Children in Care Council, Care Leavers Independent Collective and The Corporate Parenting Partnership Board and has been endorsed by the Corporate Parenting Board. This is a three-year Corporate Parenting Strategy outlines our commitments, challenges, and the key steps we shall take to ensure that our children have the best possible outcomes in life.

Our key partners which include public services, private sector, the voluntary sector and the wider community all have their part to play. By working together, we can support our children and those leaving care to take advantage of the range of opportunities our city can offer to help them to reach their full potential.

Every good parent should ensure that:

- Children are safe and in a secure environment
- Children are protected and are supported against the dangers and risks of life.
- Children are ambitious reach their full potential.
- Children are celebrated and other share in their achievements.

A child who is cared for by the City of Wolverhampton Council has the right to expect everything from a corporate parent that would be expected from a good parent.

**Definitions**

Corporate Parenting is the term used in law to describe our collective responsibility to care for, love and champion our children in care and our care leavers and ensure they have every opportunity to reach their full potential as they grow up.

The concept of Corporate Parenting was introduced by the Government in 1998 as part of a drive to improve the lives of children who are care for by the local authority. The Corporate Parenting responsibility was reiterated and reinforced in 2007 with the release of the White Paper Care Matters-Time for Change and the underpinning

legislation, Children and Young People Act 2008. The Children and Social Work Act 2017 which now requires all local authorities to evidence how they meet the seven Corporate Parenting Principles as they are statutory in relation to children and young people in and leaving care,

The Corporate Parenting Principles for children in care and care leavers, are:

- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people
- To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
- To take into account of the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people
- To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners
- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people
- For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work
- To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

This strategy is about working with children and young people in and leaving care in a collaborative and co-productive way. The City of Wolverhampton Council recognises and celebrates its role as Corporate Parents and acknowledges that children and young people in care and care leavers have the right and responsibility to shape how services work for them. The strategy will take a City-wide approach to drive forward, support and strengthen the areas of good practice and work with key partners in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors. The voice of children and young people will be at the heart of service design, delivery and evaluation, including democratic decision-making processes. As corporate parents, relationships and connection will be at the core of everything we do. We will work collaboratively with children and young people to enable us to get things right for them. We will always have high aspirations and high expectations, develop respectful and empowering relationships with our children and young people, we will see their strengths, celebrate their achievements and create many lasting happy memories. The strategy will look at the areas of work that are needed to support young people in and leaving care over the next three years. This will then develop into the Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan, which will be overseen by the Corporate Parenting Board.

Legislations that relates to this strategy

- Children Act 1989
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989
- The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Social Work Act 2017

## **Our Commitment**

The City of Wolverhampton Council has a unique responsibility to children who are in care or leaving care as their 'corporate parents'. In simple terms, a corporate parent is intended to carry out many of the roles a parent would. The Council may not be able to provide everything a loving parent can, but they will provide the children and young people they are responsible for with the best possible support and care.

This strategy has been co-produced with the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Independent Collective, each principle has been evaluated analysing the strengths, challenges and what needs to happen. This feedback will form the basis of the Corporate Parenting Action plan and will be reviewed annually.

### **Strengths:**

- We are dedicated and passionate
- The voice of our young people is strong and valued by all including senior leaders
- There is good emotional and wellbeing support
- Co-production on service and policy development
- We have high aspirations and everyone wanting the best
- There is strong partnership working with equal offers of support, information, forward thinking and joined up working
- Integrated approach, celebration events, awareness of achievements, stakeholder engagement
- Young people's voice respected, support with mental health, training flat, house project, ASDAN award and peer support
- Support and options for accommodation for young people leaving care
- Support for Education, Employment and Training

### **Challenges:**

- Communication support for young people and keeping young people up to date with support on offer
- digital inclusion
- Transport
- equality of opportunity and support for those young people living out of city,
- sustainability, stability and consistency for young people
- Preparing for adulthood support to foster carer

### **What needs to happen to ensure we are confidently meeting the principles of Corporate Parenting?**

The Priorities of the Care Leavers Independent Collective and Children in Care Council need to be at the forefront of the progression of this Strategy. These are their priorities.

<u>Care Leavers Independent Collective</u> <u>Priorities</u>	<u>Children in Care Council</u> <u>Priorities</u>
-----------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rent reduction for working care leavers</li> <li>2. Apprenticeships/Uni offer with more ring-fenced posts outside of children's services and support for EET co-ordinator</li> <li>3. Health access/ Mental Health-glasses, dental and equipping young people with skills to cope with adversity and to engage with available support</li> <li>4. Digital Poverty</li> <li>5. Transport</li> <li>6. Professional being accountable to young people</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Celebrating the achievements of young people</li> <li>2. Workers understanding the feelings of young people and listening to their views</li> <li>3. More consistency and contact with social workers.</li> <li>4. To make sure of early intervention and to keep young people safe at all times</li> <li>5. Young people should be given more choices</li> </ol>
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Then each of the principles there are areas of focus based on the feedback from children and young people in and leaving care and the relevant stakeholders

- 1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people**
  - Share good practice across the partnership
  - Demonstrate clearly the ways we are listening to young people
  - Communicate effectively with our children and young people what support is there.
- 2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings**
  - Provide different tools for engagement
  - Endorse and share with young people that there are constant feedback opportunities
- 3. To take into account of the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people**
  - Celebrate the views of young people
  - Share good practice
- 4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners**
  - Access to affordable transport
  - Inclusive and clear use of language
  - Ensure services and provisions are accessible and financially viable for young people
- 5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people**
  - Sharing the success of young people across the partnership
  - Commitment from all stakeholders to showcase and secure opportunities and consistent support



**6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work**

- Varied offer from education providers
- Ambitious expectations for young people
- Support in for care leavers in employment to be practical and flexible

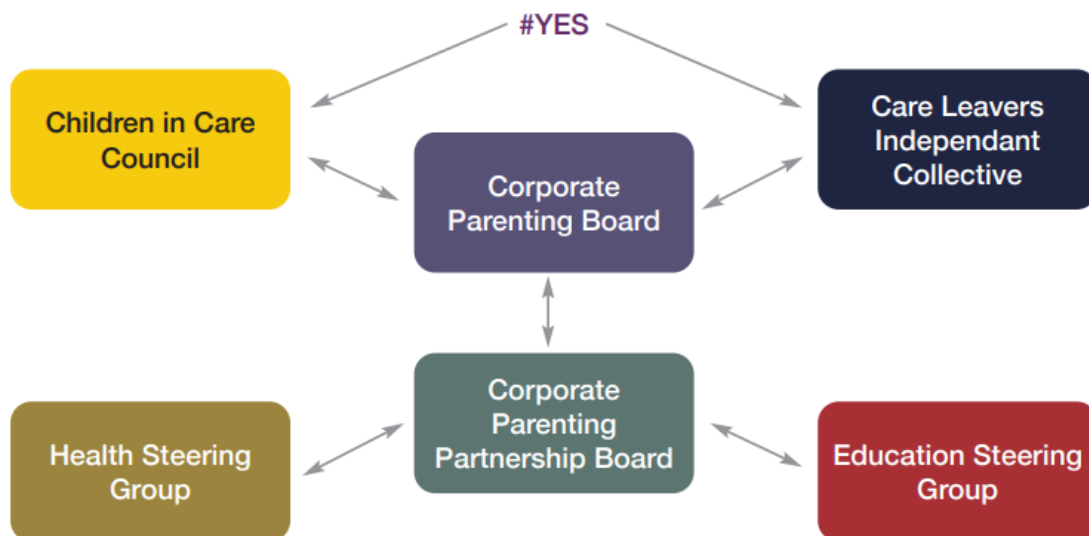
**7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.**

- To start independent skills earlier with Children in Care,
- All young people to complete the ASDAN award

**As a result as a Council, we will**

- Know our children, their needs, talents and aspirations and promote their interests
- Hold high aspirations for their future and expect the best for and from them
- Take an interest in their successes and problems and show our pride in their achievements, and celebrate them
- Listen to their views and ensure they influence practice, service developments and policy.
- Ensure they are consulted about their own lives and plans
- Recognise, support and respect their identity in all aspects
- Promote and support high academic achievement.
- Support their health and emotional well-being and resilience
- Support transition to adult life and promote their economic prospects & prepare them to become responsible citizens.

