

CITY OF  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
COUNCIL

# Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel

22 July 2021

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

**Venue** Council Chamber - 4th Floor - Civic Centre

## Membership

**Chair** Cllr Barbara McGarrity QN (Lab)

**Vice-chair** Cllr Paul Appleby (Con)

### Labour

Cllr Mary Bateman  
Cllr Greg Brackenridge  
Cllr Christopher Burden  
Cllr Alan Butt  
Cllr Keith Inston

### Conservative

Cllr Christopher Haynes  
Cllr Andrew McNeil

### Independent

Cllr Harman Banger

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

## Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the Scrutiny Team:

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# Agenda

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

*Item No.*    *Title*

### MEETING BUSINESS ITEMS

- 1            **Apologies and Substitutions**  
[To receive any apologies for absence and notification of substitutions].
- 2            **Declarations of interest**  
[To receive any declarations of interest].
- 3            **Minutes of the previous meeting** (Pages 3 - 8)  
[To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record]

### DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 4            **Wolverhampton Homes Delivery Plan / Performance**  
[To receive a report on the Wolverhampton Homes Delivery Plan / Performance].  
  
[Report is marked: To Follow].
- 5            **Housing Allocations Policy - Update on roll out of new policy**  
[To receive an update on the roll out of the new Housing Allocations Policy].  
  
[Presentation is marked: To Follow].
- 6            **Housing Strategy - Update on Delivery of Current Priorities**  
[To receive an update on the delivery of the current Housing Strategy priorities].  
  
[Presentation is marked: To Follow].
- 7            **Work Programme** (Pages 9 - 18)  
[To receive the draft Work Programme for the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel].

# Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel

Agenda Item No: 3

Minutes - 25 March 2021

## Attendance

### Members of the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel

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

### In Attendance

Cllr Steve Evans (Portfolio Holder for City Economy)

### Employees

Martin Stevens (Scrutiny Officer) (Minutes)  
Ross Cook (Director of City Environment)  
Steve Woodward (Head of Environmental Services)  
Lamour Gayle (Head of Customer Engagement and Registrars)  
Julia Cleary (Scrutiny and Systems Manager)  
Earl Piggott-Smith (Scrutiny Officer)

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

*Item No.*    *Title*

- 1        **Apologies**  
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Christopher Haynes, Cllr Beverley Momenabadi and Cllr Mak Singh.
- 2        **Declarations of interest**  
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3        **Minutes of the previous meeting**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2021 were confirmed as a correct record.

**4 Matters arising**

The Chair commented that the Work Programme had been discussed at the last meeting. He thought it would be useful for Wolverhampton Homes to be added to a future agenda and also WV Living.

**5 Digital Technology in City Environment**

The Head of Environmental Services gave a summary presentation of the report titled "Digital Technology in City Environment," which had been despatched with the agenda for the meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for City Environment commented that there were considerable services within the Directorate that were already digitally connected. The key was to ensure simplicity and ease of access for the general public. The public needed to have confidence in the systems so they could report and track issues. Digital was also important for enabling them to access information such as on the City's parks. The pandemic had certainly accelerated the digital agenda and its importance. It was important to remember though, the people in the City that did not use digital. The Business Improvement Manager was currently liaising with some Councillors on a digital reporting mechanism for Councillor enquiries. Being aware of the applications available and the plethora of information was key. He commented on the way Covid-19 had changed the nature of working, with so many people able to carry out their roles at home.

A Panel Member spoke in support of the Portfolio Holder's comments on the importance of getting things right for the residents of Wolverhampton, including the availability of the information. He asked about the CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system and whether in future it could send automated messages to the public on the progress of an issue that had been reported. He felt this was an issue which needed improvement. The Head of Customer Engagement and Registrars stated that the system could send automated messages and they had started this with some services. She agreed with the Member that improvements were needed. She added that the current automated response templates they were using needed improving. There was a Customer Services and ICT roadmap which they were currently developing. The first step was to improve the templates and the next step would be to roll it out to all areas that currently used the Customer Engagement platform.

