

CITY OF  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
COUNCIL

# Scrutiny Board

22 March 2022

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

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

## Membership

**Chair** Cllr Paul Sweet (Lab)  
**Vice-chair** Cllr Simon Bennett (Con)

### Labour

Cllr Philip Bateman MBE  
Cllr Val Evans  
Cllr Rita Potter  
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar  
Cllr Asha Mattu  
Cllr John Reynolds  
Cllr Susan Roberts MBE  
Cllr Zee Russell  
Cllr Barbara McGarrity QN

### Conservative

Cllr Wendy Thompson  
Cllr Ellis Turrell

Quorum for this meeting is four Councillors.

## Information for the Public

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

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**Tel/Email** [julia.cleary@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:julia.cleary@wolverhampton.gov.uk)  
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Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

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# Agenda

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

*Item No.*    *Title*

### MEETING BUSINESS ITEMS

- 1            **Apologies for absence**
- 2            **Declarations of interest**
- 3            **Minutes of the previous meetings** (Pages 3 - 18)  
[To approve the minutes of the previous meetings as correct records.]
- 4            **Matters arising**

### DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 5            **Economic update and snapshot of the Black Country and City of Wolverhampton**  
[To receive a presentation from Sarah Middleton, Chief Executive, Black Country Consortium Ltd]
- 6            **Quarter 2 Social Care, Public Health and Corporate Complaints Report 2021-2022** (Pages 19 - 40)  
[To receive an update from Sarah Campbell, Customer Engagement Manager]
- 7            **Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards - Compliance Update 2022**  
[To receive an update from Lynda Eyton, Client Relationship Manager – Housing Managing Agents] Report will be send to follow.
- 8            **Annual Scrutiny Review 2020-2021** (Pages 41 - 94)  
[To consider the Annual Scrutiny Review 2020-2021]
- 9            **Work Planning** (Pages 95 - 108)  
[To consider items for the scrutiny work programme.]

## Attendance

### Members of the Scrutiny Board

Cllr Paul Sweet (Chair)  
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE  
Cllr Val Evans  
Cllr Rita Potter  
Cllr Wendy Thompson  
Cllr Simon Bennett (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar  
Cllr Asha Mattu  
Cllr John Reynolds  
Cllr Susan Roberts MBE  
Cllr Zee Russell  
Cllr Ellis Turrell  
Cllr Barbara McGarrity QN

### In Attendance

Ross Cook	Director of City Housing and Environment
Sarah Campbell	Customer Engagement Manager
Lamour Gayle	Head of Customer Services and Registrars
Julia Nock	Deputy Director Assets
Kieran Simpson	EDI Advisor LGBT+
Marguerite Nugent	Manager: Arts and Culture
Isobel Woods	Head of City Assets

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

*Item No.*    *Title*

- 1 Apologies for absence**  
There were no apologies for absence.
- 2 Declarations of interest**  
There were no declarations of interest.
- 3 Minutes of the previous meeting**  
Resolved:  
That the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### 4 **Quarter One 2021/22 Social Care, Public Health and Corporate Complaints Report**

Scrutiny Board welcomed Sarah Campbell, Customer Engagement Manager to the meeting. Board received a presentation in relation to the Quarter One Social Care, Public Health and Corporate Complaints report for the following areas:

- Corporate
- Children's
- Adults and Public Health
- Ombudsman enquiries

The Council had received 29 stage one corporate complaints; this was in comparison to 74 cases received for quarter one in 2020/21, details were outlined in Appendix 2. Out of the 29 cases received, 11 were upheld (at fault) and 18 not upheld (not at fault).

The highest figure of 17 complaints referred to Waste Management, followed by Planning receiving three and Arboriculture receiving three. In some cases, this had followed extensive but unsuccessful attempts to resolve some of those matters at a service level. Out of the 17 complaints referring to Waste Management, two were received for Household, Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) sites, seven were received for general waste and eight received for garden waste. More detail was outlined in 4.2 of Appendix 3. The Complaints Team had worked closely with services to improve complaint handling and ensure appropriate remedies were put in place to achieve the best outcomes for customers.

If a customer remained dissatisfied, they could escalate their complaint to stage two of the procedure. During this period the council received five stage two cases which was consistent in comparison to quarter one 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020. Out of the five cases received, two cases were partially upheld (partially at fault), and three cases were not upheld (not at fault).

The Council had received 13 stage one children's services complaints; this was in comparison to eight received during 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020, an increase of five cases; The highest figure of three cases referred to the SEND team. Out of the 13 complaints investigated during this period, two cases were upheld (at fault), seven cases were partially upheld (partially at fault), and four cases were not upheld (not at fault). In some cases, this had followed extensive but unsuccessful attempts to resolve some of those complaints informally.

No statutory stage two complaints had been received during this period; this was in comparison to no complaint cases being received during 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020. A non-statutory children's stage two complaint had been received which was dealt with in accordance with the corporate complaints policy and procedure. This was in comparison to no cases received from 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020.

The Council had received six stage one adult services complaints: a decrease of six cases in comparison to quarter one in 2020/21. The highest figure of two cases referred to Adult Community Team West. During this period, three complaints received were in relation to commissioned services. Out of the six cases logged and

investigated during this period, one case was upheld, three cases partially upheld and two cases were not upheld.

The council had received six assessment enquiries from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and six assessment enquiries from the Housing Ombudsman. The council had received three LGSCO full enquiries; two for Adult Services and one for Children's Services, and one full enquiry from the HO for Wolverhampton Homes. Adoption@ Heart, Children's Services received one published report from the LGSCO. The complaint was in relation to a request to register a potential adopter; the council accepted the findings of the LGSCO and in line with recommendations had reviewed its adoption recruitment procedure to ensure it adhered to the Department of Education's 2013 statutory guidance on adoption.

Board understood that when a complaint was upheld (council at fault) and the findings of a subsequent investigation were for a financial remedy, change to policy or service delivery, the Customer Feedback Team produced an action plan report. Recommendations within these reports were agreed with appropriate Heads of Service and shared with the relevant Service Manager/Director to ensure appropriate remedies and changes to policy/service delivery were implemented. The Customer Feedback Team also attended regular quality assurance meetings for Adults/Children's Services and Waste Liaison Meetings to ensure they used the learning from complaints to drive service improvements.

The Customer Feedback Team had received a total of 165 compliments (Corporate, Public Health, Adults and Children's) for this period.

Board noted that waste management had received the most complaints and that issues in relation to this were very important to residents and did need to be addressed. It was also noted that there were probably more issues than actual complaints as some residents might not consider lodging a complaint. Members hoped that lessons were being learnt from the complaints in order to bring them down in the future. Clarity was also sought as to the difference between a complaint and a service request. It was stated that in relation to service requests, if somebody phoned up to say that their bin had not been emptied, then this would be dealt with as a service request, and it would be unreasonable to expect someone to wait 21 calendar days for the matter to be investigated. A service request would provide an audit trail and an acknowledgement to the resident. The relevant service area would be notified straight away, and they would be asked to ensure that the bin was collected.

Board considered the matter of blue badges, and it was noted that this could also be a constant source of concern for many residents. Concerns were raised in relation to parking enforcement officers acting against residents whose blue badges were out of date but who were struggling to get through the system to sort out the renewal. Board queried whether there was a particular number or emails address that residents were able to use for blue badge information. The Customer Engagement Manager stated that she was not aware of an increase of complaints regarding these.

Resolved: That the update be received.

## 5 **Customer Contact Update**

Scrutiny Board welcomed Lamour Gayle, Head of Customer Engagement and Registrars to the meeting.

Customer Services used a number of channels to enable customers, citizens, visitors to the city, businesses and partnering organisations. These channels included:

- Telephony
- E-mail and web forms
- Online and paper application processing
- Face to face and
- Virtual appointments

During Quarter 2 the Team handled 147, 403 customer contacts with the highest number of contacts being through telephony which accounted for 115,799 contacts. The majority of face-to-face appointments were for Taxi Licensing where walk-in appointments were provided at the Hickman Avenue site. Board noted that 6.6% (9687 call) of customers terminated their call before employees were able to answer.

During Quarter 2 in 2021 the Team received 125,486 calls. Of these calls, they were able to answer 115,799 and the call contact response rate for this quarter was 92.3%. There were 5,349 more calls in that quarter in comparison to the same period during 2020. An analysis of Mitel (telephony system) was undertaken for the period of 1 July 2021 to 27 September 2021, data showed that 2491 calls were terminated by the customer within 80 Seconds, 844 of those being within 30 seconds.

During Quarter 2 the Team handled 27,904 emails and web form enquiries. Enquiries relating to Revenue and Benefits accounted for the highest number of email and webform customer contact. The service level agreement with internal services was to process customer emails and webform enquiries within two working days and this was achieved this during Quarter 2. Board understood that the Team analysed email data to identify any trends in customer enquiries and to identify opportunities to work with services to improve published customer information. The Team also worked with the services to improve their web forms and the information that was on the website, all channels were analysed to help identify where the Team could make the customer journey slicker and easier.

During Quarter 2, Customer Services had processed 2,536 Blue Badge and school applications, provided support for home to school travel appeals and continued to support local businesses with business grant applications. In relation to these areas, the Team would process the applications as soon as they were received and there would only be further work required if areas such as occupational health assessments were needed, otherwise the Team would process the applications up to the point where the badge was issued to the customer. It was noted that for blue badges, the Team recognised how important they were to residents and pre-pandemic had held surgeries within the Civic Centre to help customers complete the forms online. To follow up on this as part of the reopening, surgeries were also being held in areas such as Bilston and Wednesfield. Work had been carried out with the Insight and Performance team to identify areas where the highest numbers of applicants for blue badges came from and this information was used to inform where the surgeries were held. It was however noted that the majority of customers applied online but paper forms could be sent out if requested or customers could attend the Civic Centre or Bilston Library to have face to face support. The same service was

being offered at the Civic Centre for school applications to support parents and carers with their applications and the team were looking to identify any hot spots in relation to this before the next round of secondary and primary school applications.

In relation to future plans to further improve the Customer Journey the following areas had been identified:

- Review of current telephony system
- Chat Bot solution
- Web Chat solution
- Document scanning solution for customers
- Community based Customer Service Delivery
- CWC and Wolverhampton Homes community-based Co-location
- Work with Insight and Performance to identify any trends in demand for
- Blue Badge appeals

Board welcomed the idea of the chat bot as this technology was already being used by a lot of businesses and it could really help to streamline interaction with customers.

Board considered that the call log suggested that there had been more calls this year but appreciated that this could be due to customers seeking additional support due to the pandemic and some services being reduced and new services such as the food bank being introduced.

Board considered that it Might be useful to have a breakdown of calls received during the week and queried whether there was any reporting available for specific days or busy periods during the day and what mitigating action was taken in relation to any identified busy periods. A query was also raised in relation to when calls were sent onto other departments and how or whether this was monitored to ensure that they were not just going to voicemail creating a backlog.

Board queried whether the Customer Services team had any call handling targets, were these being met and whether there was any analysis in relation to idol time or targets for wrap up times. Board also queried whether the service was able to let customers know where they were in the call queue and how long the wait was expected to be. It was stated that the Team were aware and able to monitor busy periods and peak times on a day-to-day basis and that to manage this, resources and staff were allocated appropriately.

The Team were satisfied that they could now predict peak times and days for a full 12 months and had been carrying out a lot of analysis on the system. There were five different family group in Customer Services and the team were able to identify when there would be peak times in relation to these areas such as when council tax bills were sent out, or on a Monday morning when there were normally a higher number of calls coming into specific service areas. There were different peaks across the services and the team were able to predict this. A lot of work had also been carried out with service areas in relation to passing calls onto them. It was confirmed that calls were not forwarded to voice mails and that if the team were aware of a letter drop coming up for a specific department, then plans would be put in place to mitigate any predicted increase in calls. Agreements were also in place with service

areas in relation how many calls would be put through for each day so that the call wait times would be reduced and for those customers calls were always to internal offices and were never outside of the council or to a voicemail. There were call handling targets for the team and it was noted that the national abandonment rate for contact centres was 15 percent and that the Council was adhering to this standard, but it was also understood that each call abandoned was a customer and there was ongoing analysis of why calls had been abandoned and what impact that might have.

Targets were set for each family group as the handling times for different types of queries varied and a call relating to housing benefits or business rates could take 20 to 30 minutes, whilst a garden waste call could take between five to ten minutes.

In relation to idle time, this was a large piece of work and different services could have different idle times. Monitoring was carried out in real time and section leaders were able to identify if a customer service officer had been idle for some time, section leaders were also able to contact the customer service officer directly if required. Wrap time was also considered in real time so and was different for the different service areas. Wrap time for an adult social care call would be much longer than wrap time for a purple bin inquiry. Wrap times were therefore set for each family group. Board thanked the Head of Customer Engagement and Registrars for the detailed responses to the questions.

Board queried whether support for parents and carers in relation to school admissions might be rolled out to other parts of the city such as Blakenhall where there was a high percentage of South Asian and BAME residents, and whether the information would be available in different languages. It was stated that at the moment, the availability of surgeries was being carried out on a risk assessment basis and that research was being undertaken as to where specific types of calls were coming from so that surgeries could be targeted; discussions were ongoing in relation to moving surgeries around and it was considered that the work in relation to this was just at the start of the journey with an aim to make sure that the service was accessible to all of our communities moving forwards. In relation to the use of different languages; this was an area that the team dealt with on a day-to-day basis and a translation service was used to ensure that there were no barriers to any communities.

In relation to the blue badges, it was normally a 12 weeks turn around for an application however this could take longer if an occupational health assessment was required or if customers hadn't submitted the right documents. It was stated that there hadn't been many complaints around blue badges. When enquiries were made in relation to blue badges, care was taken to ensure that the customer was fully aware of the information that needed to be submitted. Some members of the Board considered that the 12 week turnaround was still too long a wait for a straightforward blue badge application. In relation to advertising and communicating this, the information was captured in the surgeries and most of the people that booked appointments for face-to-face meetings were those who were unable to complete the forms online. It had been noted that information was spreading through word of mouth in relation to the surgeries, but it was agreed that further work could be done to promote and use these surgeries more. The suggestion was made that in relation to surgeries, the team could consider Tennent Management Organisation (TMO) areas as some areas did not have libraries and communication was not reaching these areas. The suggestion was also made that venues managed by



Wolverhampton Homes could be considered. Board also considered that surgeries in relation to blue badges could be held in Tettenhall as it had the most elderly population in the city.

A question was raised in relation to residents who had emailed the council and had not had a response and what was being done to address this issue to ensure that all email enquiries were responded to. In relation to the emails, it was stated that the team had an SLA with the service area that the emails were received on behalf of and that the SLA required the team to action the emails within two working days. However, if the e-mail needed a service specific response, then the customer services team would not manage that and some of those outstanding e-mails could be where the service hadn't responded. Where there were repeat calls to customer services and customers stated that they had not received a response then the team could follow this up, but customer services did not case manage the calls. The data within the e-mails would flag up to show that these were repeat e-mails which would enable customer services to target the areas where the delays were occurring.

In terms of the future to improve the customer journey, Board noted that there appeared to be a long waiting list for Tele Care services. Board expressed concern that this might result in vulnerable residents waiting desperately for the required services. It was stated that the customer services team did not manage the tele care system and this was managed by Adult Social Care.

Resolved: That the presentation be received.