**Governance**



The Corporate Parenting Board made up of elected members and Corporate Parenting Partnership Board made of partners will be influenced and guided by the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Independent Collective as experts by experience and will be active partners in co-producing developments that effect Children in Care and Care Leavers.

The Governance of this strategy is committed to promote a strong corporate parenting ethos and consider how services can be delivered differently to meet the needs of the care population as effectively as possible. To be successful the City of Wolverhampton Council it is vital that the council recognises, celebrates and promotes the importance of its partners in the statutory, private and third sector. The City of Wolverhampton Council alone cannot meet the needs of Children in Care and Care Leavers and needs to work effectively with partners to demonstrate the statutory Corporate Parenting Principles.

Whilst this strategy is the City of Wolverhampton Council document it is hoped that it will be adopted by our partners and the resultant Action Plan is held across all the sectors.

### **Children in Care Council**

The Children in Care Council is made of young people aged 11-18 who are in care of the City Council, some living with foster carers, residential homes, friends and family carers and some living independently. These young people are nominated to become members by their social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO), foster carers or other professionals who feel that young people would benefit from the skills acquired as part of the council.

This group meets fortnightly. The young people completed induction training; interview training and some will complete the Total Respect Training. In addition to the group meeting they meet twice a year with the Corporate Parenting Board. The Children in Care Council work plan includes all of the reports sent to this board. This process is to ensure the experiences and opinions of the young people are imbedded into service delivery and development. This group attends national forums through the National Children's Board which advises on national policy.

### **Care Leavers Independent Collective**

The Care Leaver Independent Collective is made up of young people who are supported by the council leaving care team known as the Reach Team, these young people are 18 -25 and are either living independently, living with a host or staying put with foster carers. They are recruited to the forum through advertisements on Facebook, through their Young Person's Advisors (YPA) or social worker.

The group meets fortnightly and has its meeting combined with a peer support element as these young people can be very isolated. The formal part of the meeting is for an hour and half where they look at policy developments and service provision and give feedback to officers. This group also takes part in the National Care Leaver Covenant and National Benchmarking Forum which feeds into national policy development for Care Leavers.

## **Corporate Parenting Partnership Board**

Corporate Parenting Partnership Board is made up of colleagues from the Council, Police, Fire Service, Health Services, the Voluntary Sector and other relevant organisations. These colleagues are at an appropriate senior level within their organisation to be able to influence policy and strategy within their organisation to assist with the raising of opportunities and aspirations of our care population in line with the seven principles. The actions and recommendations agreed by this group will be shared with the Corporate Parenting Board, the Children in Care Council and the Care Leavers Forum.

## **The Corporate Parenting Board**

The Corporate Parenting Board is made up of cabinet member for children and young people and 10 elected members. In addition, a care experienced young person and a foster carer are advisors and sit on the board. The board meets six times per year to consider and provide clear strategic and political direction in relation to corporate parenting. This includes satisfying themselves that

- All Councillors and the City of Wolverhampton Council Service Groups are all fulfilling their roles and responsibilities as corporate parents proactively and make a demonstrable commitment to prioritising the needs of looked after children and young people.
- The City has high ambitions and aspirations for all looked after children and care leavers.
- Undertake regular monitoring of the outcomes associated with the seven principles.
- Set objectives for monitoring the work of and evaluating the progress of the Senior Officers Group.

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<b>CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL</b>	<b>Cabinet</b> <b>19 January 2022</b>
----------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------

<b>Report title</b>	Determined Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools 2023-2024	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Dr Hardacre Education, Skills and Work	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	Emma Bennett	Executive Director of Families
<b>Originating service</b>	Children's Services	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Bill Hague	Head of Service, School Business and Support 01902 555100 <a href="mailto:Bill.Hague@wolverhampton.gov.uk">Bill.Hague@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Children's and Education Leadership Team	9 December 2021

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**Recommendations for decision:**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for secondary and primary school admissions at the normal year of entry for 2023-2024 and that the Secretary of State be notified by 28 February 2022.
2. Approve the proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2023-2024.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To approve the schemes for co-ordinated school admission arrangements for secondary and primary schools and the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for 2023-2024.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 In accordance with legislation and the Schools Admission Code, each Local Authority is required to draw up a scheme (or schemes) for co-ordinating admission arrangements for all mainstream, maintained schools (community, voluntary controlled, voluntary aided, foundation and academies) within their area.
- 2.2 In addition, each Admission Authority is required to determine admission arrangements every year. The City of Wolverhampton Council's (CWC) responsibility in this regard is for the Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools in Wolverhampton. For academies the academy trust(s) are the admitting authority not CWC, however some academies follow CWC admission arrangements.

## **3.0 Admission Arrangements**

- 3.1 There are no proposals for changes to the admission arrangements.
- 3.2 The Local Authorities within the West Midlands and beyond operate an inter-Local Authority scheme for primary and secondary admissions. There are no proposals to change the schemes in this regard.
- 3.3 For 2023-2024 the CWC will maintain waiting lists for primary schools including year two to three transfers and secondary schools until 31 December 2023.
- 3.4 During the Autumn term 2021, Governors were asked to consider their recommendations in respect of their school's Published Admission Number (PAN). A significant amount of work has already been undertaken to ensure a sufficient level of school places are available in future school years.

## **4.0 Evaluation of alternative options**

- 4.1 One alternative option may have been to propose changes to the admissions arrangements. However, a full consultation was conducted in 2015, and the current arrangements are compliant with the School Admissions Code 2021. A full consultation will be undertaken in the Autumn term of 2022.

## **5.0 Reasons for decision(s)**

- 5.1 As prescribed by The School Admissions Code 2014, Admission authorities must set (determine) admission arrangements annually. If there are no changes to admission arrangements, they must be consulted on at least once every seven years. A full consultation was conducted in 2015 and will next be undertaken in the Autumn term of 2022.

There are no proposed changes to the admission arrangements, and they comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code 2021.

## **6.0 Financial implications**

- 6.1 The Schools Admissions service is funded largely through the Dedicated Schools Grant as an approved centrally managed service. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.  
[TS/30112021/G]

## **7.0 Legal implications**

- 7.1 School admission arrangements are heavily regulated by the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 as amended by the Education and Skills Act 2008. Regulations also apply and the CWC is required to comply with the School Admissions Code in relation to admission arrangements.
- 7.2 The Schemes for co-ordinated admissions and the Admission arrangements for Wolverhampton community schools, voluntary controlled schools, free schools and academies comply with the current relevant legislation.  
[SZ/03122021/P]

## **8.0 Equalities implications**

- 8.1 Initial screening was carried out (equality analysis-stage one-initial analysis) and no significant impacts have been highlighted. Admission arrangements must be compliant with the School Admissions Code 2021 that adheres to and references the Equality Act 2010.