The Panel Member responded that there would be times when an automated message would not be appropriate to a customer enquiry. Where there were unresolved cases, in some software products, it would add the enquiry to an agent's workflow automatically. He thought this was a good way to keep to service level agreements. He had raised issues to do with customer responses over three years ago and felt there should be some urgency to improvement. The Head of Customer Engagement and Registrars added that all the Panel Member's points were being looked at as part of the development of the service. There was a Service Development Team within Customer Services and they were setting up some Customer User focus groups.

The Portfolio Holder remarked that Customer Services now came under the City Environment Portfolio, which was advantageous as many customer enquiries were often related to this area. He accepted that some of the wording of the automated messages needed to be clearer for residents.

A Panel Member spoke on the rapid change, evolution of digital technology and the challenges and opportunities this brought. He felt that the public wanted the Council to use digital technology more. He asked how many CCTV cameras the Council owned that played a role in the digital revolution. His second question was how the Council could continue to inform Members of the Council about the development and the pace of digital technology. He had been most impressed, when he heard as part of the Officer's presentation, the ability to conduct digital autopsies. He was in favour of the Council developing the use of digital within services.

The Head of Environmental Services responded that Environment Services did not own enough CCTV cameras, they were looking to purchase more. The cameras could be deployed anywhere in the City and moved from location to location. They were predominately used to detect and deter fly tipping offenses. Environment Services owned approximately ten cameras. There were other cameras the Council used including those in the Town and City Centres operated by the Business Improvement Districts and also the transport cameras. Cameras helped people to feel safe.

A Panel Member gave an example of a recent Customer Services enquiry. He referred to a raised junction off Broad Lane South, Wednesfield, which had been reported six weeks beforehand. He had heard nothing since and was being asked by the public about progress. Feedback on enquiries into Customer Services was important, such as the raised junction off Broad Lane South. He also cited as another example the need to keep the public informed on the clean up of incidents of fly tipping within the City.

A Member of the Panel commented that he was often asked about public protection issues and environmental crime. Residents were becoming more aware of the Report It App. He congratulated the team on the report.

The Director for Environment Services thanked the Panel Members for their contributions to the reports on digital over the last year. A report would be received by the Scrutiny Board on the work the Scrutiny Panels had completed on digital.

## 6 **Update on Climate Change Action Plan**

The Director for City Environment gave a short presentation updating Members on the Council's, Climate Change Action Plan. He commented that it was a topic which Members might wish to revisit in the next municipal year in more detail. The Council had declared a Climate emergency early last year. A commitment to an action plan had been agreed at the end of last year. A Climate Emergency Working Group had been formed, which cut across all Council Directorates and had good representation from each Service. The aim was to reach the target of making all Council activities net carbon zero by 2028. The Council had appointed a Climate Champion, Cllr Barbara McGarrity QN, who had been Chairing the Member Climate Working Group. The Council had changed all of its electricity to renewable energy, which had really helped with reducing the carbon footprint of the Council.

The Director for City Environment remarked that a Citizen Assembly had been held with residents from the City. The Assembly discussed what the Climate Change Action Plan needed to focus on and what the responsibilities the Council, Community

Groups and Citizens should be as a whole. A public consultation then took place on the action plan and this was then adopted by the Council in September 2020. A new Project Manager had been appointed in February 2021.

The Director for City Environment presented a slide showing the overall City Carbon Footprint of the City. The overall City Carbon Footprint for 2019 /2020 for the Council was 12,423 tonnes. They were working with partners to influence wider decarbonisation as industry and commercial, domestic and transport accounted for much of the carbon emissions with the City. Robust Governance and oversight measures were being put in place, including within Council reports to help achieve the net zero target by 2028 for the Council.