## 6 **Rainbow City**

The Board welcomed Julia Nock, Head of Assets and Chair of the Rainbow Project Board and Kieran Simpson EDI Adviser (LGBT), to the meeting.

The Board understood that there was a clear drive and passion for ensuring Wolverhampton was firmly on the map as a rainbow city and there was a high level of commitment, not only within the council but also with partners to make this happen. The overall aim was to ensure that the City of Wolverhampton was a fair, diverse, and inclusive city where everybody felt free to be themselves. Multiple initiatives would be delivered across the city to highlight this commitment, with a particular focus on improving health and wellbeing outcomes for our growing LGBT+ community. The work was being delivered through the Rainbow City Project Group, which included officers from across the business and representatives from city partners including Wolverhampton Homes, Wolverhampton LGBT+ and Enjoy Wolverhampton.

Board considered the 168 responses to the consultation including:

- 82% agreed with the initial principles, vision, and objectives of the Rainbow City
- 67% thought Wellbeing Services were the top priority for Health and Support Services (with 52% being Sexual Health)
- 60% got information on health and support services from Google (8% get information from WIN)
- 82% wanted to see Cafés as their top priority for what they wanted to see in the daytime economy (71.3% wanted to see City Events)
- 71% wanted to see Bars as their top priority for what they wanted to see in the daytime economy (70% wanted to see Social Events)

The majority of people agreed with the principles, vision and objectives and a lot of the feedback was around visibility and recognition of our LGBT community. Respondents sought equality, acceptance, and diversity in the Rainbow City and to be a welcoming city where LGBT people could thrive. The consultation specifically referred to health opportunities and health inequalities, which were seen as major concerns in society and the highest option that came out was around Wellbeing Services with sexual health being at 52%.

In relation to the drivers for change the Board understood that LGBT+ people showed lower satisfaction with their lives than the general population. In the national LGBT survey, LGBT people gave an average rating of 6.5 out of 10, while trans respondents gave an average rating of 5.4. For the general population, the average rating was 7.7.

Board understood that a high proportion of LGBT+ people suffered from mental health issues. It was noted that 24% of respondents to the national LGBT survey had accessed mental health services in the 12 months prior to responding. These were likely to have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, as indicated in survey results published by the LGBT Foundation.

Many LGBT+ individuals had experienced hate crime, and this was often unreported. The national LGBT survey showed that over 40% of respondents had been victims of abuse as they were LGBT and indicated that over 90% of these incidents went unreported. While some LGBT+ support was available in the city, there was no unified offer. Feedback from LGBT+ individuals in the city indicated that this could lead to a perception of Wolverhampton not being LGBT+ friendly.

In relation to the national picture, the Government had released an LGBT Action Plan in 2018, this was as a response to the findings of the national LGBT survey conducted in the previous year. The Action Plan contained 75 committed for delivery by 2022, across themes including health, education, safety, and workplaces. The latest progress report from July 2019 highlighted the following actions:

- The appointment of the UK's first LGBT Health Advisor (Apr 2019)
- The appointment of an "LGBT Advisory Panel". The Panel's term ended in March 21 and had yet to be reconvened.
- Funding for training and development of LGBT+ community groups and a small grants scheme, delivered by Consortium (the LGBT+ Futures Fund, January 2019 to March 2020).
- A new curriculum for Relationships Education (primary schools) and Relationships and Sexual Education (secondary schools) that included non-heteronormative portrayals of relationships. Schools were required to have implemented the changes by September 2021.
- Consultation on Banning Conversion therapy (launched on the 29 October 2021)
- The scheduling of an international LGBT+ conference for June 2022, entitled 'Safe to be Me'.

Based on research and consultation, the LGBT conference held in 2019 and the work of the Project Board; five key themes had been identified and officers allocated to these themes as part of a wider group. The five key themes were:

1. Digital
2. Culture and Creative
3. Health and Wellbeing
4. Community Safety
5. Education

Detailed information was provided to show some of the interventions, aims, objectives and the actions that were proposed, alongside the theme leads and deputy leads.

Board considered the Governance arrangements of the Rainbow City which included at the strategic level, the Rainbow City Project Board, at the operational level the Rainbow City Operational Steering Group and at the consultative level. The Rainbow City Charter Network.

Board considered the Engagement Plan which showed the approval path for the project, including being sent out to all Councillors for feedback on 13 December 2021, approval by Cabinet on 23 February 2022 and a launch date of 28 February 2022. Board thanked officers for what was considered a great initiative and welcomed the presentation.

Board referred to page 61 of the agenda and queried whether it would be possible to have hate crime data from across the whole of the West Midlands. Board also requested some additional clarification as to who had been consulted and whether there was a breakdown of the ages of those who had responded and whether any consultation had been carried out with schools. Board considered that it might be good to see enhanced consultation with schools as this work needed to be shaped by young people as well as people who worked in the Council. Some Board members considered that it would have been better had the project been resident driven rather than staff driven in the first instance.

It was stated that consultation had been widely advertised through social media and letters had been sent out in relation to a number of briefings that had been held. In relation to providing a more detailed breakdown of those who had been consulted and responded, the survey had been anonymous, but a high-level breakdown could be provided. In relation to working with schools, this was one of the largest areas where work was hoping to be carried out as this was where the future would be shaped. Work in this area was under development and the team were working closely with the Youth Council but recognised that there was much more that could be done moving forward.

The question was also raised in relation to whether the Council had reached out to partners such as the local football team; there had been consultation previously in relation to setting up a LGBT supporters Club in the year before the pandemic and as football was such a huge part of the culture of the city it was considered important to try and include this in the Rainbow City project. It was noted that the Wolves Captain was the British LGBT ally which was wonderful, and it was stated that Ian Fegan (Director of Communications and External Relations) was the sponsor for the project and that the aspiration was to work with as many partners as possible including the football club.

Board queried the costs associated with the Rainbow City Project and noted that there had to be priorities for the Council and that the outreach centres referred to would come at a cost which would take resources away from other priority areas. It was stated that in relation to budget, the team and project board were acutely aware of its and nothing in relation to the outreach centres had been set in stone yet. At the moment investigations in to the centre and available budgets were ongoing. Work was being carried out with partners such as the University and Wolverhampton Homes as it was not incumbent upon the Council to necessarily share all the financial burden and work was being carried out to see what could be achieved together.

Board queried what research had been done in relation to other towns and cities and their approaches. It was stated that prior to the main consultation, work had been carried out by the Senior Policy and Strategy Officer in relation to what best practice was already out there locally, nationally, and worldwide; information about this could be provided to Board after the meeting.

Board suggested that there could be some further work with West Midlands Police given the very concerning statistics in relation to hate crime. This work could include a focus on understanding what a hate-crime was and how it could affect different people in different ways.

Board thanked officers for what was considered to be a fantastic initiative and a powerful and proud statement to make to our citizens.

Resolved: That the presentation be received.

## 7 **British Art Show 9 - Full Programme Update**

Scrutiny Board welcomed Marguerite Nugent, Manager for Arts and Culture to the meeting.

The British Art Show 9 was due to open in Wolverhampton on 22 January 2022 and run until 10 April 2022. Wolverhampton was the first English host city, there would be 35 artists showing across Wolverhampton Art Gallery and the University School of Art. Themes included:

- healing,
- care and reparative history
- tactics for togetherness and
- imagining new futures

There would be a Wolverhampton focus on 'living and giving voice to difference' alongside the most diverse range of artists represented to date, with 40% being Black or Asian, 45% being women artists and 11% European.

The Art Show would help to support the city recovery and wider city offer in the following ways:

- Relighting our City- Vibrant High Streets and Communities strand
- Cultural Strategy- in draft but focusing on 5Ps (Productivity, Promotion, Participation, Pride, Partnerships)
- Link to Open Events Cultural Action Zone

- Events Strategy and longer-term plan for activity in the city
- Driving footfall to the city (40,000 people to Aberdeen)
- Evening economy – supports the development of evening activity in the city.

Board understood that there would also be a learning programme supported by Arts Connect. This included:

- Programme of BAS9 partner schools with focus on performance, visual arts and SEND working with specialist local practitioners
- School visits and teacher resource packs available for schools
- Programme of events to include workshops and talks both in person and virtual
- Family exhibition trails including Augmented Reality trail
- Saturday Art Club for disadvantaged young people to run during the show

There was a bespoke community ambassador programme which included:

- LGBTQ+ ambassador artist Kathy O'Conner
- The Good Shepherd working with homeless people- tour and exhibition 'it starts with a meal'
- Amarjit Kaur workshops for Asian women using textiles and responding to artist Catherine Walker
- Student ambassador – producing a 'Zine' drawing on experiences of autism and mental health.
- BID ambassador would see an additional BAS9 street ambassador in the city
- Youth ambassador working with groups from The Way Youth Zone

Volunteering would be co-ordinated across all sites to include:

- University students volunteering programme
- Arts & Culture council volunteering programme for non-students through the Art Gallery
- Training to be given on both operational matters and exhibition content
- Incentives including certificates and training so that participants had evidence of career development.
- Volunteer target of 40

Board considered the Offsite 9 project which would be delivered in partnership with Creative Black Country. This was funded by Arts Council England and would involve 25 local artists who had been commissioned to make work around the city. This would include an open call and four ring-fenced commissions with Asylum Arts, Eagleworks studios, Flexus Dance and DASH (disability arts). There would be a publication telling the stories of people of Wolverhampton and profiling the artistic and creative talent in the city. There would also be podcasts capturing Wolverhampton voices in a changing social and political environment.

A marketing and audience development strategy had been developed to identify target audiences. This strategy had been aligned to the national campaign with a launch event planned for 21 January 2022 at the Art Gallery. The hope was to bring

an additional 50,000 visitors to the city for the duration of the show, provide new opportunities for local businesses, create meal and hotel deals, and provide events space for pop up events and activities. Through measuring the impact of the activities, the Council would be able to better profile visitors to the city for large scale events and it was hoped that the show would support the longer term cultural and events strategy, provide a template for any future large-scale exhibitions or festivals and raise the profile of the city.

Board welcomed the presentation and all the work being carried out and considered that this was a huge feather in the city's cap. Board considered it vital to ensure that we were getting every single bit of benefit from this huge show as possible. However, some members raised concern that when looking at the event on the internet it appeared to link with the visit Birmingham web pages and that it was important to try and encourage people to stay over in Wolverhampton so perhaps how we were marketing and communicating this event and our city required some additional work and thought. It was considered vital to get the publicity and communication right to really make the most of this.

Resolved: That the presentation be received.

#### 8 **Work programmes Update**

The Scrutiny and Systems Manager updated the Board in relation to the Work programme.

Resolved: That the Work programme be agreed.

## Attendance

### Members of the Scrutiny Board

Cllr Paul Sweet (Chair)  
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE  
Cllr Val Evans  
Cllr Rita Potter  
Cllr Wendy Thompson  
Cllr Simon Bennett (Vice-Chair)  
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar  
Cllr John Reynolds  
Cllr Susan Roberts MBE  
Cllr Zee Russell  
Cllr Ellis Turrell  
Cllr Barbara McGarrity QN

### In Attendance

David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer  
Claire Nye, Director of Finance  
Charlotte Johns, Director of Strategy  
Allison Shannon, Chief Accountant  
James Amphlett, Head of Insight and Performance

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

*Item No.*     *Title*

- 1        **Apologies for absence**  
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Asha Mattu.
  
- 2        **Declarations of interest**  
Cllr P Bateman declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Canal and River Trust.

It was confirmed that there was no requirement for members do declare an interest if they were a governor at a local school.

- 3        **Financial Inclusion Strategy - Engagement and Consultation**  
Board welcomed Alison Hinds, Deputy Director of Children's Social Care and Kate Lees, Partnership Manager Children's Services, to the meeting.

Board considered the presentation, but it was resolved that due to not having had sufficient time to process the information contained in the presentation, that any

discussion on the matter be deferred until a later date. It was noted that the full Financial Inclusion Strategy was scheduled to come before the Board on Tuesday 15 March 2022 as pre decision scrutiny.

Resolved: That the item be deferred and considered at a subsequent meeting.

- 4 **Council Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy and Performance Framework**  
Scrutiny Board welcomed David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer; Claire Nye, Director of Finance; Charlotte Johns, Director of Strategy, Allison Shannon, Chief Accountant and James Amphlett, Head of Insight and Performance to the meeting.

Scrutiny Board considered the Council Plan, Medium Term Financial Strategy and Performance Framework. Scrutiny Board noted the aims and objectives highlighted in the Council Plan and what it would be seeking to achieve for residents, businesses, and the city. The Council Plan was linked and supported by a detailed performance framework setting out exactly how the Council would measure and evaluate the impact of the aims and objectives listed.

Scrutiny Board noted the importance of understanding and monitoring how the Council was performing in relation to the Plan objectives and how the Council's finances were linking in and being used to support and promote the Plan objectives and framework.

Board considered the matter of digital by design and noted that it was also important to take into consideration the number of children who were living in poverty. It was agreed that a huge amount of progress had been made and a lot of good work done to help citizens be more digitally connected but that there were still issues with connectivity at home and with poor internet connections. It was stated that driven by digital was a cross cutting theme in the Council Plan because it touched on every facet of life. Underpinning this was the forthcoming digital Wolverhampton Strategy that was currently being consulted on and had been considered as pre-decision scrutiny recently. This Strategy aimed to look at digital in the round and it was stated that the city had really pushed ahead in terms of digital infrastructure whether that be full fibre broadband in the ground or 5 G masts in the sky, it was vital to ensure that the infrastructure was in place. Officers were however still very conscious of the challenges around inclusion and poverty and were taking care to ensure that people had got the means to access equipment and the skills and support required to be able to capitalise on the opportunities that digital could bring.

Some members noted that even though the Council Plan was refreshed every year they struggled to see the benefits for residents and how it translated into positive outcomes for the city. The majority of Board members welcomed the new plan. The importance of having a council plan was welcomed as a way of bringing together the council's strategic priorities which would then inform how the council aligned its budget and resources to deliver those outcomes whilst also linking in with performance and improvement issues. A key part of the Council Plan was about the monitoring of performance going forward and in the context of the Levelling Up White paper it was also an opportunity to articulate what levelling up meant in the context of our city to support the ongoing conversations with central government

Board agreed that having a council plan was vitally important for the democratic function. Some members considered that it might be useful to include areas in the



plan such as where there had been success from European Regional Development Fund initiatives and how the council was going to build upon this with whatever funding opportunities would take its place. Moving forward it was also considered potentially useful to see and understand what had been achieved or where initiatives had not been as successful as planned. Areas such as this in the Council Plan would help to steer the council in the right direction, provide accountability and give members the opportunity to provide constructive commentary and recommendations.

Board did request that for future meetings where the budget would be scrutinised, that a more detailed breakdown of the draft budget be provided. Scrutiny Board welcomed the fact that there was a balanced budget and that the financial situation looked healthy which was commendable given what the city and the country had been through during the pandemic.

Board queried the situation in relation to vaccinations for staff working in social care and the possible knock-on effect if they were no longer able to work. It was stated that this was being carefully monitored and that close work was being carried out with the Adult Social Care Team who were best placed to monitor the pressures in the system in terms of the ability of providers to manage service provision. Information such as this was factored into the report and the question of market sustainability was being very carefully monitored.