## **9.0 All other implications**

- 9.1 The City of Wolverhampton school admission arrangements allow for a child with an Education Health and Care Plan which names the school to be admitted.
- 9.2 The oversubscription criterion includes children and young people in care and in care as the highest criterion. This includes children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.
- 9.3 The criterion allows for medical and social claims for a preferred school to be considered.

## **10.0 Schedule of background papers**

- 10.1 School Admissions Code 2021 and School Admissions Regulations 2012.

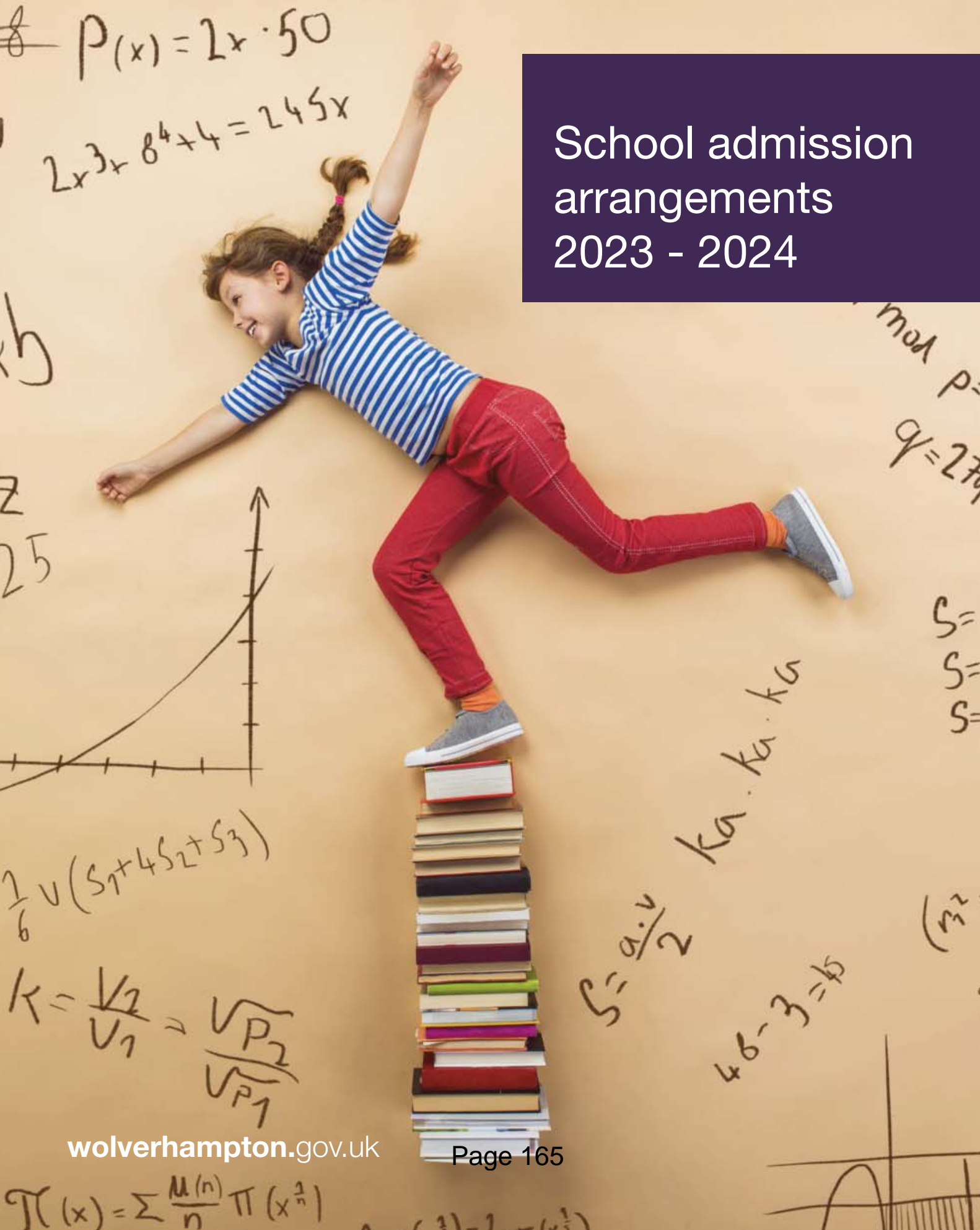
## **11.0 Appendices**

- 11.1 Appendix 1: School Admission Arrangements 2023-2024.

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# School admission arrangements 2023 - 2024





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Definitions



# 1

## Overview of the application process

The scheme is an “Inter-Local Authority” scheme whereby Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Telford and Wrekin, Walsall and Wolverhampton Local Authorities have agreed to co-ordinate applications for their schools to ensure that each child receives the best possible single offer of a place at a school, based upon parents’ preferences.

In brief terms:

- Parents whose child has an Education and Health Care Plan follow separate admission procedures through the Statutory Assessment or Annual Review process.
- Parents will only have to fill in one application form, on which they will state their school preferences and reasons for those preferences. Applications are made online;
- Five preferences are invited;
- Initially, all preferences are treated as equal, and sent out as equal to other admission authorities as appropriate (i.e. voluntary aided and academy schools in Wolverhampton, and other participating Local Authorities as detailed above).
- After over-subscription criteria have been applied (where appropriate), if more than one school place can potentially be offered, the single offer is for the available school the parent ranked highest on the preference form.

# 2

## Primary admissions

Including admission into Reception Year and transfer from Infant to Junior education.

### Admission into reception year

**If your child was born between 1/09/2018 and 31/08/2019 you must apply for a place in Reception Year before the 15 January 2023.**

The online application will go live in November 2022. Hard copies of the form will only be made available on request. Parents are invited to name and give reasons for applying for up to 5 preferred schools, ranked in order of preference, by 23:59 **15 January 2023**. Parents should name all schools (to a Maximum of 5), for which they wish their child to be considered for a place, including any Voluntary-Aided schools, Academies or Free schools and/or any school outside the Wolverhampton area.

By **14 February 2023**, the admissions and appeals team will send other Local Authorities and own Admitting Authority Schools details of applicants for their schools. These details will not reveal the order of preference. All Own Admitting Authority schools will apply their over-subscription criteria, and return their complete ranked list of applicants to the admissions and appeals team who will then compare the potential offer lists. If more than one school place can potentially be offered, a place will be allocated at the available school that the parent ranked highest on their application.

On **17 April 2023** parents who made their applications online will be able to view their allocation via the online admissions facility. The admissions and appeals team will also write to every applicant resident in Wolverhampton telling them of their allocated school place.

**Parents will be required to respond to any offers made within 10 school days.**

## Transfer from infant to junior education

There are Infant Schools in Wolverhampton which cater for children up to the age of seven. At this point there is an expectation that pupils will transfer to the corresponding Junior School.

Parents of children attending a Wolverhampton Infant School will receive a letter from the Local Authority in the Autumn Term 2022 informing them that their child will automatically transfer to the corresponding Junior School.

If the parent wishes for this to happen they will need to take no action. If, however they wish to apply for a place in a Primary School they should make an application via the online application system.