The Chair asked about boiler scrappage schemes and if Wolverhampton Homes were facilitating them and the use of Solar Panels on Council buildings and assets. The Director for City Environment responded that they were working with Wolverhampton Homes and were in discussions about their action plan. There were 22,000 homes to consider. It was clear that some houses were worthwhile investing in energy efficiency measures, whilst others needed to be rebuilt. The Council would also be working with private rented accommodation and privately owned, to make sure schemes were available. Solar panels were in place across some Council assets and they were looking to introduce more in the future. There was a major plan to build a solar farm to power the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, New Cross Hospital site. Any alternative fuel or energy the Council would consider as part of its plans moving forward.

The Portfolio Holder complimented the team on what they had achieved to date on climate change, citing some examples such as electric charge points, plans for a solar farm and the planting of trees. The Council had been awarded three national awards for their work.

The Chair asked if the Council were engaging with any transport providers on matters such as emissions from buses, which he doubted were all of Euro 6 standard. The Director for City Environment responded that they were in discussions with transport providers. They were in contact with Transport for West Midlands about installing an electric charging point for buses at the major bus station in the City. The Council were part of the Quality Bus Partnership which did restrict certain buses from entering the City, this would be strengthened in the coming years.

A Member of the Panel stated that climate change was now a core policy for local authorities and for nations. He added that having a Member Climate Champion had been a real benefit for the City and thanked them for their work. The next thirty years were going to be very important for climate change.

The Chair proposed that an update on the Climate Change Action plan should be an item for the Panel to consider in the municipal year at an appropriate time. As it was the last meeting of the municipal year, he thanked Members and Officers for their contributions to the Panel meetings throughout the last year.

**Resolved:** That an update on the Climate Change Action Plan should be considered by the Panel in the new municipal year at an appropriate point.

The meeting closed at 7:09pm.

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# **Scrutiny Work Programme (draft)**

## **Vibrant & Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel 2021-2022**

### **Relighting Our City**

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## Scrutiny – A New Approach

1. **Roles and expectations** have been defined for the Chairs of Scrutiny Panels, Strategic Executive Board (SEB) leads and Scrutiny Officers; creating a collective understanding of scrutiny's role within the Council. These can be seen in Appendix A.
2. Effective **work planning and agenda setting** will take place to produce **jointly owned work plans**.
3. Regular briefings will be arranged with the Scrutiny Panel Chair, Vice Chair, SEB lead and scrutiny officer to enable a shared understanding of priorities and reviews of progress and recommendations.
4. **Improved communication:** 'You said we did' updates and publicity (including social media)
5. Creation of a **strong organisational culture** that supports scrutiny work that **adds real value** and **evidences impact**.

## **Work Programme considerations:**

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

## Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel

Chair:	Vice Chair: Cllr Paul Appleby	SEB Lead: Ross Cook	Scrutiny Lead: Martin Stevens
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Date of Meeting	Agenda Publication	Item Description	Lead Report Author	Notes
22 July 2021	14 July 2021	<p><b>Wolverhampton Homes – Delivery Plan / Performance for 2020/21</b></p> <p><b>Allocations Policy – update on roll-out of new Policy</b></p> <p><b>Housing Strategy – Update on current delivery of Priorities</b></p>		Please see email from Cllr Appleby (15 June 2021) with specific requests for the report on performance data.
21 October 2021	13 October 2021	<p><b>Climate Change Action Plan Review (To be confirmed)</b></p> <p><b>WV Living – Performance and Future Direction</b></p>		

3 March 2022	23 February 2022	<b>To be determined</b>		

## Scrutiny Panel Remit & Functions

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

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

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

## **General Role of the Scrutiny Board and Scrutiny Panels**

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

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

### **The Scrutiny Panels will:**

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



## Appendix A: Roles and Responsibilities

### 1. Chair of Scrutiny Panel:

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

### 2. SEB Lead:

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

### 3. Scrutiny Officer:

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

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