A recommendation was proposed and seconded that Cabinet consider not implementing the 1% Adult Social Care precept and instead seek to fund the additional revenue that it would raise for adult social care through alternative means. Board debated the recommendation. Clarity was sought from the Director of Finance who considered that should this be agreed that it would not be a one-off decision, it was a decision that would then have impact over the medium term because the funding would then be taken out of every budget going forward if a one-off grant was used instead of the council tax increase. There would be an incremental impact each year so it would have a bigger impact over the medium term. The proposer and seconder of the amendment suggested that this be only for the 2022-23 financial year as an alternative to raising council tax.

Board voted on the recommendation, with the majority voting against. The recommendation was not passed.

Board welcomed the intention to bring a multi-year budget position, especially given the current context and uncertain funding positions. Board also welcomed the intention to consider the MTFS in terms of core council business and to really consider where money was spent and activity undertaken in terms of current priorities such as the promotion of independence and wellbeing, (specifically in terms of adult social care) and investment in the City (including embedding the Wolverhampton Pound).

Board supported the aims detailed in the presentation to ensure that the Council sought to capitalise on what was best for residents. Board also supported the key areas mentioned which included innovation, balancing of risk, reducing demand across services, more targeted service delivery and how the Council worked with organisations and partners to deliver sustainable services in line with corporate priorities.

Board sought clarity as to the budget associated with the Strategy Directorate and it was explained that Strategy included policy and strategy, insight and performance, data analytics, organisational development (including council and councillor training budgets) external funding, digital projects, customer services and the council's digital and IT services. Board also considered the budget associated with communications with the majority of members in favour and supportive of the importance of communication for democratic accountability and keeping residents informed of what was going on, especially during a pandemic.

In relation to the indicators, Board suggested that it might be useful to include whether a school was a local authority run school or an academy. In relation to the section on homes, Board noted that this was about energy efficiency for homes and that many UK homes were poor on energy efficiency; it was suggested that a definition on fuel poverty might be useful to provide more context to this to understand the percentage of fuel spend required in relation to income.

Board welcomed the draft indicators and the report and noted the importance of monitoring the indicators effectively once they had been agreed through the relevant scrutiny panels. This would need to include detailed information on school performance, arboriculture matters, placements for children in care, ward data and unemployment statistics. Board also considered that an objective in relation to the Wolverhampton Pound be included in the statistics and be monitored regularly by the appropriate scrutiny panel.

Resolved: That the presentation be received, and comments considered by Cabinet.

# Scrutiny Board

22 March 2022

<b>Report title</b>	Quarter 2 Social Care, Public Health and Corporate Complaints Report 2021-2022	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Cllr Paula Brookfield, Cabinet Member for Governance	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable director</b>	David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer	
<b>Originating service</b>	Information Governance, Customer Feedback	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Sarah Campbell Tel Email	Customer Engagement Manager 01902 551090 sarah.campbell@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Leadership Teams - Finance, Governance, Regeneration, Joint Adult, Children's & Education, Public Health, City Housing & Environment, City Asset & Housing, People and Change	February/March 2022

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## Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

1. Review complaints management and performance for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021.

## Recommendations for noting:

The Scrutiny Board is asked to note:

1. The Statutory Complaints Activity for Children's Services, Education Services, Adult Services and Public Health, as detailed in Appendix 3 (Section 1).
2. All the other complaints activity governed by the Corporate Complaints Procedures as detailed in Appendix 3 (Section 2).

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The Council's Customer Feedback Team handles complaints, compliments and service enquiries from members of the public. Those relating to children's, adults and public health matters fall under a statutory framework, while the remainder are handled under the council's corporate policy and procedures.
- 1.2 This report provides an overview of the complaints, including Local Government and Social Care/Housing Ombudsman enquiries received during 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021.

## **2.0 Attachments**

- 2.1 Appended to this covering report are the following documents:

Appendix 1 – Statutory Social Care Customer Feedback Dashboard

Appendix 2 – Corporate Customer Feedback Dashboard

Appendix 3 – Notes to the dashboard – Statutory (Section 1); Corporate (Section 2), Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) and Housing Ombudsman (HO)

Appendix 4 – Learning from stage one complaints (corporate, social care and public health)

## **3.0 Complaint Training**

- 3.1 The Customer Feedback Team has compiled mandatory corporate complaint training and children's complaint handling for council officers, which is available via the council's learning hub. The team is currently working with the Council's organisational development team and is compiling an online training module for Adult's complaint handling; this will be launched during 2021-2022.

## **4.0 Monitoring Information**

- 4.1 There are no concerns with the data analysis or evidence of any groups being disproportionately affected. The Council, being under the Public-Sector Equality Duty must, on an on- going basis, consider how its policies are working for the diverse communities a Council serves.

## **5.0 Managing Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Procedure**

- 5.1 The management of unreasonable complainant behaviour procedure has been active since February 2015. During this period, the Customer Feedback Team has managed a total of two cases in line with this procedure.

## **6.0 Complaint Policy/Procedures**

The customer feedback team carries out regular reviews of the council's corporate complaints policy and Children's, Adults and Public Health complaint procedures to

reflect current working practices and legislation. All policies and procedures are presented to the relevant leadership teams and democratic panel/board for approval.

## **7.0 Financial Implications**

7.1 There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation in this report. [GE/03022022/N]

## **8.0 Legal Implications**

8.1 The statutory complaints procedure must comply with various statutes. These include:

- Children and Family Services - The Children Act 1989, Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. The Local Authority functions covered include services provided under Parts III, IV and V of the Children Act 1989
- Adult Social Care – The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009; which came into force on 1 April 2009.
- Public Health - The NHS Bodies and Local Authorities (Partnership Arrangements, Care Trusts, Public Health and Local Healthwatch) Regulations 2012.

Legal Code: SZ.07020222/P

## **9.0 Equalities Implications**

9.1 There are no equalities implications associated with this report.

## **10.0 Environmental Implications**

10.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this report.

## **11.0 Human Resources Implications**

11.1 There are no human resource implications associated with this report.

## **12.0 Corporate Landlord Implications**

12.1 There are no corporate landlord implications associated with this report.

## **13.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

13.1 The complaints element of the social care and corporate procedure is part of a wider assurance process supporting quality in service delivery standards. This can then be a positive experience for customers and contribute to their health and well-being. For those occasions where the experience which has led to a complaint is a less positive one, then there is an opportunity for appropriate action or redress so that the health and

well-being of the complainant and/or relevant others is secured. The compliments process allows customers to note great practice by the Council; positive experience of officers working in many different settings will support improved experience of health and well-being for individuals as well as for staff who can be satisfied that their work is appreciated.

#### **14.0 Covid Implications**

14.1 During the period, 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021, a number of complaint cases were implicated by Covid pandemic which are outlined Appendix 3; some cases are due to government restrictions and regulations in place.

#### **15.0 Schedule of Background Papers**

15.1 None for consideration.

# Appendix 1 Statutory Customer Feedback Children's and Education Services

Quarter 2 (1 July 2021 - 30 September 2021)

## Stage 1 Complaints Received

See Appendix 3 (1.2)



## Average Complaint Response Time

See Appendix 3 (1.3)



Corporate complaints

*This represents an increase*



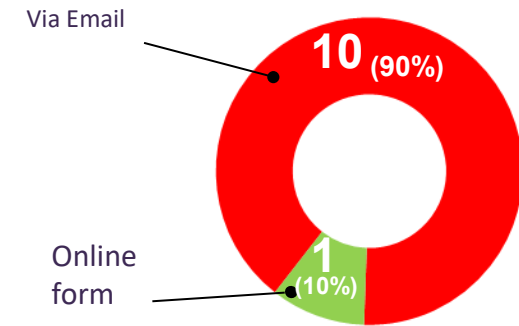
## Stage 1 Complaints Comparison for Q2

See Appendix 3 (1.2)



## How complaints are received

See Appendix 3 (1.2)

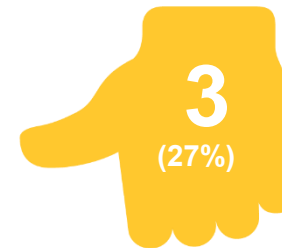


## Complaints where the Council is at fault (Upheld)

See Learning Appendix 4



## Complaints where the Council is partially at fault (Partially Upheld)



Issues have been identified from upheld complaints and have been addressed; remedies have been provided to the customers by apologising and informing them of the improvements that have been made.

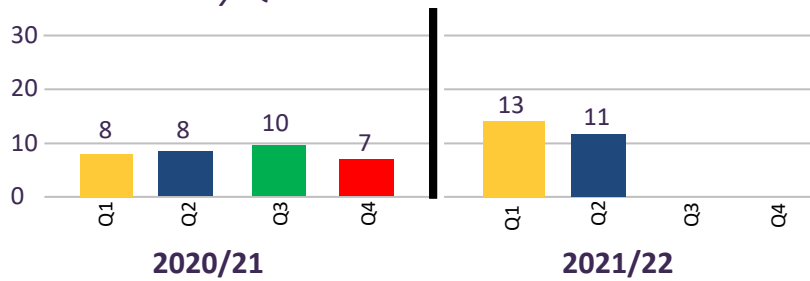
## Complaints where the Council is not at fault (Not Upheld)



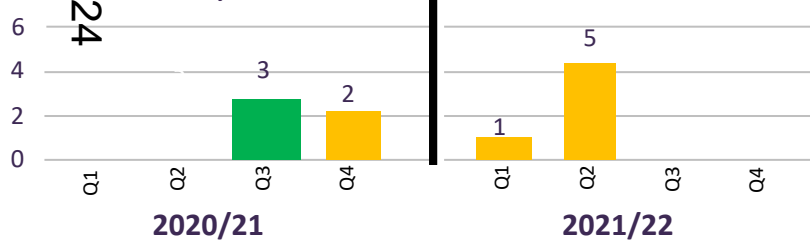
# Appendix 1 Statutory Customer Feedback Children's and Education Services

Quarter 2 (1 July 2021 - 30 September 2021)

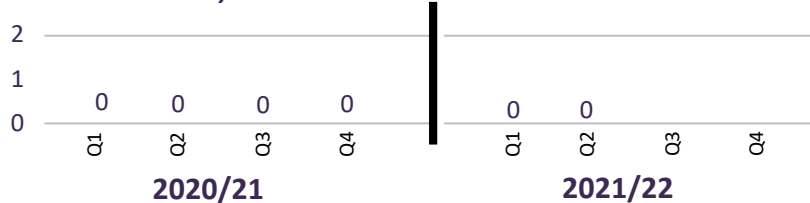
## Stage 1 Complaints Comparison – Appendix 3 (1.2) Breakdown by Quarter



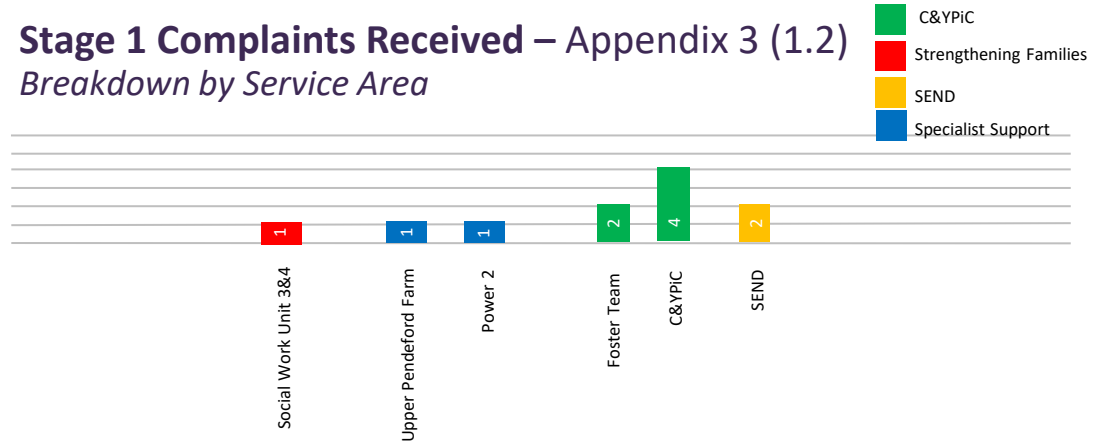
## Stage 2 Complaints Comparison – Appendix 3 (1.5) Breakdown by Quarter



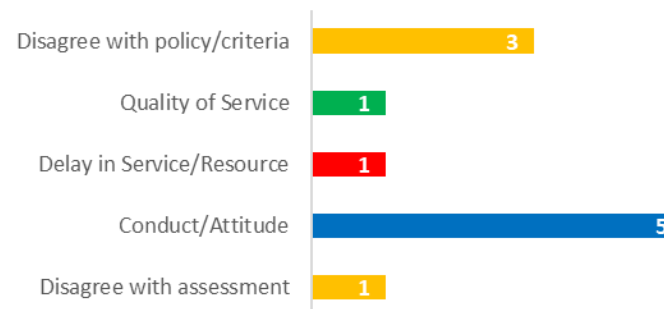
## Stage 3 Complaints Comparison – Appendix 3 (1.6) Breakdown by Quarter



## Stage 1 Complaints Received – Appendix 3 (1.2) Breakdown by Service Area



## Stage 1 Complaints Received Breakdown by Category



48

Compliments  
Appendix 3 (1.8)

25

Informal  
Complaints  
Appendix 3 (1.1)



# Appendix 1 Statutory Customer Feedback Adult Services and Public Health

Quarter 2 (1 July 2021 - 30 September 2021)

### Stage 1 Complaints (Formal) Received

See Appendix 3 (2.1 and 3.2)



Average Complaint Response Time  
See Appendix 3 (3.4)



Statutory complaints



Corporate complaints

This represents an increase



5

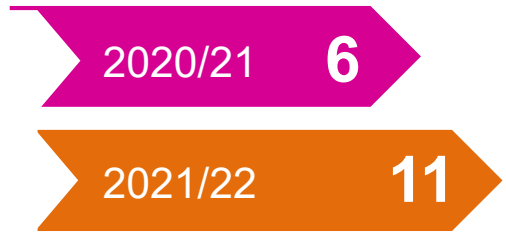
### Complaints where the Council is at fault (Upheld)

See Learning Appendix 4

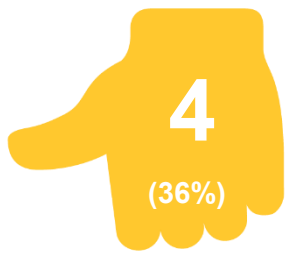


### Stage 1 Complaints Comparison for Q2

See Appendix 3 (2.1 and 3.2)



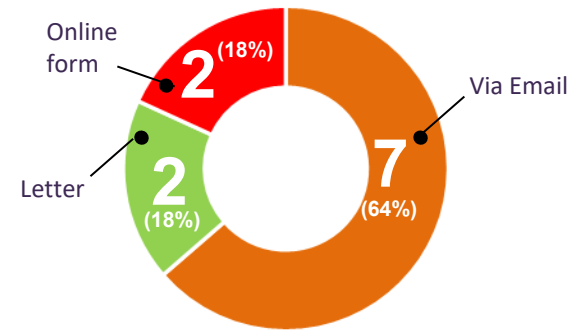
### Complaints Where The Council Is Partially At Fault (Partially Upheld)



Issues have been identified from these upheld complaints and have been addressed; remedies have been provided to the customers by apologising and informing them of the improvements that have been made.