## Primary school application timeline

### 2022

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By 10 Nov Online application is made live

### 2023

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15 Jan Closing date for application forms to be submitted

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13 Feb The final date for late applications

---

14 Feb City of Wolverhampton Council sends/receives unranked preferences to/from other authorities

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1 Mar Schools submit final lists of applicants in ranked order

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9 Mar Wolverhampton provisionally allocates places

---

By 29 Mar Final data exchange with co-ordinating authorities

---

17 Apr Allocation day

# 3

## Secondary school applications

**Children born between 1/9/2011 and 31/8/2012 will commence secondary education in September 2023. Parents must apply for a secondary school place before 31 October 2022.**

The online application is made live in **September 2022**. Applications should be made online, hard copies of the form will only be made available on request. Parents are invited to name and give reasons for applying for up to 5 preferred schools, ranked in order of preference, by 23:59 **31 October 2022**. Parents should name all schools (to a Maximum of 5), for which they wish their child to be considered for a place, including any Voluntary-Aided schools, Academies or Free schools and/or any school outside the Wolverhampton area, with the exception of any independent schools.

By **18 November 2022**, the admissions and appeals team will send other Local Authorities and Own Admission Authority Schools details of applicants for their schools. These details will not reveal the order of preference. All admission authorities will apply their over-subscription admission criteria including any selection tests and return their complete ranked list of applicants to the admissions and appeals team who will then compare the potential offer lists. If more than one school place can potentially be offered, they will allocate a place at the available school that the parent ranked highest on their application.

On **1 March 2023** parents who made their applications online will be able to view their allocation via the online admissions facility. The admissions and appeals team will also write to every applicant resident in Wolverhampton telling them of their allocated school place. **Parents will be required to respond to any offers made within 10 school days.**

## Secondary school application timeline

### 2022

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By 8 Sep	Online application is made live
31 Oct	Closing date for application forms to be submitted
18 Nov	City of Wolverhampton Council sends/receives unranked preferences to/from other authorities
29 Nov	The final date for late applications

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### 2023

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13 Jan	Schools submit final lists of applicants in ranked order
25 Jan	Wolverhampton provisionally allocates places
By 11 Feb	Final data exchange with co-ordinating authorities
1 Mar	Allocation day

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## 4

## Admission criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools

A child with an Educational Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which names the school will be admitted. Remaining places are allocated as detailed below.

Where there are less applicants than the PAN, all children will be admitted. In the event the school is oversubscribed, the admission authority will apply the following oversubscription criteria in order of priority.

### 1. **Children and Young People in Care and previous Children and Young People in Care**

Children and young people in care are children who are in (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of the social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time the application is made to school. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order) immediately following having been looked after and those children who appear (to the admission authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.



#### **Supporting evidence**

If the child is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by that authority this must be indicated on the common application form and evidence (e.g. evidence of child in care from the placement authority) to support this claim must be submitted with the common application form. If the child has previously been in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation by them and has subsequently been adopted, or is subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order this must be indicated on the

common application form and evidence (e.g. adoption certificate/copy of court order) to support this claim must be submitted with the common application form. For children in state care outside of England who ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted the relevant legal document(s) must be supplied.

## **2. Children attending the corresponding Infant School (Infant to Junior transfers only)**

### **3. Medical/social**

Whether there are specific medical or social circumstances that can be met only by the child's attendance at the preferred school.



#### **Supporting evidence**

If parents believe there are specific reasons, medical or social, for claiming priority for their child to attend a particular school these special factors must be indicated on the form and evidence (e.g. a letter from a registered health professional such as a doctor or a social worker) to support this claim must be submitted with the common application form. The information submitted must state clearly the effects of the condition/illness and why the preferred school is the only school that can meet their child's needs. This is necessary because parents would be asking the Authority to assess their child as having a stronger case than many other children, even some who live closer to the school in question than they do. The information provided will be used to prioritise the request for a particular school. Please note that only in exceptional cases are places prioritised in respect of a child's/parent's medical/social grounds.

### **4. Siblings**

Whether siblings attend the school (or the associated Infant/Junior School) and will be attending the school in September 2023. See definition of a sibling on page 21.

## 5. Religious reasons for voluntary controlled schools (PRIMARY ONLY)

To a child and family who has religious reasons for attending the preferred voluntary controlled school and for whom it can be demonstrated by the faith leader that s/he has current strong religious connections. This reason will only be taken into consideration if the preferred school is the nearest Church of England (voluntary controlled or voluntary aided) school to the child's home address (measured by a straight line from the home address to the school using the Local Authority's software).



### Supporting evidence

A Supplementary Information form will be provided for parents and your faith leader to complete, to enable them to demonstrate your child and family's current strong religious connections.

## 6. Distance

How close the child lives to the school requested with those living closest to the school getting the highest priority. The distance from the applicant's home and school is taken in a straight line between the respective school and the child's home address. The distance is measured using the Local Authority's software. If there are a limited number of spaces available and we cannot distinguish between applicants using the above criteria, children who live in the same block of flats will be offered the available spaces randomly selected by drawing lots.

# 5

## Additional arrangements and information

### Applications for children to be admitted outside their normal age group

Parents who wish for their child to be considered for admission to a class outside of their normal age group must make an application for the normal age group in the first instance by 15 January 2023.

This will include Parents of a “summer born child” that may choose not to send that child to school until the September following their fifth birthday and may request that they are admitted out of their normal age group – to reception rather than year 1. Any parent wishing to make such a request must put the request in writing to the Admissions and Appeals section no later than 15 January 2023.

This request should be in the form of a written letter of application outlining the reasons why they wish for their child to be admitted into a class outside of their normal age group and enclosing any supportive evidence and documentation that they wish to be taken into account as part of that request.

Requests will be considered on an individual basis and decisions will be reached by taking account of the parent’s views; information about the child’s academic, social and emotional development; where relevant, their medical history and the views of a medical professional; whether they have previously been educated out of their normal age group; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely. The view of the head teacher of the school concerned will also be sought as part of the decision-making process.



If the request is agreed and the year group for which the parents have requested a place is for a future year group, i.e. Reception in September 2024, then the original application is withdrawn and the parents must submit a fresh application for Reception 2024 when applications open in the autumn term of 2023. Please note that parents only have the right to re-apply for a place. Where the decision is to agree the request for an application in Reception the following year, that application is considered alongside all other applications received and parents will be advised of the outcome of that application on national offer day. No place is reserved or held for the child in advance.

Before any application is submitted it is strongly recommended that parents/carers also read the DFE guidance which can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/summer-born-children-school-admission>





## Changes of address (occurring during the allocation process)

In these circumstances - or if a query arises in respect of your child's place of residence - you will be required to supply evidence of your new address. This would need to be validated by documentary evidence such as a solicitor's letter confirming the completion of a house purchase or rent book confirming tenancy.

## Deferred entry

A child's parents may defer the date at which their child, below compulsory school age, is admitted to the school, until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age and not beyond the first day of the summer term 2024. A child may take up a part-time place until later in the school year, but not beyond the point at which the child reached compulsory school age. Upon receipt of the offer of a place a parent should notify the school, as soon as possible, that they wish to either defer their child's entry to the school or take up a part-time place.

## Financial implications

There is no charge or cost related to the admission of a child to a Wolverhampton school.

## Fraudulent or misleading applications

The Local Authority will follow up any reports they receive that allege that a fraudulent or misleading application has been made.

Parents can alert the Local Authority of any potential fraudulent applications by contacting the Admissions and Appeals team. Contact details are published in the composite prospectuses.

## Late applications

Applications received after the closing date will be treated as late.

Applications received after the closing date and before the final date for late submissions with approved written evidence will only be incorporated into the initial allocation process if the late submission is for a valid reason or parents can demonstrate a material change of circumstances (see page 16).

When submitting late applications parents must give reasons in writing and supporting documentary evidence for the late submission. The appropriate admission authority will give consideration to the reasons, following which the application will be:

Either 1) incorporated into the initial allocation and assessed against the over-subscription criteria for the school(s) concerned

Or 2) considered only after all other applications.