### How complaints are received

See Appendix 3 (3.2)



### Complaints Where The Council Is Not At Fault (Not Upheld)

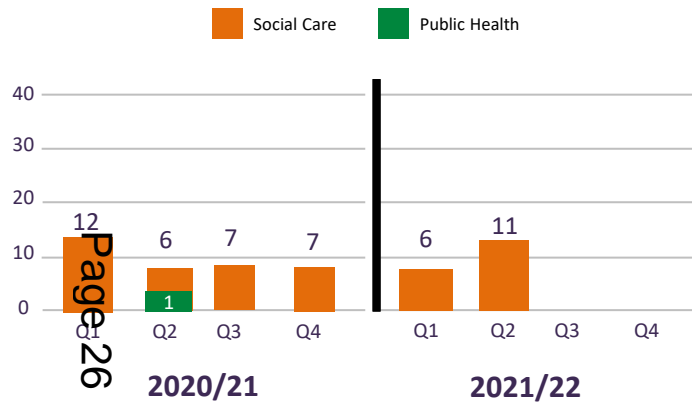


# Appendix 1 Statutory Customer Feedback Adult Services and Public Health

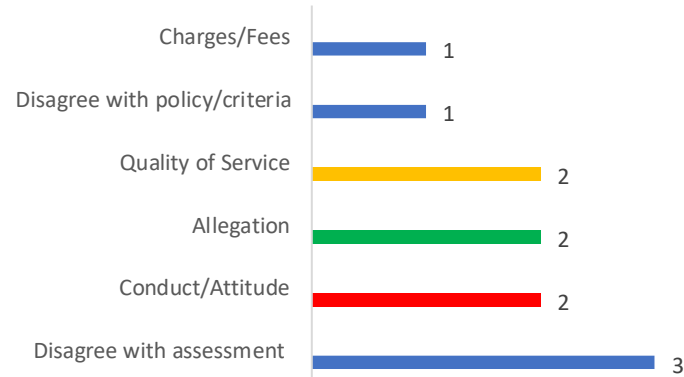
Quarter 2 (1 July 2021 - 30 September 2021)

## Stage 1 Complaints Comparison

Breakdown by Quarter - See Appendix 3 (3.2)



## Stage 1 Complaints Received - Breakdown by Category



105

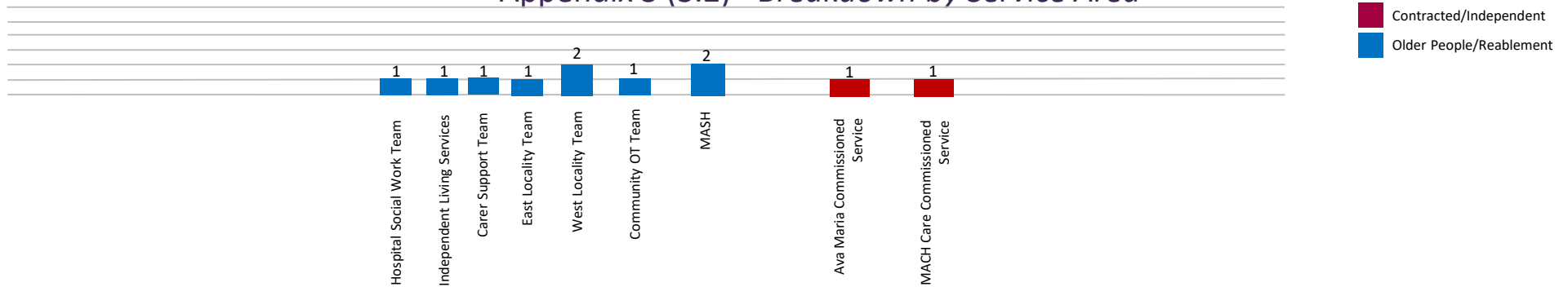
Compliments - Appendix 3 (3.5)

17

Informal Complaints Appendix 3 (3.1)

## Stage 1 Complaints Received

Appendix 3 (3.2) - Breakdown by Service Area



# Appendix 2 Customer Feedback Corporate Complaints

Quarter 2 (1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021)

## Stage 1 Complaints Received

See Appendix 3 (4.2 and 4.3)



## Stage 1 Complaints where the Council is at fault

(upheld) See Learning Appendix 4



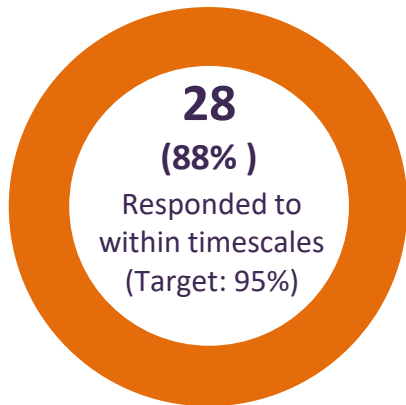
Issues have been identified from upheld complaints and have been addressed; remedies have been provided to the customers by apologising and informing them of the improvements that have been made.

## Stage 1 Complaints where the Council is not at fault



## Stage 1 Response Timescales

See Appendix 3 (4.4)



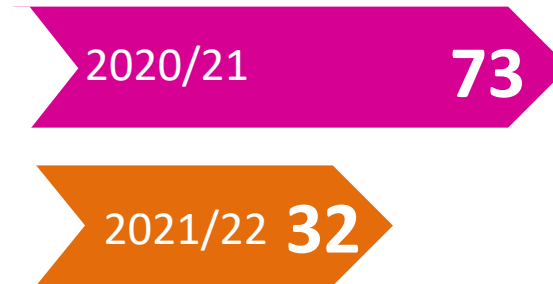
## Stage 1 Average Complaint Response Time

See Appendix 3 (4.4)



## Stage 1 Complaints Comparison for Q2

See Appendix 3 (4.2)



## Stage 1 Complaints decreased by



Decrease of 41 complaints compared to Q2 2020/21

# Appendix 2

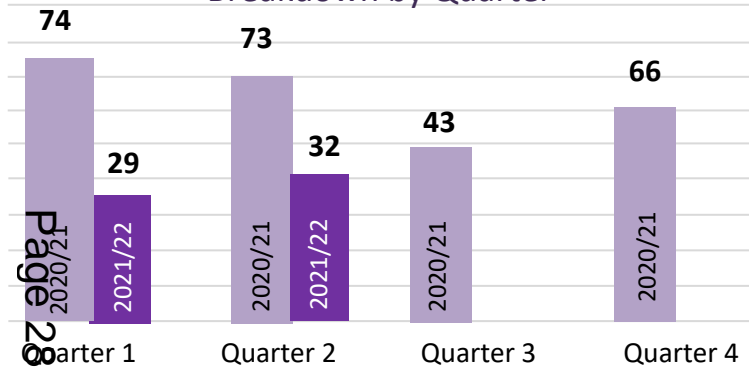
## Customer Feedback Corporate Complaints

Quarter 2 (1 July 2021 – 30 September 2021)

### Stage 1 Complaints Comparison

See Appendix 3 (4.2 and 4.3)

Breakdown by Quarter

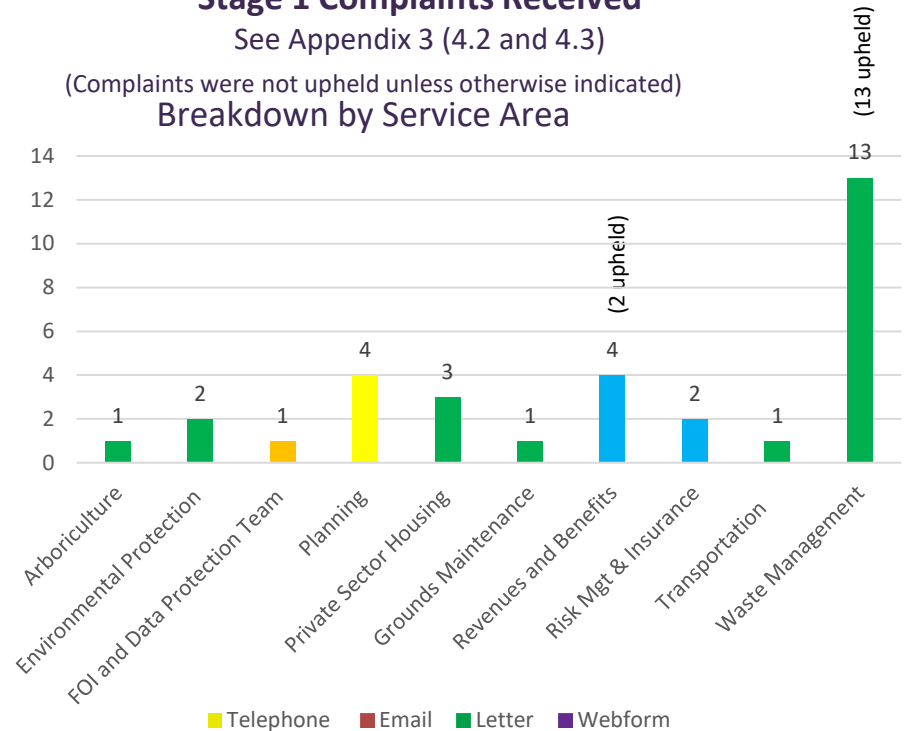


### Stage 1 Complaints Received

See Appendix 3 (4.2 and 4.3)

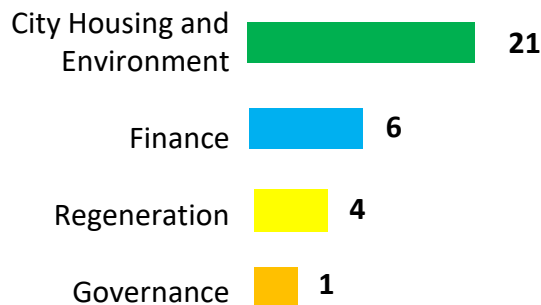
(Complaints were not upheld unless otherwise indicated)

Breakdown by Service Area



### Stage 1 Complaints Breakdown by Service

2021/22



### Service Requests

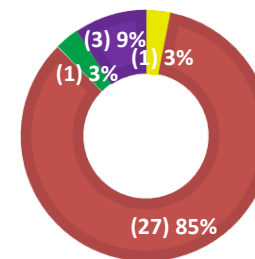
See Appendix 3 (4.1)

262

### Compliments Received

See Appendix 3 (4.6)

57



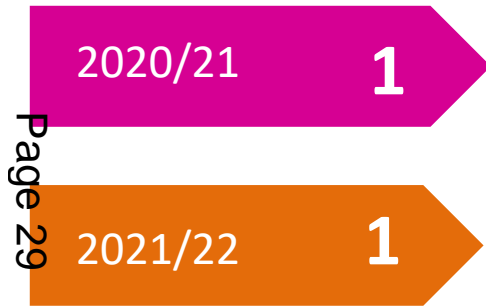
How complaints  
are received  
See Appendix 3  
(4.2)

# Appendix 2

Quarter 2 (1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021)

## HO enquiries for Quarter 2

See Appendix 3 (5.2 and 5.4)

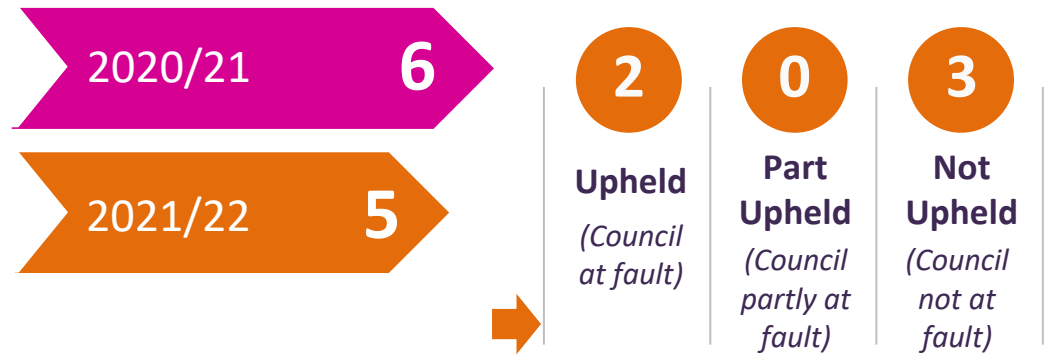


Page 29

Figures consistent for 2021/22 Q2 compared to 2020/21 Q2. Customer Feedback team has also received 5 initial HO assessment enquiry for Q2 2021/22.

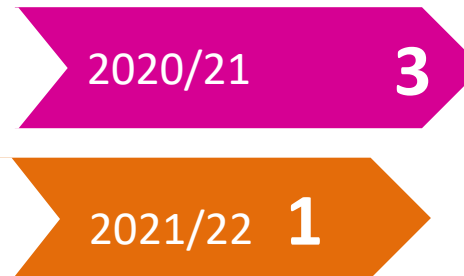
## Stage 2 Corporate Complaints Comparison for Quarter 2

See Appendix 3 (4.5)



## LGSCO enquiries for Quarter 2

See Appendix 3 (5.1 and 5.3)



Figures have decreased for 2021/22 Q2 compared to 2020/21 Q2. Customer Feedback team has also received 8 initial LGSCO assessment enquiry for Q2 2021/22.

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## **APPENDIX 3**

### **SECTION 1:**

### **Children's Services, Education Services, Adult Services and Public Health Complaints Activity**

**1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021**

#### **1.0 Children's and Education Services – Complaint Activity**

##### **1.1 Informal Complaints**

The complaint regulations provide an opportunity for young people/children, parents, advocates and carers to raise issues of concern without those matters being treated as formal complaints, as long as they are effectively addressed and resolved in a timely manner. These are referred to as informal complaints; 25 informal complaints were received during 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 compared to nine informal complaints received during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020; an increase of 16 cases. Out of the 25 informal complaints, two enquiries were received via an advocacy service.

##### **1.2 Stage One Complaints**

During 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 the council received 11 stage one Children's and Education Services complaints compared to eight during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020, an increase of three cases. The 11 complaints received during this period refer to six separate service areas. The highest figure of four cases referred to the Children and Young People in Care team. In some cases, this has followed extensive but unsuccessful attempts to resolve some of those complaints informally. The following customer groups submitted complaints to the council; three parents/two foster carers/two neighbours/one guardian/one family friend/one relative and one adopter. Out of the 11 complaints logged and investigated, ten complaints were submitted via email and one complaint via an online form. No stage one complaints were received via an advocacy service. Out of the 11 complaints logged and investigated during this period, five cases were upheld (at fault), three cases were partially upheld (partially at fault) and three cases not upheld (not at fault).

##### **1.3 Timescales**

Out of the 11 complaints logged and investigated during this period, no complaints were dealt with in accordance with the Children's Act. 11 complaints were dealt with in accordance with the corporate complaints policy and procedure (Non-Children's Act) with a response timescale of 21 calendar days; the average timescale for complaint responses was 25 days. The customer feedback team regularly reviews response times with Children's Services to improve these timescales and complainants are regularly updated on the progress of their complaint whilst providing realistic timescales.

##### **1.4 Stage Two Complaints**

During this period 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021, the council received no statutory stage two complaints; this is in comparison to no complaint cases received during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020.

The Council received five children's and education stage two complaints which were dealt with in accordance with our corporate complaints policy and procedure. This is in comparison to no cases received during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020. Out of the

## APPENDIX 3

five cases received, two cases were upheld and three cases not upheld. The corporate children's and education stage two complaints received are as follows:

- Children and Young People in Care, DC&YP Team received one complaint in relation to social worker conduct, request for new worker to be allocated to case and delays in concluding stage one response; outcome not upheld
- Children and Young People in Care, CYPiC Team received one complaint in relation to no progress with contact with children and ongoing letter box contact; outcome upheld; appropriate learning and remedies have been put in place
- Children and Young People in Care, Fostering Team received one complaint in relation to process/procedure of fostering placement and actions of fostering team; outcome not upheld
- Education, SEND team received one complaint in relation to officer conduct; outcome not upheld
- Education, SEND team received one complaint in relation to delays incurred by the team for an EHCP and psychological advice report; outcome upheld; appropriate learning and remedies have been put in place

Several other complaints that could have proceeded down this route were resolved after significant intervention, mediation meetings and problem solving with Children's and Education Services, the complainant and customer feedback team.

### 1.5 Stage Three Complaints

Where a statutory children's stage two complaint investigation has been carried out and the complainant remains dissatisfied, they have the right to request matters proceed to the final stage of the statutory complaints procedure; a stage three Independent Complaint Review Panel. During 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 no complaints escalated to a stage three panel during this period; this is in comparison to no stage three cases during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020.

### 1.6 Complaint Category

These are the headings under which we register the complaint against, based on the complaint details received – see attached Dashboard.

### 1.7 Compliments

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Feedback Team and reported as part of the team's monitoring process. During this period 48 compliments were received for Children's Services, compared to four during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020. Fostering team received eight compliments followed by Early Intervention and Children and Young People in Care Teams both receiving six compliments.

## 2.0 Public Health – Complaint Activity

- 2.1 Regionally and nationally councils receive very few complaints in relation to Public Health Services. A typical complaint would be where a council has commissioned a service for local people through a Clinic or GP practice. Complaints in relation to GP's and Hospitals are dealt with through a separate complaint process managed by Health Services. In relation to Public Health complaints, there has been no complaints received during 1 July



## **APPENDIX 3**

2021 to 30 September 2021; this is in comparison to one complaint received during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020.

### **3.0 Adult Services – Complaint Activity**

#### **3.1 Informal Complaints**

The complaint regulations provide an opportunity for adult complaints to be resolved informally utilising a number of resolution methods as long as they are effectively addressed and resolved in a timely manner. During 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 the council received 17 informal complaints which were resolved at service level without going through the formal route. This was compared to 12 informal complaints received during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020, an increase of five cases.

#### **3.2 Stage One Complaints**

During 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 the council received 11 formal complaints compared to six during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020, representing an increase of five cases during this period. The highest figure of two cases referred to both MASH and West Locality Team. The 11 complaints received covered nine separate service areas; seven were received via email, two received via online form and two received via written letter correspondence. In some cases, this has followed extensive but unsuccessful attempts to resolve some of those complaints informally. During this period, two complaints received were in relation to commissioned services – see Appendix 1. Out of the 11 cases logged and investigated during this period, one case was upheld, four cases partially upheld and six cases not upheld.

Out of the 11 complaint cases received, one case escalated to stage two under the corporate complaints policy and procedure; the corporate stage two complaint was in relation to council's response to statutory guidance during Covid19 concerning Direct Payments/Carer Support; outcome partially upheld; appropriate learning and remedies have been put in place.

#### **3.3 Complaint Category**

These are the headings under which we register the complaint against, based on the complaint details received – see attached Dashboard.

#### **3.4 Timescales**

Out of the 11 complaints logged and investigated during this period ten complaints were dealt with in accordance with the Statutory Adults procedure with a response timescale of ten working days; the average response timescale was 16 days. One complaint was dealt with in accordance with the corporate complaints policy and procedure with a response timescale of 21 calendar days; the average response timescale was 18 days. Cases responded to outside of the timescale are due to various reasons for example, complex cases, availability of resources. In these circumstances, complainants are regularly updated on the progress of their complaint.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **3.5 Compliments**

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Feedback Team and reported as part of the team's monitoring process. 105 compliments were received during 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 relating to Adult Services compared to 47 during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020. 83 compliments were received for Welfare Rights, followed by 2 compliments received for West Locality Team and 2 compliments received for Community Equipment Service.

### **3.6 Areas of Learning from Complaints**

See Appendix 4 for stage 1 learning.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **SECTION 2: Corporate Complaints Activity, Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman Complaints Activity 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021**

#### **4.0 Corporate Complaints Activity, Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and Housing Ombudsman**

##### **4.1 Informal complaint enquiries/service requests**

The customer feedback team works alongside the service involved and the customer complaining to resolve the complaint informally, preventing it becoming a formal complaint. It should be noted that 262 informal complaints and service request enquiries were logged with the customer feedback team during 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021, compared to 287 received during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020. These types of enquiries are varied, for example, missed bin collection, contaminated bins, appeals, parking enquiries, litter or enquiries that fall outside of the complaints procedure jurisdiction. All enquiries were logged and resolved informally or sign posted to the correct process without going through the corporate complaints procedure; this provides a swift outcome and resolution for the customer by resolving concerns at service level.

##### **4.2 Corporate stage 1 complaints**

During 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 the council received 32 stage one corporate complaints compared to 73 received during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020; a decrease of 41 cases. Out of the 32 cases logged and investigated, 15 cases were upheld (at fault) and 17 not upheld (not at fault). The 32 complaints cover ten separate service areas, the highest figure of 13 complaints refer to Waste Management, followed jointly by Planning and Revenues and Benefits both receiving four cases. Out of the 13 complaints referring to Waste Management, eight cases were received for general waste (four missed bin collections, two bin replacements, one for assisted collection and one in relation to new waste bin not provided); two cases received for garden waste (one for replacement bin and one for missed garden waste collection); two cases for recycling bins (two for missed recycling collections); one case received for trade waste (missed trade waste collection). In some cases, this has followed extensive but unsuccessful attempts to resolve some of those matters at service level. Out of the 32 stage one complaints received, 27 cases were submitted via email, three cases via webform, one case via written correspondence and one case via telephone.

##### **4.3 Corporate Complaint Category**

During 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 the main issue of complaint involved failure to provide a service (14), followed by dissatisfaction of council policies (7), failure to achieve standards/quality (5), conduct of employees (5); delays with responding or administration (1).

##### **4.4 Corporate Timescales**

The average response time for responding to each complaint is 15 days for this period; this is in comparison to 13 days for 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020. The response timescale for stage 1 complaints responding within 21 calendar days (corporate complaints policy and procedure) is 95%. Out of the 32 cases logged and investigated during this

## APPENDIX 3

period, 28 cases were responded to within 21 calendar days and 4 cases responded to outside of this timescale. The target of 95% response time has therefore not been achieved; the Customer Feedback Team will continue to monitor this response time and work with service groups to improve this timescale. Cases responded to outside of the timescale are due to various reasons for example, complex cases, availability of resources. In these circumstances, complainants are regularly updated on the progress of their complaint.

### 4.5 Stage 2 corporate complaints

During 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 the council received five stage two corporate complaints compared to six cases for 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020, a decrease of one case. Out of the five cases received, two cases were upheld (at fault) and three cases not upheld (not at fault).

Stage two complaints received are as follows:

City Housing and Environment received two cases as follows:

- Transportation received one complaint in relation to maintenance of highways and potholes; outcome not upheld
- Housing received one complaint in relation to damage caused to property during re-development; outcome upheld; appropriate learning and remedies have been put in place

Regeneration received two cases as follows:

- Planning Department received one complaint in relation to officer conduct; outcome not upheld
- Planning Department received one complaint in relation to planning application process, outcome not upheld

Governance received one case as follows:

- Information Governance Team received one complaint in relation to process and procedure; outcome upheld; appropriate learning and remedies have been put in place

### 4.6 Corporate Compliments

All compliments are recorded by the Customer Feedback Team and reported as part of the team's monitoring process. During 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 the council has received 57 compliments, this is in comparison to 36 received during 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2020. Planning received 18 compliments, Waste Management received nine followed by Finance receiving four.

### 4.7 Area of Learning for Corporate Complaints

See Appendix 4 for stage one learning.

### 5.0 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman/Housing Ombudsman

## APPENDIX 3

### 5.1 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Enquiries (LGSCO)

During 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 the council received one Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) enquiry as follows:

Adult Services received one complaint as follows:

- Adult Services and Communities received one complaint in relation to the council's lack of prompt action when concerns were raised about carers; outcome upheld, maladministration and injustice; as outlined in the Ombudsman's report appropriate recommendations, remedies and learning have been carried out

### 5.2 Housing Ombudsman (HO) Enquiries

During 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 the council received one enquiry from the Housing Ombudsman for Wolverhampton Homes as follows:

- One enquiry received in relation to the landlord's response to a request for redecoration; outcome customer has requested a review of the HO's decision, therefore the council is awaiting the HO's final report

### 5.3 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) assessment enquiries

During 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 the council received eight Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman assessment enquiries as follows:

Adult Services received two enquiries as follows;

- Adult Services and Health Partnerships received one enquiry in relation to health and social care services provided, outcome, progressed to a full investigation
- Adult Services and Health Partnerships received one enquiry in relation to supported living and direct payments; outcome premature complaint

Wolverhampton Homes received three enquiries as follows;

- Wolverhampton Homes received one complaint in relation to no support for a house move; outcome premature complaint
- Wolverhampton Homes received one complaint in relation to housing allocation; outcome closed after initial enquiries, no further action
- Wolverhampton Homes received one complaint in relation to repairs carried out by the council to a property next door; outcome closed after initial enquiries, out of jurisdiction

City Housing and Environment received two enquiries as follows:

- Environmental Services received one complaint in relation to fly tipping; outcome closed after initial enquiries, no further action
- Transportation, Parking and Traffic/Road Safety received one complaint in relation to disabled parking space and PCN; outcome closed after initial enquiries, no further action

Regeneration received one enquiry as follows:

## APPENDIX 3

- Planning received one complaint in relation to council failing to identify defective building work from 2007; outcome closed after initial enquiries, no further action

### 5.4 Housing Ombudsman assessment enquiries

During 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021 the council received five Housing Ombudsman assessment enquiries as follows:

Wolverhampton Homes received four enquiries as follows:

- One enquiry in relation to multiple leaks within a resident's property; resident is unhappy that no repairs have been carried out; outcome premature complaint
- One enquiry in relation to outstanding repairs, lack of communication with the resident and level of compensation; outcome premature complaint
- One enquiry in relation to loft insulation; outcome premature complaint
- One enquiry in relation to the landlord's handling of reports of damp and mould in a property; outcome premature complaint

Pendeford TMO (Tenant Management Organisation) received one enquiry as follows:

- One enquiry in relation to a neighbour's complaint; outcome premature complaint

### 6.0 Learning/Action Plans

Where complaints highlight that things have gone wrong, heads of service, managers and the customer feedback team are required to identify these areas, implement remedies and review processes/procedures where necessary. Customer Feedback Team and Directorates are committed to learning and require the completion of a tracking form/learning log from each complaint investigated at all stages. When a complaint is upheld/partially upheld (council at fault) and the findings of a subsequent investigation is for a financial remedy, change to policy or service delivery, the Customer Feedback Team produce an action plan report. Recommendations within these reports are agreed with appropriate Heads of Service and shared with the relevant Service Manager/Director to ensure appropriate remedies and changes to policy/service delivery are implemented. The Customer Feedback Team also attend regular quality assurance meetings for Adults and Children's Services and Waste Liaison Meetings to ensure they use the learning from complaints to drive service improvements.

See attached Appendix 4, Learning dashboard

Quarter 2 – 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021

**Action Plans/Learning from complaints** - When a complaint is upheld (Council at fault) and the findings of a subsequent investigation is for a change to policy or service delivery, the Customer Feedback Team produce an action plan report and follow up with the service any learning/action that needs to be carried out. Recommendations within these reports are agreed with appropriate Heads of Service and shared with the relevant Director. Please see below a few examples of stage 1 complaint learning

### Children's and Education Services – Stage one complaint learning

- *Complaint in relation to the placement of a young person in the neighbouring flat causing disruption and anti-social behaviour. **Learning** – The service agreed to move the young person within 6 weeks. No further recommendations were made as this was a unique case.*
- *Complaint in relation to the process to obtain assistance for an extension on a property causing delays with an application for guardianship. **Learning** – The agreement was finalised and issued and as a gesture of good will the council offered to fund one hour of independent legal advice*

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### Adult Services – Stage one complaint learning

- *Complaint in relation to current care provider - **Learning**- In conclusion, it is accepted that the care provider failed in it's duty of care to the service user and despite there being mitigating circumstances of lack of human resources, the best course of action was not taken to address the issues.*

# Appendix 4

## Customer Feedback

### Learning from Complaints

Quarter 2 – 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2021

**Action Plans/Learning from complaints** - When a complaint is upheld (Council at fault) and the findings of a subsequent investigation is for a change to policy or service delivery, the Customer Feedback Team produce an action plan report and follow up with the service any learning/action that needs to be carried out. Recommendations within these reports are agreed with appropriate Heads of Service and shared with the relevant Director. Please see below a few examples of stage 1 complaint learning

#### **Corporate Complaints – Stage one complaint learning**

- *Complaint in relation to Housing Benefits deduction. **Learning** – Apology issued to the customer and the member of staff reminded that notification letters must be issued where a recovery of overpaid housing benefit is sought from a landlord*
- *Complaint in relation to failure to provide 'assisted bin collection' service. **Learning** – Officers have been alerted to the complaint and procedures recorded. Refuse collections for assisted collections to be monitored by operational team*
- *Complaint in relation to missed trade waste collection. **Learning**- Complainant was contacted and advised it was the council's fault; officer discussed what had happened in relation to the complaint and established the fault with the customer. Officer apologised to the customer and arranged for the account to be credited*



CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	<b>Scrutiny Board</b> 22 March 2022
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<b>Report title</b>	Annual Scrutiny Review 2020-2021	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Paula Brookfield Cabinet Member for Governance and Equalities and Equalities	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All Wards	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	David Pattison, Chief Monitoring Officer	
<b>Originating service</b>	Governance	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Julia Cleary	Scrutiny and Systems Manager
	Tel:	01902 555046
	Email:	<a href="mailto:Julia.Cleary@wolverhampton.gov.uk">Julia.Cleary@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Regeneration Leadership Team	7 December 2021
	City Housing and Environment Leadership Team	7 December 2021
	Public Health Leadership Team	8 December 2021
	Children's and Education Joint Leadership Team	9 December 2021
	Governance Leadership Team	9 December 2021
	Adult Social Care Leadership Team	9 December 2021
	Cabinet Member Briefing Governance And Equalities	15 December 2021
	Strategic Executive Board	16 December 2021
	Leader Briefing	20 December 2021

**Recommendation for decision:**

Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

1. Endorse the Annual Scrutiny Review 2020-2021
2. Recommend the Annual Scrutiny Review 2020-2021 be received at Full Council on 6 April 2022.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 2.1 The Annual Review highlights some of the key achievements of the Scrutiny function over the 2020-2021 municipal year including details of the progress and outcomes from a selection of Panel meetings.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.2 Main areas for consideration this year included:

- Focus on Digital – Connected City Theme
- Adding value through the pandemic – Partnership working in Health scrutiny
- Place and Community – Critical friend challenge and feedback
- Protecting out most vulnerable children and young people – cross panel working, and member led enquiry
- Relighting our City – Regeneration and holding the Executive to account
- Challenges and future direction for scrutiny

## **3.0 Scrutiny**

- 3.1 Scrutiny is a vital component of good governance and the work carried out by Councillors through scrutiny this year has been invaluable in influencing policy. This has been through representing the concerns and interests of the public and by providing challenge to the Cabinet. Scrutiny also undertakes reviews of partners working with the Council through detailed and critical analysis of their annual plans and reports. The Board and all the Panels undertook thorough scrutiny of the budget savings proposals.
- 3.2 Wolverhampton operates a model similar to that used by most unitary councils across England. The Scrutiny Board provides the overall co-ordination of the work programme with the six Panels focussing on key areas of priority.