Applications without written reasons for the late application or received after the final date for late submissions will only be considered after all other applications and the notification may be sent shortly after the national offer day.

## Material changes of circumstance

In claiming material changes of circumstances, the applicant, at the time of application, must supply documentary evidence to confirm the changes. An example of material changes of circumstances is a house move that necessitates a change of preferences. This would need to be validated by documentary evidence such as a solicitor's letter confirming the completion of a house purchase or rent book confirming tenancy. An impending change of circumstances should not delay the submission of the preference form.

If applicants' circumstances change during the course of making the application that relate to any of the published criteria it is the applicant's responsibility to provide evidence to the Admissions and Appeals Team as this may affect the outcome of the application.

## Sixth form admission arrangements for academy and community schools

Applications for admission to Sixth form will be dealt with by the school in accordance with the school's published admission arrangements.

Each school which admits pupils into Year 12 is required to publish in the school prospectus the minimum requirements for entry into sixth form.

Pupils already in school will not be required to apply formally for places in Year 12 but should have reached the minimum entry qualifications for admission into the sixth form.





Minimum entry requirements are the same for internal and external applications.

External applicants must not be refused the opportunity to make an application, or advised that they can only be placed on a waiting list rather than make a formal application

Pupils will be considered for entry into Year 12 based on their academic attainment and/or individual subject grade criteria and the availability and suitability of courses at the school. Entry to Year 12 is not dependent upon attendance, behaviour records, and perceptions of attitude or motivation.

Schools must not interview children or their families for entry to Year 12 although meetings can be held to provide advice on options and entry requirements for particular courses.

Any applicant refused a place in year 12 is entitled to appeal to an independent appeal panel whether the child is already attending the school or is an external candidate.

## Special educational needs

The admission of children with an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) will be agreed between the Local Authority's SEN Statutory Assessment and Review Team, parents and school in accordance with parental preference, as far as possible, and the child's individual needs. Children with an EHCP are given overall priority to the named school. This will reduce the number of places at the school, which are available for allocation in accordance with the above criteria.

## Supplementary information forms

In order to assess the application for Voluntary Aided schools and Academies parents are required to provide additional information to that collected on the preference form and should complete a "supplementary information form". For Wolverhampton schools these forms will be made available on the City of Wolverhampton Council website and they should be returned to the relevant school or schools by the specified date. In the case of Voluntary Controlled schools the supplementary information form must be returned to the Local Authority. Please note if the school is over-subscribed the additional information gathered will be used to determine the allocation of school places.

Parents who are applying for schools outside of Wolverhampton are advised to contact the appropriate LA to determine whether any Supplementary Information Forms are required, their submission date and to whom they must be submitted.

Parents should be aware that where a Supplementary Information Form is completed it will not be regarded as a valid application unless the LA has also received a completed application showing an expressed preference for the school concerned.

Similarly, if applicants are required to sit school tests they will be required to complete an "entrance examination registration" form.

## Tie breakers for over-subscribed schools

If there are an insufficient number of places to accommodate all the children of a particular criterion, the next criterion will be used to assess the applications concerned in order to prioritise applications.

## Unsuccessful applications and appeals

If the applicant is a Wolverhampton resident and the admissions and appeals team is unable to allocate a place at any of the preferred schools then a place will be allocated at the nearest Wolverhampton maintained school that has a place available. Allocations to Own Admitting Authority schools in this case would be made following consultation with the governing body concerned.

For Wolverhampton residents, where preferences cannot be met, the Admissions and Appeals Team will notify parents accordingly, setting out the reasons and advising of the right of appeal, how to lodge an appeal and to whom.

For other applicants for Wolverhampton schools the home LA will notify parents of the reasons why parental preference cannot be met and to whom any appeal should be lodged.

Parents are only entitled to one appeal per year group, per school, per academic year unless there is a material change of circumstances.

Further information can be found at  
<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/education-and-schools/school-admission-appeals>

## Waiting lists

If the applicant has not been allocated their first preference, the application will automatically be placed on a waiting list for the preferred Wolverhampton school or schools that were ranked higher than the allocated school.

Unless material changes of circumstances have been demonstrated a child's name will only be included on those lists for schools that were ranked higher on the application than the school allocated to the child and, therefore, if a child is allocated a place at the first preference school the child's name will not be added to the waiting list for any of the other preferred schools.

The waiting lists will be ranked in admission criteria order. As soon as places become vacant the LA on behalf of the admitting authorities will re-allocate those places from the waiting list, even if this is before appeals have been heard.

The Authority will maintain the waiting lists until 31 December 2023.

Requests for inclusion on waiting lists for non-Wolverhampton schools must be made in writing to the relevant local authority for the school concerned for assessment in accordance with their scheme.

A child's position on a waiting list is not fixed. This means that a child's position on the waiting list could go up or down during the time that it is on the list. Any late applications accepted will be added to the waiting list in accordance with the oversubscription criteria.

## **Withdrawing offer places**

Any allegations received by the admission authority of people providing false accommodation addresses when applying for school places shall be fully investigated and, if found to be true, allocated places may be withdrawn, as appropriate.

External applicants must not be refused the opportunity to make an application, or advised that they can only be placed on a waiting list rather than make a formal application.

Pupils will be considered for entry into Year 12 based on their academic attainment and/or individual subject grade criteria and the availability and suitability of courses at the school. Entry to Year 12 is not dependent upon attendance, behaviour records, and perceptions of attitude or motivation.

Schools must not interview children or their families for entry to Year 12 although meetings can be held to provide advice on options and entry requirements for particular courses.

Any applicant refused a place in year 12 is entitled to appeal to an independent appeal panel whether the child is already attending the school or is an external candidate.

## 6

## Definitions

### Sibling

For admission purposes, a sibling is a child who resides permanently at the same address as the child for whom a place is being requested, and is one of the following:-

- brother/sister
- half brother/sister (i.e. share one common parent)
- or stepbrother/sister (i.e. related by a parent's marriage)
- any other child for whom it can be demonstrated that s/he is residing permanently at the same address (e.g. under the terms of a residence order).

The sibling connection only applies where the child concerned has a sibling attending the school at the time of the application as well as at the time of admission, (i.e. for normal year of entry applications siblings are expected to be attending the same school in September 2024). A sibling connection will not be accepted if the original place was obtained by using fraudulent or false information.

### Children and young people in care

Children and young people in care are children who are (a) in the care of the local authority, or (b) being provided with accommodation by a local authority in the exercise of the social services functions (see the definition in Section 22(1) of the Children Act 1989) at the time the application is made to school. Previously looked after children are children who were looked after, but ceased to be so because they were adopted (or became subject to a child arrangements order or special guardianship order)

## Home address

Parents are asked to provide their child's home address, i.e. the usual place of residence on weekdays and nights. Please note that childminder's addresses will not be accepted. This applies to both formal childminders and relatives and friends acting in a childminding capacity.

The home address of a pupil is considered to be the permanent residence of a child in a residential property when the place is offered. Documentary evidence relating to house moves taking place between National Offer Days (1 March 2023 and 17 April 2023 respectively) and the start of the academic year in September 2023 will be considered. The address must be the child's only or main residence and is either:

- Owned by the child's parent(s), carer(s) or guardian(s)
- Leased to or rented by the child's parent(s), carer(s) or guardian(s) under lease or written rental agreement.

Documentary evidence of ownership or rental agreement may be required together with proof of actual permanent residence at the property concerned.