## **5.0 Financial implications**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations in this report as Councillors are requested to endorse the Annual Scrutiny Review 2020-2021 and recommend that it be received by Full Council on 6 April 2022. Any financial implications emerging as work is undertaken in pursuit of Scrutiny recommendations will continue to be incorporated in reports to the Scrutiny Board and Panels. Ongoing scrutiny function developments will be implemented utilising current budgeted Scrutiny Team resources. [GE/14032022/K]

## **6.0 Legal implications**

- 6.1 This report provides an overview of the scrutiny which has taken place during 2020-2021 and future plans for the on-going improvement and development of the service. For legal implications, specific to each project please refer to the reports taken to Scrutiny Board and Panels during the year. [AS/14032022/A]

## **7.0 Equalities implications**

- 7.1 In scrutinising issues, the members of the Board, Panel or group are required to consider the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups of people in order to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- 7.2 For equalities implications relating to each issue considered, please refer to the reports taken to Scrutiny Board and panels during the year.

## **8.0 Environmental implications**

- 8.1 There are no environmental implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

## **9.0 Human resources implications**

- 9.1 There are no human resources implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

## **10.0 Corporate landlord implications**

- 10.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

## **11.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications**

- 11.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Any health and wellbeing implications associated with scrutiny processes through the year are or will be incorporated in reports taken to the Scrutiny Board and Panels. []

## **12.0 Schedule of background papers**

- 12.1 Copies of all agendas and minutes for scrutiny panel meetings can be found [here](#).

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# Annual Scrutiny Review

2020 - 2021

CITY OF  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
COUNCIL

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## Introduction from the Chair



Cllr Paul Sweet  
Chair of Scrutiny Board  
2019-present

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On 16 March 2020, the Health and Social Care Secretary told the House of Commons that unnecessary social contact should be avoided.

On 23 March 2020 the Prime Minister told the country that people must stay at home.

### **Life as we knew it changed, in more ways and for longer than we could have ever imagined.**

Throughout these changes scrutiny has held and continues to hold a very privileged and unique position. This position has allowed scrutiny and those working with it to witness and document the journey of the council, working alongside partners and citizens through an unprecedented moment in time.

The work carried out by scrutiny through the pandemic sought to focus on where scrutiny could add value or impact and support our citizens and colleagues with the challenges facing them. Scrutiny has been about people, about partnerships, about seeking to understand the reality of a constantly changing landscape, about supporting those in need and about recognising those who have gone above and beyond what was ever thought necessary or

even possible. All of this whilst continuing to hold those responsible for making key decisions to account and keeping a close eye on the budget.

A key area this year was to consider what was working and what wasn't working in the communities to support citizens through the pandemic. A vital contribution to this work centred on the role of the local scrutiny councillor. The local intelligence that each member holds regarding their ward is crucial, scrutiny councillors are able to draw on the experience of their constituents as to the effectiveness of the processes that the Council and its partners are putting in place and communicate common messages and concerns back into the work planning and decision-making processes.

From the first meeting in June when hope was on the horizon and normality felt within reach, to the second wave in the new year and the renewed resilience and determination that colleagues, citizens and partners showed as they rose to what was a hugely challenging situation; scrutiny has been there. Scrutiny has sought to document the journey of our council, our city and our citizens, working together to make it through the pandemic, to come out the other side with hope, pride, trust, confidence, ambition and creativity still intact.





## “Out of darkness cometh light.”

And there is light, a lot of light. New ways of working, the food hub, the stay safe be kind helpline, social prescribing, supporting the vulnerable, agile working, community and voluntary sector initiatives, food banks, lateral flow testing, vaccinations, equalities, homelessness, housing, 5G, full fibre broadband, digital infrastructure, the civic halls and art gallery refurbishments and the harnessing of smart technology to make our City safer. The pandemic has acted as a catalyst for so many initiatives and as an opportunity for us all to take a step back and really consider how and why we work and act in certain ways; it has shone a light on who the key workers really are and how much of a debt we owe to the public sector, voluntary and community sector and NHS workers who have shown themselves to be true heroes throughout this time. Our own colleagues have risen to previously unthinkable challenges and conquered them head on and scrutiny seeks to celebrate these monolithic achievements and the people who have helped to make them possible, this year has been a true example of a ‘one council’ approach that is so central to how we all seek to work in Wolverhampton.

As previously stated, Scrutiny has a unique vantage point in being able to work with such a vast number of colleagues and partners and by pulling a number of threads and themes together in this report, **scrutiny can impact on how we continue to emerge from the pandemic** and keep a watching brief over this emergence. Scrutiny can help to ensure that innovation, inspiration, pride and the desire to improve services continues and to make sure that solid foundations are being laid for a modern, futureproof city and council.

Scrutiny will also seek to ensure that there continues to be informed decision making based on accurate data and evidence so that money is spent well and in the right places, to help bridge all divides, both digital and other, to make Wolverhampton the best city it can be.

## Introduction from the Vice Chair



Cllr Jonathan Crofts  
Vice Chair of Scrutiny  
Board 2019-2021

For obvious reasons 2020 will prove a memorable year for all. Like all at the Council the pandemic radically changed the nature of Scrutiny's work as we moved to a fully online process.

Earlier in the year it was decided for all scrutiny panels to give a specific focus to digital inclusion due to much of society moving online and the fact that unfortunately Wolverhampton faces a digital divide between those who do and those who do not have digital access. I hope you'll agree that our work in this area has laid the foundations in addressing this shortfall faced by many residents.

Together with the Chair of Scrutiny Board, Cllr Paul Sweet, Scrutiny gained real decision making powers through our roles on the Scrutiny Board in approving, or not, the Council's use of urgent decisions. I hope that our perspective as 'critical friends' ensured the Council made the right decisions in what was an incredibly challenging time.

I, too, would like to pay tribute to the many across the City, region and country that helped in so many different ways to keep our communities safe during these unprecedented times.

## Statement from the Leader



Cllr Ian Brookfield  
Leader, City of  
Wolverhampton Council

Extreme measures had to be taken to ensure that, as a Council we were able to protect and support our citizens, especially those deemed to be vulnerable or at high risk.

I was pleased to see how the scrutiny function rose to the challenges posed and continued to provide constructive and intelligent challenge on the issues that really mattered throughout this critical period.

As we move forward, the Council is and will continue to be dedicated to protecting the health, wellbeing and livelihoods of the communities we serve. The long-term impacts of the crisis are still emerging, and as we move together towards a new normal, we remain dedicated to improving services and outcomes for local people.

Scrutiny will have a large part to play in this by continuing to act as a critical friend to the Executive and in holding us to account in relation the decisions being made. I am looking forward to hearing the outcomes from the new Select Committee Review into the Wolverhampton Pound and I hope that areas such as youth unemployment and digital inclusion will continue to feature on scrutiny workplans in the future. Following the work carried out by the Council in relation to digital connectivity and the ongoing input from scrutiny throughout the year, I decided this year to create a new portfolio for Digital City that will be able to pick up many of the recommendations made in this report.

I would like to thank the chairs, vice chairs and all scrutiny councillors for their hard work and support throughout what has been a very challenging year and I look forward to working with you all moving forward.

## Statement from Martin Stevens (Scrutiny Officer)



Martin Stevens

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There are two items which stand out for me in this last Municipal year, the Dentistry item, and Mental Health during Covid-19, which were both considered by the Health Scrutiny Panel. Research and preparation are key to effective Scrutiny and for both of these items there was substantial research and extensive planning meetings with a wide range of health partners. These informal planning meetings helped to shape the contents of the reports given and informed the questions which would be asked by Members at the Panel meeting. The Dentistry item led to a clear recommendation at the end of the meeting ***“That Health Partners give consideration to developing a local Wolverhampton campaign to raise awareness with parents and carers of young children of the need to take children to the Dentist and the key oral health messages for this age group. Clearly it would need to launch at an appropriate time because of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.”***

The Mental Health during Covid-19 item was a real example of Scrutiny working with multiple Health Partners and the Youth Council to enhance accountability and improve the decision-making process. The results from the Mentimetre consultation, carried out with the Youth Council, were reported to the Health Scrutiny Panel meeting by their chosen representative. It was also an example of Scrutiny Panels working together in a matrix way, as the findings from the meeting were reported to the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel. Mental Health was a key subject because it affects every one of our Citizens and is especially important at a time of great national change, due to the pandemic.

The Scrutiny Function has adapted well to conducting the formal public meetings in the virtual environment due to the restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Across the three Scrutiny Panels I support, the Digital Theme given to the Panels by Scrutiny Board has been a running thread throughout the meetings. This had led to some innovative and stimulating discussions throughout the year. I have enjoyed working with all the Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Panel Members and key council partners to help support the vital Scrutiny Function of the Council. Excellent Scrutiny leads to better decision making and better decisions benefit the Citizens of Wolverhampton.

## Statement from Earl Piggott-Smith (Scrutiny Officer)



Earl Piggott-Smith

The issue of loneliness and social isolation has been a concern of the Adults and Safer City Scrutiny panel since the start of the pandemic, particularly the effect on older people living alone. The lockdown rules and increased use of remote communication to meet this need has provided a solution and real benefits to many, but it has also highlighted the hidden issue of digital poverty.

The panel invited the Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council to talk about the impact of their Support to the Connect project. The panel also invited Sandra Ashton Jones, Head of service – Mental Health and Tom Denham, Head of Service - Adult Services, to talk about the range of changes made to Adult Social Care Services.

The speakers shared examples of different community and digital solutions introduced to tackle the issue of loneliness and isolation, particularly among vulnerable groups. It was really good to see the range of creative and innovative solutions developed to continue supporting people during the pandemic.

The opportunity to hear presentations from different approaches to the same issue on this topic gave panel members a much richer understanding and awareness about the good work being done, highlighted gaps in the service and the potential to use digital solutions in the future to meet needs of people who would not have previously contacted the service. There was a very positive press report to the presentations.

## Adding Value through the Pandemic: Partnership Working in Health Scrutiny

“

*The key principles of any partnership working are clarity, openness, trust, shared goals and values, and regular communication between partners, despite the pandemic this has grown between both of our organisations to the benefit of the local community and people we serve. During the formal Panel meetings in which we share updates and discuss changes to service provision for all sectors this has been most useful in adapting our service provision.*

**Professor David Loughton CBE,  
Chief Executive, Royal Wolverhampton  
NHS Trust**

**With a shared vision and clearly  
communicated objectives our  
partnership has been a great success.**

“

*The meetings have run very smoothly this year and the Scrutiny Team have done wonders with the new ways of working and digital technology. It has been a pleasure to work with John Denley and his team, they have done a fantastic job through this pandemic along with David Laughton and his team at the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust and all our other partners.*

*The last 12 months have been some of the most difficult that we have ever had to endure but the partnership working, and understanding has been of the highest level. There have been tragedies for many families, but we are now starting to emerge into a better position. I was very impressed by the presentation we received from the Ambulance Service and the work that they have done through the pandemic has been second to none. I would like to thank every partner who has joined us through the year and also a big thank you to the panel members for all their support.*

**Cllr Phil Page, Chair of Health Scrutiny Panel  
(15/05/2019-20/05/2021)**



*Black Country Healthcare NHS FT has worked in close partnership with the Health Scrutiny Panel in Wolverhampton throughout the year – we have welcomed the constructive and supportive approach of all partners around the Scrutiny table and this has helped inform not only our approach to managing the pandemic, but also to developing our newly formed Trust.*

**Marsha Foster, Director of Partnerships,  
Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**



*I have found working with Health Scrutiny Panel has brought welcome challenge to the work we are undertaking in conjunction with Health partners, it has also allowed us the space to engage with partners to establish system wide plans. For example Health scrutiny allowed us a one agenda item meeting to share and answer questions on the Winter Plan 2020 which was crucial to keeping flow going through the Health and Care system during the winter period.*

*Questions and challenge from the panel has always being well informed and gives us scope to improve our work We really value the role of Health Scrutiny within Adult Services.*

**Becky Wilkinson, Deputy Director, Adult Services**





*Thank you for the opportunity to provide a reflection on the work of the Wolverhampton Health Scrutiny Panel over this last year.*

*The panel has, of course, directed its attention principally to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on local people and the response of Wolverhampton's health and care services. The council's scrutiny function is an essential mechanism by which our NHS organisations are accountable through elected councillors to the population that we serve. We have welcomed the opportunity that the scrutiny meetings have provided to talk about key local health issues; the actions that we have taken this year; and to answer the questions raised by Health Scrutiny Panel members on behalf of local people. As well as the immediate issues of managing the pandemic and treating patients with Covid-19 disease, you have also looked more widely at the implications for other services, health inequalities and the impact on people's mental health and mental health services.*



*I have found the panel members very professional in their approach and with the interests of the citizens of Wolverhampton always central to their thinking. They are well informed, respectful and ask appropriate questions to ensure that citizens receive appropriate care and also are committed to improving the health of people living in Wolverhampton by promoting healthy life styles, health prevention & promotion and cross agency working.*

**Professor Steve Field CBE, Chairman of the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust**

*In September we attended a meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel to discuss the proposed merger of the Black Country and West Birmingham CCGs. You raised points about the importance of a merged CCG continuing to have a strong and effective relationship with the City of Wolverhampton Council and other local partners and we have been pleased to provide you with those assurances and we look forward to continuing to develop those relationships in the future.*

*Whilst the Scrutiny Panel is, as it should be, thorough and challenging in its engagement with the CCG on areas of interest and concern, we appreciate the constructive approach that you take as a Health Scrutiny Panel to your engagement with us at formal meetings and the continuing and helpful dialogue that we have with yourself as Scrutiny Officer and with the Chair and Vice-Chair on an on-going basis.*

*We look forward to continuing our work with your during 2021/22.*

**Paul Maubach, Chief Executive Officer of the Black Country and West Birmingham CCGs**

**Paul Tulley, Managing Director of Wolverhampton CCG**



## Equality and Diversity - Pushing Boundaries and Evidencing Impact



*I have been a Councillor for ten years and it is great to see the changes in the Council, such as the appointment of our BAME colleagues to Heads of Services positions – we definitely need to keep pushing forward and continue to make progress in this area.*

*The issue of promoting equalities and increasing opportunities for BAME employees to progress within the Council has been championed by me for many years. In response to my request earlier in the year The Our Council Scrutiny Panel received a progress report from David Pattison, Director of Governance, on range of work being done to tackle inequalities within the Council and the wider community.*

*The Director commented at the meeting about the renewed focus on equalities within the Council in response to events such as the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter campaign, and also the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 pandemic on particular communities.*

*The issue of employee progression and particularly into senior positions within the Council has also been a concern for a long time. However, I welcome the progress made to recruit three people from BME groups to senior positions within the Council and the range of other positive initiatives aimed at increasing opportunities for people to progress. I am confident that the Council is moving in the right direction.*

*I personally believe that there is so much talent within the Council and it is important to build on recent achievements and move forward to capitalise on the progress made and not to fall back. The panel will be getting a further report in the next few months from the Director of Governance on the inclusion of equalities in the assessment of employee performance and recruitment. I look forward to seeing more evidence of progress being made in this important area.*

**Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal,**  
**Chair of the Our Council Scrutiny Panel**  
 (06/07/2020-12/05/2021)

## Place and Community - Critical Friend Challenge and feedback



*Housing was part of the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel Scrutiny panel in November 2020. Being asked to present to Scrutiny challenged us to draw together all of the information we had on how the Council's housing managing agents delivered contact services to customers, both pre lockdown and during lockdown. During lockdown, service delivery changed in ways we would never have predicted; more people were accessing services online as front line services closed. The Scrutiny panel gave us an opportunity to analyse the performance of these online services during this time and start the conversation with councillors about how services could be provided in the future. This opportunity was valuable, as it allowed us to get very early feedback and councillors posed questions which were useful for us to consider as part of our service planning.*

**Jenny Lewington,**  
**Service Manager - Housing Strategy and Policy**





*2020 was a challenging year and a difficult one for all of us.*

*In our lifetime it has been a first, The Council as a whole has been put under a lot of pressure to make decisions for the safety of our citizens.*

*I have to applaud senior officers, cabinet members and all of the staff involved and we as a Panel continued to review all actions taken and sought to feedback from and to our residents.*

*Decisions had to be made as to whether certain services were to continue through the pandemic and national guidelines were carefully followed to keep all our residents and council employees safe and well.*

*We all had to adapt to new working challenges such as working online and becoming part of the digital platform which lined in well with the overarching scrutiny theme.*

*This new and growing digital way of working and living has brought many of the writers and filmmakers visions we have seen on cinema screens or on our televisions to life.*

*In scrutiny we understood how the bereavement team had dealt with demanding and difficult times and heart-breaking moments as residents watched loved ones' funerals online.*

*An extra hotline was introduced at the start of the pandemic, STAY SAFE BE KIND, food parcels were provided to vulnerable residents and within 72 hours, vulnerable homeless people were placed in a hotel or hostel.*

*All general waste and recycling continued throughout the pandemic with residents reporting that the key workers had done a great job in relation to this. Unfortunately, even with the lockdowns, fly tipping remained at the same level.*

*WV Active was affected by the pandemic but was able to adapt to allow members to take classes online, whilst Aldersley Sports Village was transformed into a food distribution hub.*

*Advancements continued to be made such as the replacement of street lighting with 27,000 LED bulbs and Highways used LED signage to display Covid-19 messages. Public transport was also used less and more people were encouraged to cycle and walk which was both good for the environment and for health and wellbeing.*

**Cllr Mak Singh,**  
**Chair of Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel**  
 (16/05/2019-21/06/2021)

## Protecting our most vulnerable children and young people: Cross Panel Working and Member Led Enquiry



*It was a pleasure to attend a meeting of the Youth Council with my colleague Cllr Rita Potter where we heard first-hand about the challenges that young people had faced through the pandemic. One of the main issues that arose was in relation to mental health and we asked representatives of the Youth Council to attend a meeting of Health Scrutiny to discuss the matter, the meeting was very well attended with a number of partners including the following:*

**Professor David Loughton CBE,  
Chief Executive of the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust**

**Paul Maubach, CEO of the Black Country and West Birmingham CCGs**

**Paul Tulley, Managing Director of Wolverhampton CCG**

**Steven Marshall, Programme Director for Mental Health Integration  
and Transformation - Black Country and West Birmingham CCGs**

**Chris Masikane, Chief Operating Officer - Black Country Healthcare  
NHS Foundation Trust**

**Marsha Foster, Director of Partnerships - Black Country Healthcare  
NHS Foundation Trust**

**Professor Sultan Mahmud, Chief Innovation, Integration and Research  
Officer of the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust**

**Simon Evans, Chief Strategy Officer -  
The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust**

**Andrew Moody, Black Country STP  
Mental Health Commissioning**

**Mags Courts, Children's Commissioning  
Manager - Wolverhampton CCG**

**Syed Naqvi, Youth Council - Chair**

**Anna Tabner, Youth Council Representative**

*It was a very productive meeting and I have since written to the to the Children's Commissioning Manager on the matter of Mental Health Support Teams in Schools, the Government's intention to roll out these Teams to all Schools in the future and if there were any expected timescales for this rollout. A response has been received and will be followed up.*

**Cllr Phil Page  
Chair of Health Scrutiny Panel  
(15/05/2019-20/05/2021)**

“

*The Youth Council this year have continued to play a role in the City Council Scrutiny Process, they have attended the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel meetings and contributed to discussions.*

*During these meetings the issue of Education in Lockdown was discussed. The Youth Council carried out a survey with young people based on their experiences in Lock down One, the Youth Council then presented the findings and recommendations to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel.*

*The Chair and Vice Chair of the Health Scrutiny Panel attended a Youth Council meeting to discuss emotional wellbeing and mental health during Covid-19. As a result of this discussion the Youth Council presented a report based on the groups experiences of the topic to the Health Scrutiny Panel.*

**Wolverhampton Youth Council**

“

*2020/2021 has been an unprecedented year. The Health Scrutiny Panel has worked extremely hard with all our partners to ensure that the health and social care needs of our residents have been met. It has been a great honour to serve as the Vice-Chair with so many passionate and hardworking individuals. I would like to express my gratitude to all of those that have helped with the testing for Covid-19 and the vaccination programme, including volunteers from places of worship across the city.*

*The outbreak of Covid-19 has highlighted the importance of better mental health support, and how important it is to ensure that our whole community is included in planning health services. We were pleased to meet with young people so that we could ensure that their needs and concerns were also taken on board. The key is challenging and addressing what is not working and our community engagement work has helped us to effectively do this. Being a member of the Health Scrutiny Panel has vastly added to my knowledge and helped me in my role as a local councillor. I would like to extend my sincere thanks to everyone who has helped us fulfil our duties. Covid-19 has brought our sector closer together and strengthened how we work. We will only benefit from what we have learned in the years ahead of us.*

**Cllr Paul Singh, Vice Chair of Health Scrutiny**  
(17/05/2018-present)

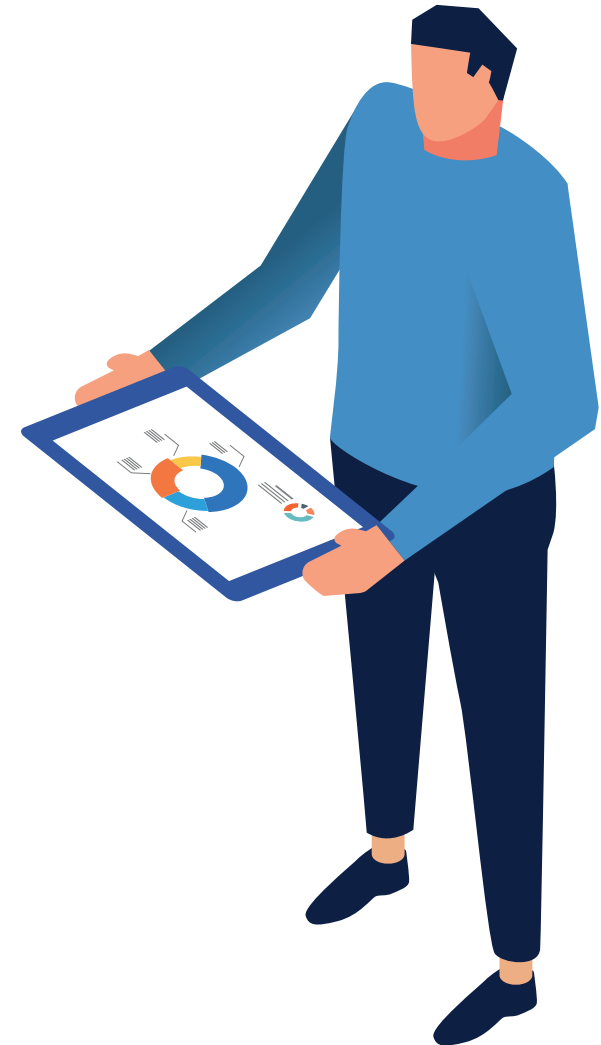
## Relighting our City - Regeneration

Scrutiny was pleased to welcome the Director for Regeneration and the Head of City Development to a number of Stronger City Economy meetings to receive updates on the Council's key regeneration projects in the City. This included Lower Horseley Fields which would provide 370 residential units incorporating the historic Union Mill buildings.

Scrutiny was supportive in relation to the Interchange project which was a partnership delivery between the Council, Network Rail and Transport for West Midlands and would provide a fully integrated multi-modal transport hub. Scrutiny was pleased to hear that Phase 1 of the new station facility had now been completed and was open to the public and that Phase 2 was well underway and was scheduled for completion in Spring 2021. At a later meeting, Scrutiny was also pleased to hear that the Interchange Project had been awarded the RTPI West Midlands Award for Planning Excellence and had won Regeneration Project of the Year at the Insider Property Awards having been shortlisted and nominated for three awards.

Scrutiny was pleased to hear that the i9 Project (a 50,000 square foot office floorspace), was now an award winning Glenn Howells designed building. Scrutiny understood that the building had been designed to achieve BREEAM 'Excellent' rating and WiredScore 'Gold' Standard.

Scrutiny was pleased to hear that the i54, was a continuing success. The i54 Western Extension (South) was a joint venture between City of Wolverhampton Council and Staffordshire County Council. The scheme would provide up to 100,000 m<sup>2</sup> of B1 and B2 end uses and generate up to 1,700 new jobs. The Southern 60-acre site was under development and was controlled by City of Wolverhampton Council. The project was currently scheduled to deliver on time and very much on budget.



## Relighting our City - Growing our Vital Businesses

Scrutiny heard from the Director of Communications and External Relations and the Head of Enterprise about how we were hoping to “Grow Our Vital Businesses.” **Areas covered in the presentation included:**

1. Impact of Covid-19 on businesses
2. Brexit update
3. Current business support offer
4. Developing the business support offer

Scrutiny understood that there were three key principles relating to the “Grow Our Vital Local Businesses” theme in the Council’s Relighting Our City strategy. **The three principles were:**

- Being climate focused,
- Being driven by digital, and
- Being fair and inclusive.

Scrutiny noted that 97% of the City’s businesses were small enterprises (employing less than 50 staff) and that the highest employment sector in the City was health, followed by retail. Employment levels in Wolverhampton were at 67.2% which was approximately 10% below the national average. Due to

Covid-19, some key sectors had been severely affected including hospitality, retail and leisure. There were however some sectors which had experienced unprecedented growth including food, distribution, digital and communication. The main issues faced by businesses included **Crisis Management and Response, Workforce, Finance and Long-Term Challenges.**

Scrutiny understood that moving businesses online and accelerating digital transformation had been more challenging for some of the City’s businesses. Managing disruption to operation and supply chains and complying with the latest government guidance and mandatory closure of non-essential businesses were all issues businesses had faced during the pandemic.

Managing the health and wellbeing of employees had been made ever more difficult due to the added pressure of home schooling. Businesses also had to support extremely vulnerable staff and those that were shielding. As business activity slowed, there was less cash flow and therefore liquidity issues were arising. The uncertainty of the future was having a big impact on businesses being able to plan effectively.

### Relighting our City - Wolves in Business

Scrutiny welcomed the launch of the brand “Wolves in Business” which had been launched in the Summer and provided support and guidance to businesses. It was also connecting businesses with partners and was having a strong impact. During the last 12 months over 2000 job vacancies had been identified in the City by the Council. Over the Summer, the Council had delivered £45 million in grants to 4,500 businesses in the first national Covid-19 national lockdown. They were currently delivering £2 million in grant support to 1,600 businesses across the City. They were supporting businesses who had vacancies through Wolves at Work. The Council’s business support line had received over 10,000 calls since April. The Council would be receiving a share of a national £595 million discretionary fund to support other impacted businesses.

### Business Relight Programme

Scrutiny welcomed the programme which would seek to run 5 cohorts of 40 businesses over the next 12 months, each cohort would reflect a cross section of business sectors and sizes. The programme was supported by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and the Chamber of Commerce, and it was predicted that there would be a potential return on investment of £1.4 million.

Scrutiny expressed support for the business grants but sought reassurance as what safeguarding measures were in place to prevent fraudulent claims. Scrutiny was satisfied that there were a number of rigorous checks which took place including on the bank account and business status. Scrutiny considered that the process was working well and noted the important distinction between fraud and an error.



### Holding the Executive to Account - Portfolio Holder Question Time

Scrutiny invited the Portfolio Holder for City Economy to attend the meeting on 18 March 2021. The Portfolio holder remarked that the team of officers had performed exceptionally well in unprecedented times and that he was immensely proud of the work that had taken place in regenerating the City and the economy.

The following areas were listed as priorities for the Directorate and the Portfolio Holder for City Economy as follows:

- Relighting our City
- Completion of Interchange and i9, over the next few months
- Attracting end users to i54
- Delivery of Future High Streets and Town Fund project
- Bringing forward major regeneration projects such as Brewers Yard, City Learning Quarter and Westside
- Providing continued business support post the Covid-19 pandemic
- Events

Scrutiny referred to the different employment sectors within Wolverhampton and was pleased that there was now a broader employment sector base as it gave more future resilience for the City, not to be heavily reliant on one sector. Scrutiny understood that the Health sector in Wolverhampton had benefited from the growth of the education sector in Wolverhampton including the University and considered that it was important to maintain the manufacturing sector whilst accepting a broad employment sector base was beneficial.

The Portfolio Holder for City Economy commented on the resilience of the general population of Wolverhampton and their ability to move with changes. The global change and transition meant that Green technology was the way forward. He referred to the different sectors where this applied such as transport, housing and components. He believed the new Green Deal moving forward should be the key driver. One of the next tasks was to see what opportunities there were for the Council moving forwards.

The Portfolio Holder for City Economy referred to the importance of entertainment in the City such as the Arts and leisure facilities. He believed education would be key to what he described as the Green Revolution. He believed elected Members and Officers had a key role in suggesting innovating ideas. He commented on the importance of working with the WMCA (West Midlands Combined Authority) and with the Councils in the Black Country Area. He spoke highly of the new train station and the new transport Hub.

Scrutiny spoke highly of the relight scheme and supporting small businesses but considered that there was some further work required internally to support small businesses. Scrutiny considered that the City needed to do more to promote Wolverhampton as a Learning and that the importance of the partnership with Wolverhampton University need to be highlighted. Scrutiny welcomed all of the work that had taken place in the last twelve months to help bridge the digital divide and felt this should be celebrated.

The Portfolio Holder stated that it was important to see how the City would be in the future. Not only did new houses need to be built, but the economy also had to be built up as well. The question of the future for City Centres and shopping centres was important to answer. Covid-19 had accelerated a changing retail landscape, with online shopping becoming more prevalent. Building resilience back into the marketplace and the centres of the City was key, along with seeking the opportunities from the new green agenda.

Scrutiny asked the Portfolio Holder for City Economy what he wanted Wolverhampton to look like in twelve months' time and what was the biggest challenge for the year. He responded that the biggest challenge was competing for funding streams. He wanted Wolverhampton to be the shining light for the whole of the West Midlands. He thought it was essential to have good discussions with the Police, to ensure the safety of the citizens in the City and its assets. The area around the Civic Centre and the Art gallery was an important part in enhancing the City. He thought the use of the accelerator fund in Wednesfield and Bilston was a good example of using funds for the benefit of the City. International companies investing in the City had offered to help the community. He spoke highly of the principle of openness and transparency in working relationships with partners. He wanted the youth of the City to have a bigger input into the future of the City.