Where parents have shared responsibility for the child and the child lives with both parents for part of the week then the main residence will be determined as the address where the child lives for the majority of the school week. If the child equally shares living with both parents, the parents must inform the Local Authority which address should be used for admission purposes and which parent will make the application. Parents will be requested to supply documentary evidence to support the address used for the application.



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 of Wolverhampton Council, Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square,  
Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

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<b>CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL</b>	<b>Cabinet</b> <b>19 January 2022</b>
----------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------

<b>Report title</b>	Building Surveys of Large Panel System Blocks	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal City Assets and Housing	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	Ross Cook – Director of City Housing and Environment	
<b>Originating service</b>	Housing	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Lakhi Sahota Tel Email	Housing Enabling Officer 01902 551610 Lakhi.Sahota2@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	City Housing Environment Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing Briefing	7 December 2021 25 November 2021 15 December 2021

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### Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the requirement to hold a total of 18 void properties within the six tower-blocks built using the Large Panel Systems (LPS) to enable the completion of specialist surveys.
2. Hold suitable void properties within the each of the six tower-blocks to allow the survey work to be carried out.
3. Approve the rehousing of the tenants from these dwellings following a consultation period and housing needs assessment.
4. Approve a level of compensation payment and disturbance payments as detailed in exempt Appendix 2 for those tenants in identified properties within the six tower blocks to voluntarily move to suitable, alternative accommodation to decant the property in order to carry out the specialist surveys.

5. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing in consultation with the Director of City Environment, to agree any alternative compensation payment and disturbance payment to that detailed in exempt Appendix 2 under exceptional circumstances.

**Recommendation for noting:**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Note a further report on the outcome of the testing and the future investment or regeneration of these tower blocks will be presented to a future meeting.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet on the requirement to test the six council owned tower blocks constructed using the large panel system, in accordance with Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) letter as detailed in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 To hold suitable void properties in the six tower blocks to allow the survey work to be undertaken.
- 1.3 To approve the requirement for a total of 18 flats from the six tower blocks to be held as void properties until the testing has been carried out.
- 1.4 To approve the priority rehousing of tenants from specific properties following a consultation period and housing needs assessment to facilitate the surveys/testing.
- 1.5 To approve a level of compensation payments and disturbance payments as detailed in exempt Appendix 2 for those tenants in identified properties within the six tower blocks to voluntarily move to suitable, alternative accommodation and vacate their property, so it can be used for the specialist surveys.
- 1.6 To approve delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing in consultation with the Director of City Housing and Environment, to agree an alternative cash incentive payment and disturbance payment to that detailed in exempt Appendix 2 for any exceptional circumstances, in order to secure a voluntary move.
- 1.7 To receive a further report on the outcome of the testing which will determine the future investment or regeneration requirements of these tower blocks.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 There are six council owned tower-blocks constructed using the Large Panel System (LPS), where pre-cast concrete panels are used to form the walls and floors, which were craned into position and secured with steel fixings.
- 2.2 A breakdown of the addresses and wards of the six tower blocks are detailed in the following table:

ADDRESS	WARDS
Arthur Greenwood Court, Coronation Road, Wolverhampton WV14 0HS	Ettingshall
Hugh Gaitskell Court, Parkview Road, Bilston WV14 6HE	Bilston North
Winston Churchill Court, Parkview Road, Bilston WV14 6HF	Bilston North
Clem Attlee Court, Parkview Road, Bilston WV14 6HG	Bilston North
St Andrews House, Evans Street, Wolverhampton WV6 0PW	St Peters
Whitmore House, Lowe Street, Wolverhampton WV6 0PN	St Peters

2.3 In the wake of the Grenfell Tower tragedy, Local Authorities across the country were undertaking comprehensive audits of their high-rise stock. In September 2017, the then Department for Communities and Local Government, issued a circular (see appendix 1) to all councils highlighting concerns about the safety of Large Panel System buildings (after major problems were identified in four blocks on the Ledbury Estate in the London Borough of Southwark).

2.4 A range of testing has already been undertaken by specialist structural engineers on these blocks in accordance with best practice. The testing that remains to be done follows the guidance in BR511 (published by the Building Research Establishment) and will assess the structural strength of the buildings. The surveys will inform the future management and investment approaches for these blocks.

### 3.0 Proposals

3.1 In order to carry out the surveys, it is essential that testing is carried out to three flats adjacent to the flank end walls, from three separate floors within each block. Testing is required to 18 flats in total. For the work to be delivered cost effectively, all of the surveys must be carried out in a block at the same time.

3.2 The surveys will require the properties to be tested and stripped of any asbestos containing materials that are present, the removal of fitted kitchen units and disconnection of electric and water services. Once the testing has been completed, there will be reinstatement works required. In total, these works will take around 4-6 weeks. It is not feasible for this to be carried out to occupied properties and it is therefore necessary to utilise any current or future void properties to minimise the disruption to existing tenants.

3.3 There are currently five void flats that can be used for testing as they are situated in the correct position within the respective tower blocks. These have been requested to remain

as void properties until testing can be carried out, and any additional void that arises will also be held for testing. The remaining flats required are currently occupied but should additional void properties become available they will be held for the purposes of the survey work and not made available for allocation.

- 3.4 It is proposed to contact tenants living in identified properties by letter to provide details of the proposed survey works and establish their interest in being rehoused. All tenants will be offered financial support to move on a first come, first serve basis as detailed in exempt Appendix 2.
- 3.5 Delegated authority is required for the Cabinet Member for City Assets and Housing in consultation with the Director of City Housing and Environment to agree any alternative compensation to that listed in Appendix 2, should there be exceptional circumstances to consider, in order to secure a voluntary move.
- 3.6 If additional flats are required after this process, a housing needs assessment will be carried out to relocate tenants and support given to enable alternative accommodation to be found.

#### **4.0 Alternative Options**

- 4.1 If the testing is not carried out, we will be unaware of whether the blocks are suitable for further investment or regeneration.

#### **5.0 Reasons for decision(s)**

- 5.1 The surveys are needed to inform our long-term approach to the management of these assets.

#### **6.0 Financial implications**

- 6.1 The cost of the surveys will be met from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme which includes approved budgets for investment in these blocks as part of the programme for High Rise Mechanical and Electrical Infrastructure, Fire Safety and Sprinkler Systems.
- 6.2 Should the results of the survey not support going ahead with this investment, then the re-provision of homes for the residents and eventual demolition of the blocks would need to be prioritised and provided for within the HRA capital programme going forward.  
[JM/16112021/B]

#### **7.0 Legal implications**

- 7.1 Under sections 3 and 4 of the Housing Act 2004, a local housing authority must keep the housing conditions under review with a view to identifying any action that may need to be taken by them. A local housing authority must carry out an inspection if they consider it appropriate when determining if any category 1 or 2 hazards exist on the premises.

7.2 Under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 local authorities have power to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions.

7.3 It is possible for qualifying tenants to receive a payment of Home Loss compensation and/or Disturbance payment through the Land Compensation Act 1973. This will vary depending on the tenant's circumstances.

[JA/18112021/E]

## **8.0 Equalities implications**

8.1 The proposals in this report will allow tenants to volunteer to move and be supported in their rehousing requirements to provide vacant properties to be surveyed to help understand the construction design of the six tower blocks. An assessment of their housing need will be undertaken should there be an oversupply of voluntary transfers.

## **9.0 All other implications**

9.1 The proposals in this report will allow the testing of non-traditional properties to establish a programme of investment or regeneration proposals to improve the quality of council stock.

9.2 The proposals within this report will allow the testing of existing stock to inform future investment or regeneration programmes which will bring forward better quality affordable housing for tenants.

9.3 The outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) declared by the World Health Organisation was described as a 'Global Pandemic' on 11 March 2020. The restrictions throughout the pandemic have impacted on the management and maintenance of council stock due to social distancing requirements and working in properties occupied by vulnerable tenants.

9.4 The proposals in this report will be carried out in line with current Government guidelines and it may be necessary to carry out consultation in a number of ways such as contacting tenants via personal mobiles, email and also utilising Microsoft Teams, rather than holding face to face meetings with vulnerable tenants.

## **10.0 Schedule of background papers**

10.1 None.

## **11.0 Appendices**

11.1 Appendix 1 - Department for Communities and Local Government – Safety of Large Panel System Buildings letter.

11.2 **Exempt** Appendix 2 – Tenant Compensation.



Department for  
Communities and  
Local Government

*Department for Communities and Local  
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Tel: 0303 444 1850  
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[www.gov.uk/dclg](http://www.gov.uk/dclg)

5 September 2017

Dear Local Authority Chief Executive

## **SAFETY OF LARGE PANEL SYSTEM BUILDINGS**

You may be aware of recent work being undertaken with regard to the safety of four tower blocks in the London Borough of Southwark. I have previously written to local authorities with buildings similar to those that have been affected, and I am now writing more widely to all local authorities and housing associations to ensure you are aware of the situation and to outline actions you may want to consider in relation to any Large Panel System buildings within your control.

In the London Borough of Southwark, residents raised concerns about cracks in their buildings on the Ledbury Estate. Structural engineers were subsequently instructed by the council, to investigate the cause of the cracking. These investigations have concluded that the gaps reported by tenants did not compromise the structural safety of the building but did require remedial action to ensure continued fire compartmentation.

Whilst the investigations were taking place a separate historic issue was raised regarding the piped gas supply in the blocks, which may be relevant to other buildings across the country with large panel systems.

The issue of concern related to the gas explosion at Ronan Point in Newham in 1968. This caused a partial collapse of the block. Following the Griffith Review that year into Ronan Point, the government wrote to local authorities giving advice about the need for urgent appraisal and, where necessary, measures for the strengthening of existing blocks. Records of the buildings affected, and any work undertaken are therefore likely to be held at a local rather than national level.

Reports after the event suggested that the Southwark blocks which were built after Ronan Point, and other large panel system buildings across the country, had been strengthened. This would have been in order to make them safe to carry a piped gas supply and withstand the type of explosion that took place at Ronan Point.

The structural engineers investigating the blocks in Southwark were not able to locate records of the blocks' construction or any remedial works. In order to ascertain the structural integrity of the building the engineers undertook a range of invasive and non-invasive investigations. On the basis of those investigations and on the advice of their structural engineers Southwark Council decided, as a precautionary step, to turn off the gas supply.

The structural engineers have now submitted a report setting out findings from their preliminary investigations. It should be noted that a programme of further investigation is planned, involving intrusive and non-intrusive techniques in 10 per cent of the flats to develop an objective assessment of the structural condition of each of the four buildings. These investigations will continue until the end of November when further reports on the findings from these investigations are anticipated.

Southwark Borough Council has published the report which is available at:

[www.southwark.gov.uk/assets/attach/4349/245112-05\\_REP-Ledbury-Estate-Issue%202.pdf](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/assets/attach/4349/245112-05_REP-Ledbury-Estate-Issue%202.pdf)

To date, our correspondence with local authorities has focused on high rise buildings of the same Larsen Neilsen/Taylor Woodrow Anglian large panel system common to both the Ledbury Estate and Ronan Point.

There are, however, other large panel system buildings still in use which utilise alternative systems with similar characteristics. Most of these buildings will have been subject to similar programmes of structural evaluation and strengthening over time. In light of the findings in Southwark, there are a number of points I would like to communicate more widely in relation to all large panel system buildings.

### **Fire compartmentation**

The gaps which residents identified on the Ledbury estate are a common characteristic of large panel systems built between 1963 and 1978. They are caused by the large precast concrete panels expanding and contracting, and in some cases 'bowing' due to being wet and cold on the outside and warm and dry on the inside. These gaps tend to open and close as temperatures fluctuate.

Wherever these gaps are reported it is important that they should be sealed to restore fire compartmentation using a suitably flexible fire resistant mastic capable of withstanding the differential expansion and contraction of the large panel system. Tenants or leaseholders may not always report these gaps, preferring instead to cover or fill them themselves. Building owners should consider what process needs to be in place to ensure that fire compartmentation is maintained.



## Gas supplied buildings

Buildings containing gas supplies need to be stronger in order to remain structurally stable in the event of a gas explosion. It is therefore recommended that you should ascertain whether buildings with large panel systems for which you have responsibility have piped gas, and if they do, you should take action to ensure that these buildings can carry piped gas safely. You should consider taking expert advice to assure yourselves of this.

Whether or not a gas supply is installed, it is important with all large panel system buildings that their structural history is known, and that their condition and continued structural integrity are understood and monitored. This should include desktop studies where necessary to establish what strengthening work has been undertaken, and to assess the original design of the building. In undertaking desktop studies, building owners may not be able to rely solely on their own records. They may also need to explore records prior to them taking ownership of the building and explore the accuracy of them. Depending on the records available and findings from non-intrusive investigations, building owners may wish to commission more intrusive forms of investigation to check condition and strength of critical connections.

The structural design of large panel system buildings may vary from building to building, even where they are ostensibly of the same original design. This means that each building needs to be assessed on its own merits. There are a number of reports available which may be helpful in understanding how to assess the large panel buildings for which you are responsible:

- *Large panel system. The structure of Ronan Point and other Taylor Woodrow-Anglian buildings* Building Research Establishment 1985 ISBN 0 85125 342 3;
- *The structural adequacy and durability of large panel system dwellings. Part 1 Investigations of construction* Currie, Reeves and Moore. BRE 1987 ISBN 0 85125 250 8;
- *Handbook for the structural assessment of large panel system (LPS) dwelling blocks for accidental loading.* Stuart Matthews and Barry Reeves. IHS BRE Press 2012 ISBN 978-1-84806-200-9;
- *Structural assessment of existing large panel system built dwelling blocks for accidental loads.* Stuart Matthews and Barry Reeves. The Structural Engineer. August 2012.

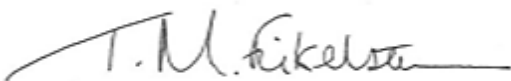
Ministers will be seeking views of the Expert Panel advising Government and from the Standing Committee on Structural Safety (SCOSS) about further advice that might be helpful to building owners.

Residents may be concerned about their building following recent reports they may have seen in the media. You may want to consider, therefore, contacting them yourselves to reassure them about steps you are taking.

I would also like to highlight that we will be writing to you separately today regarding the identification of all residential tower blocks with Aluminium Composite Material. Your Head of Building Control will also be receiving a letter regarding cladding wind loading and we will be publishing consolidated advice on the complete set of system tests.

If you have any questions or concerns then please contact the DCLG Tower Casework Team on 0303 444 1119 and [towercaseworkteam@communities.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:towercaseworkteam@communities.gsi.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T.M. Finkelstein', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

**Tamara Finkelstein**  
Director General for the Building Safety Programme

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<b>CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL</b>	<b>Cabinet</b> <b>19 January 2022</b>
----------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------

<b>Report title</b>	Purchase of affordable rent and shared ownership units – Northicote development (WV Living)	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Bhupinder Gakhal City Assets and Housing	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	Bushbury North	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	Ross Cook, Director of City Housing and Environment	
<b>Originating service</b>	Housing	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Karen Beasley	Interim Service Manager- Housing Strategy & Policy
	Tel	554893
	Email	Karen.beasley@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	City Housing and Environmental Leadership Team	6 January 2022
	Cabinet Member Briefing	12 January 2022

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**Recommendations for decision:**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the purchase of 29 homes for affordable rent and 16 homes for shared ownership units from WV Living on the Northicote housing development site through a standard form of development agreement at the agreed purchase as detailed in exempt Appendix 1.
2. To enter into contract using a standard form of development agreement between the Council and WV Living including staged payments as detailed in exempt Appendix 2.
3. Authorise Chief Operating Officer or other authorised officers to execute the contract agreement, transfers, associated wayleave agreements, deed of easements, deeds of grant, collateral warranties together with any ancillary agreements.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The report requests approval to purchase 29 affordable rent and 16 shared ownership units as from WV Living on the Northicote development site at the agreed purchase price as detailed in exempt Appendix 1 within this report.
- 1.2 To approve entering into a contract using a standard form of development agreement with WV Living, including staged payments as detailed in exempt Appendix 2.
- 1.3 Authorise Chief Operating Officer or other authorised officers to execute the contract agreement, transfers, associated wayleave agreements, deed of easements, deeds of grant, collateral warranties together with any ancillary agreements.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 WV Living is a wholly owned subsidiary of City of Wolverhampton Council set up in 2016 to build and develop a range of new homes across the City. WV Living is developing the former Northicote school site with 178 one and two bedroom flats and two, three and four bedroom houses, to be delivered over the next two years.
- 2.2 Planning permission for the development was granted in October 2021 including the provision of 25% affordable housing under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act. The affordable housing is being delivered as part of mixed tenure development.
- 2.3 The 45 affordable housing unit size and types to be delivered is detailed in exempt Appendix 1 with an overall completion date due around mid-2024. Once complete, the properties will be allocated through Homes in the City choice-based lettings system. The marketing of the shared ownership units will be managed by the Council's Sales and Marketing Agent once appointed.

## **3.0 Progress.**

- 3.1 Discussions held between the Council and WV Living have been ongoing regarding the unit type and size to ensure the affordable units meet the current housing demand. More detailed layouts, plans and specifications are currently being reviewed in conjunction with the Council's Managing Agent, Wolverhampton Homes, who will manage the properties on the Council's behalf.

The Council were offered to purchase the units from WV Living in November 2021 and following a robust financial appraisal and a period of negotiation, a purchase price was agreed with WV Living in December 2021.

- 3.2 The delivery of the affordable rent and shared ownership units will be through a standard form development agreement between the Council and WV Living and the terms of the agreement has been prepared in consultation with both parties' legal representatives.
- 3.3 The shared ownership units will be purchased by the Council and marketed for sale through an appointed Sales and Marketing Agent. Purchasers are required to purchase a

minimum 25% of the property's equity and up to a maximum of 75%. Purchasers then pay rent on the share of the equity retained by the Council. A shared ownership lease agreement is signed by the shared ownership purchasers.

- 3.4 The properties are to be managed by Wolverhampton Homes, who will deal with any future staircasing (purchase of further shares in the property). There will be an annual management fee payable. The purchaser is required to insure the property via Wolverhampton Homes. The purchaser is allowed to staircase (purchase additional shares in the property) as they wish but must pay the valuation fee for each transaction. Until the property is owned outright by the initial purchaser or their successors, it is subject to a lease of 125 years.
- 3.5 Purchasers are responsible for all repairs and maintenance to their property under the terms of their lease.
- 3.6 The valuation for the affordable rent and shared ownership units listed in exempt Appendix 1 has been carried out by a certified RICS valuer. The valuation confirmed the open market value assumptions are comparable with the report.

#### **4.0 Evaluation of alternative options**

- 4.1 The properties will be built to meet Planning requirements under Section 106 obligations and are therefore designated as affordable housing. Should the Council choose not to purchase the affordable rent and shared ownership units from WV Living, the properties could be available for purchase by another party such as a Registered Provider.
- 4.2 If the Council did not purchase these units, WV Living would not achieve a viable scheme based on agreed a capital receipt for the purchase of the land initially purchased from the Council and subsequent sale of the affordable units.

#### **5.0 Reasons for decision(s)**

- 5.1 The purchase of the affordable rent units would meet the objectives within the Council's Plan – Better Homes for All and the Housing Strategy's More and Better Homes by increasing the number of additional affordable housing to meet the housing demands within the City.
- 5.2 The purchase of the shared ownership units will provide an opportunity for residents to access low-cost home ownership.

#### **6.0 Financial implications**

- 6.1 The cost of purchasing the affordable rent homes and the shared ownership homes is detailed in exempt Appendix 1. The purchase, along with any associated legal costs will be met from the HRA capital programme new build budget for Northcote development. The HRA capital programme is due for approval as part of the HRA Business plan, including rent and service charges 2022-2023 Cabinet report of 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 2022.

- 6.2 The purchases are part of the section 106 planning conditions and will be funded from a combination of HRA borrowing and capital receipts. The capital receipts from the sale of the shared ownership equity and the rental income will be retained in the HRA.  
[JM/23122021/D]

## **7.0 Legal implications**

- 7.1 There is no legal requirements in relation to the purchase price that the Council must pay for purchasing property, however, the Council has a fiduciary duty to local tax payers.
- 7.2 As detailed in the body of the report, the housing will be fulfilling a housing need. In purchasing the properties the Council is acting in compliance with its duties under the relevant housing legislation and the Council's Constitution.
- 7.3 As detailed in the report the Council will be required to enter into a number of legal agreements with WV Living, statutory undertakers and other third parties associated with Northicote development. Legal advice has been provided and shall continue through to completion of this transaction.
- 7.4 Full legal advice will be provided to complete the standard form of development agreement between the Council and WV Living and the purchase of these properties.  
[DP/04012022/A].

## **8.0 Equalities implications**

- 8.1 The purchase of these new affordable rented units will add much needed properties to the Council stock. The units will provide additional housing opportunities for residents on the waiting list to meet their housing need which may include additional requirements for level access accommodation and will be allocated through the choice-based lettings programme once they are complete.
- 8.2 The shared ownership units will provide an opportunity for eligible purchasers to purchase a new property in the City.

## **9.0 All other Implications**

- 9.1 Purchasing newly built homes will deliver much needed affordable homes built to a high standard in terms of thermal insulation and energy efficiency to meet the required building standards.
- 9.2 The human resources implications will be managed within the Housing Services team.
- 9.3 The acquisition of the properties referenced in exempt Appendix 1 will supplement the existing housing stock and will be managed by Wolverhampton Homes.
- 9.4 These properties will provide good quality homes for local residents in housing need and those wishing to purchase low shared equity homes.



9.5 The outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19) declared by the World Health Organisation as a 'Global Pandemic' on 11 March 2020 has impacted on global financial markets. The housing market may see an increase in demand for affordable housing and low-cost home ownership due to changes in resident's financial position as a result of COVID-19.

## **10.0 Schedule of background papers**

10.1 [HRA Business Plan](#) Cabinet report – 19 January 2022.

## **11.0 Appendices**

11.1 Exempt Appendix 1: Schedule of Affordable Rent and Shared Ownership Properties

11.2 Exempt Appendix 2: Payment Schedule Affordable and Shared Ownership Properties

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