The feedback and updates from the Director and Portfolio holder were considered extremely valuable and were built into the scrutiny work programme for future consideration:

- a). Working at a local electoral Ward level to help develop Economic Strategy.
- b). Exploring how, hotels, tourism, leisure, and the culture offer, can help enhance the City economy and in particular the night time economy.
- c). Exploring how partnership working with key partners can be enhanced for the benefit of the City economy.
- d). How the City is marketed in the future.



# Work Programme - Connected City Theme

Scrutiny Board agreed a Connected City Theme at its meeting on 14 July 2020 for the following reasons:

## Digital Revolution in Wolverhampton underway:

- Increasing productivity, sparking innovation and driving economic growth by creating new jobs, attracting start-ups and enticing further inward investment.
- Enabling those in education, health and social care sectors to adopt the latest technologies.
- Enabling e-learning techniques in schools, colleges and universities.
- Providing the foundation for crucial health and social care solutions such as remote monitoring and remote consultations.

## Digital Inclusion:

- The Digital divide: Covid-19 has highlighted more issues than previously realised and if not addressed the identified gap will grow - it's not just older people who are being left behind:
- 59,000 citizens do not have access to basic digital skills & 35,000 citizens have not been online in the last three months
- Many of those who have not been online are under 60 and often the more vulnerable citizens concentrated in areas of deprivation.
- Only 52% of the workforce have the necessary digital skills for work
- Change is happening faster than we think - it continues to evolve and adapt as the needs of the end user evolve and change. How do we keep up with this to support our citizens?

All scrutiny panels and Scrutiny Board sought to incorporate digital considerations into all items that were considered.



## Overarching Theme - Connected City

The outbreak of the pandemic exposed the true scale of digital exclusion throughout the City and the country as a whole. Digital exclusion affects all areas of life from the ability to access remote learning and work and earn an income to a person's quality of life, quality of education, access to healthcare and even their ability to connect with friends, family and dependants. Those who are digitally excluded may also experience a number of other social and economic disadvantages which are compounded by the inability to access digital means.

One key source of information that was presented to scrutiny and taken into consideration when drafting the attached recommendations was the Council's [Digital Infrastructure Strategy](#). Scrutiny also considered all of the presentations and reports received at the panel meetings throughout the year and publications such as '[Learning from Lockdown, 12 steps to eliminate digital exclusion](#)' (The Carnegie UK Trust October 2020) and information available on the [#DigitalWolves](#) website.

Scrutiny are aware that a revised [Wolverhampton Digital Strategy](#) is currently under development.

**This revised strategy will set the framework for and update the Wolverhampton Digital Infrastructure Strategy resulting in a more action orientated partnership approach to delivering the following overarching aims:**

- Making Wolverhampton a Gigabit and Smart City enabled through futureproofed digital infrastructure
- Ensuring a 100% digitally included Wolverhampton
- Supporting a growing Digital Economy

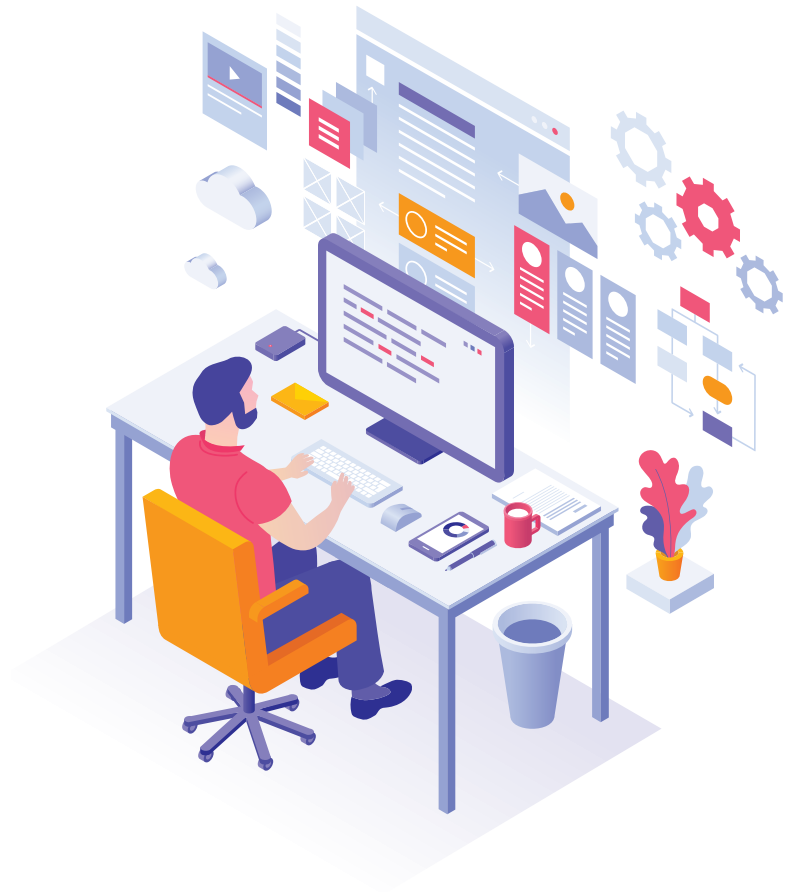
**The Digital Wolverhampton Strategy centres around four themes:**

- Digital Infrastructure
- Digital Innovation
- Digital Inclusion
- Digital Economy

## Overarching Theme - Connected City

Digital infrastructure comprises the physical resources that are necessary to enable the use of data, computerised devices, methods, systems and processes. Futureproofed Digital infrastructure is the backbone of a modern thriving economy driving productivity and spreading growth to deliver effective and efficient public services. It is thought that Covid-19 may have accelerated the adoption of digital services by 2-5 years with digital now being considered as critical to economic growth and social recovery.

Scrutiny has made a number of recommendations (Appendix 1) that it considers are necessary to help diminish and resolve the digital divide in the city, and to ensure that digital is given the status it needs as an essential utility, in line with gas and electricity.



# RELIGHTING OUR CITY

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

## COUNCIL PLAN

Wulfrunians live longer, healthier and more fulfilling lives

### VISION 2030

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## OUR PRINCIPLES

We will underpin our work with the following key principles;



### CLIMATE FOCUSED

This recovery commitment is aligned to our climate change strategy 'Future Generations' and our target to make the City of Wolverhampton Council carbon – neutral by 2028. We are committed to delivering on the recommendations of our Climate Citizen Assembly and to upholding the promises we made when the Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019.



### DRIVEN BY DIGITAL

The city is at the forefront of digital infrastructure and innovation, Wolverhampton will be one of the first cities in the world to host a 5G accelerator hub making us truly a world leader in emerging technology. Now more than ever digital skills and connectivity are vital to ensure our residents can access services, interact with friends and family, and enter the job market.



### FAIR AND INCLUSIVE

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.

## Driven by Digital

'Driven by digital' forms a cross cutting theme throughout the Council's **Relighting Our City** strategy, with digital transformation underpinning work on assets, agile working and service redesign and delivery.

A **digital strategy** is currently being drawn up and scrutiny supports the Council in continuing to develop the **Digital Wolves** website <https://www.digitalwolves.co.uk> and in using **#Digital Wolves** to raise the profile of this vital agenda.

Scrutiny supports the identification of a Digital Champion, Digital Co-ordinator and Councillor Digital Innovation Champion to drive forward the digital agenda. Scrutiny is pleased to note that a Cabinet Member for Digital Cities was created in 2021-2022.

Scrutiny welcomes the establishment of the **Digital Wolverhampton Partnership** which comprises the City of Wolverhampton Council, the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, the City of Wolverhampton College, CCG, Wolverhampton Homes and the University of Wolverhampton. Scrutiny will request updates from this partnership as its work progresses. All services within the Council and all partners working with the Council must seek to build digital into their work, with a refreshed focus on tackling digital exclusion to support individuals and communities, particularly those experiencing disadvantage.

Scrutiny considers that it is vital for ownership of the digital inclusion agenda to be shared right across the council, with council partners, voluntary organisations and at the community level. Scrutiny considered that this can be achieved in part through the work of the Digital Wolverhampton Partnership. The Partnership seeks to develop Wolverhampton's approach to digital by providing strategic leadership for digital across the City and overseeing the planned revision of the Digital Wolverhampton Strategy. Scrutiny is supportive of the following objectives being included in the revised Digital Wolverhampton Strategy:

- Supporting the rollout of future proofed digital infrastructure
- Building on relationships with strategic companies
- Developing digital Health and Innovation
- Developing a 5G plan for the City including potential use cases
- Driving the ambition for Wolverhampton to become a 100% digital included city linked to place-based approaches to tackling health inequalities
- Capturing other elements of digital including the University of Wolverhampton's vision around a Centre of Excellence for Digital Innovation for Smart Cities (DISC), digital skills including Digital Training Academy and supporting the growth of the digital economy



Scrutiny also welcomes the formation of the Digital Inclusion sub-group which has been set up to include community and voluntary sector partners to drive Wolves Online and the wider digital inclusion agenda. This will link to initiatives underway such as the Wolverhampton Learning City regional work around digital skills, the Black Country and West Birmingham Sustainable Transformation Partnership work around digital inclusion and the West Midlands Coalition for Digital Inclusion.

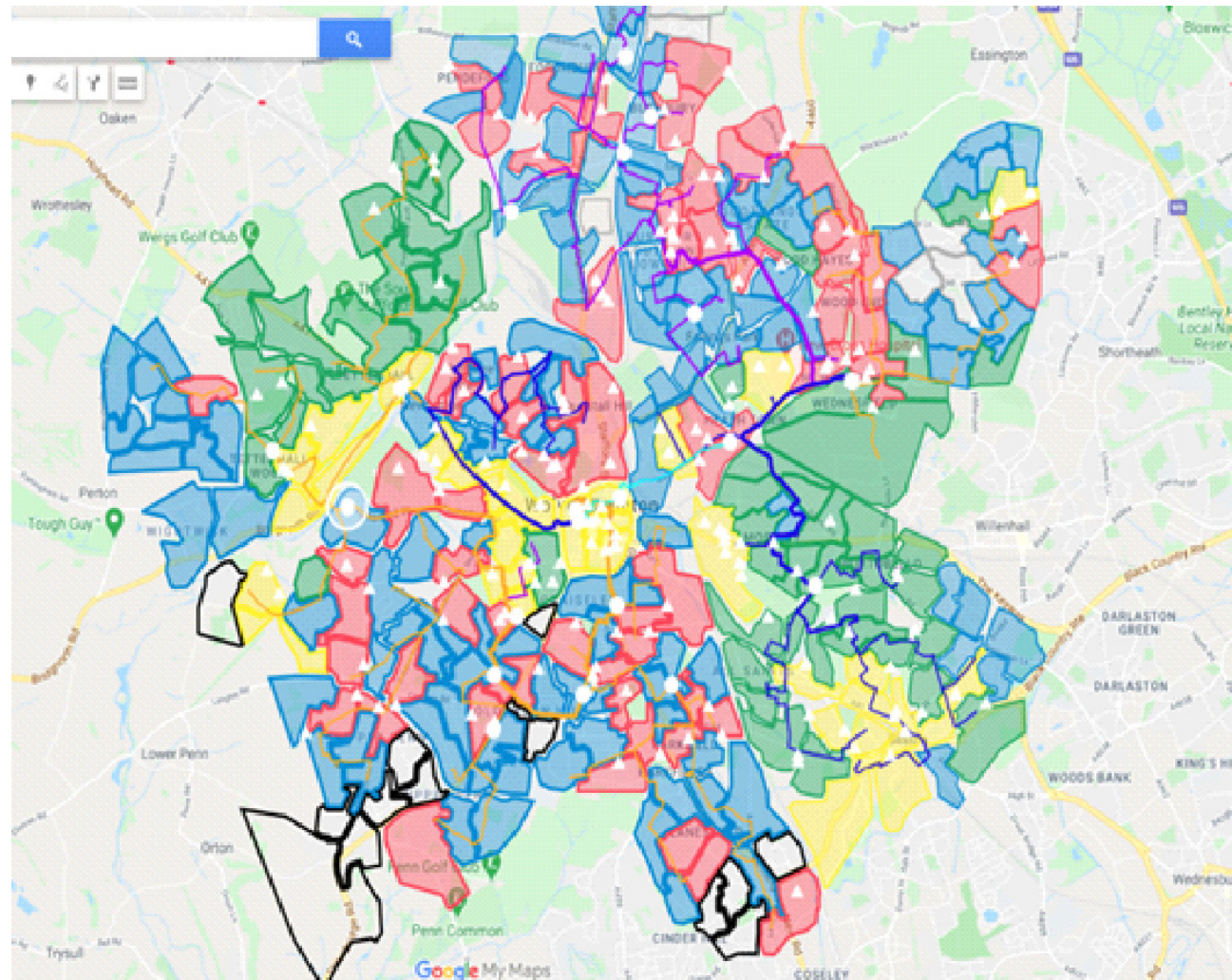


Figure 1

## Digital by Design or Face to Face

Scrutiny were keen that where appropriate, more services across the public sector be made available digitally and that the innovative work that has been carried out during the pandemic continue to be built on and improved.

Wolverhampton's 'Digital by design' enables those who can, to access services online and encourages multiple channel shifts which will ultimately lead to better customer experiences and financial savings. However, this approach needs to take into account the needs of those who are digitally excluded and to consider and make available alternative options if digital is not appropriate.

### 5G and Wireless Technology

Scrutiny were keen to support the Council in working with partners in relation to the rollout of wireless technology including 5G via masts on places such as on rooftops, masts, small cell technology and Wi-Fi meshes.

Small cell technology is a radio access point with low radio frequency (RF) power output, footprint and range and is used to complement the macro network to improve coverage, add targeted capacity, and support new services and user experiences.

A wi-fi mesh is a network that relies on additional units to propagate signals. Although the wireless signal may start at a base station (access point) attached to a wired network, a wireless mesh network extends the transmission distance by relaying the signal from one computer to another.

In 2018, Wolverhampton secured £4.9 million from the LocalFull Fibre Network to connect 170 public buildings in Wolverhampton. Progress is set out on the previous page (Figure 1) with green showing completed, blue to use existing ducting and red to be programmed.

Scrutiny understands that all 4 Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) announced rolling out 5G in Wolverhampton in 2020 and that the West Midlands now has the best 5G coverage of all the regions, with Wolverhampton's proactive approach accelerating deployment of 5G by 6 months including the UK's first 5G mast.

Scrutiny welcomes the use of transparent processes being introduced for planning applications for masts, these include pre-application discussions with Planning in relation to siting and appearance. Scrutiny recommends that the Council continues to identify and mitigate any barriers to the use of smart infrastructure and 5G wireless technology, including the development of non-exclusive wayleave agreements covering residential estates, the standardisation of procedures and guidance, and principles for commercial providers. This should also include the continued development of relationships with providers and mobile network operators. Scrutiny notes the work that has been undertaken with WM5G and that Wolverhampton have introduced new systems to support the rollout of 5G including the identification of suitable assets viable for telecoms use.

A Wayleave is a legally binding agreement between a land or property owner and Telecoms, Utilities or Fibre providers that grants access for the installation and subsequent maintenance or management of network cabling and equipment over or under land.

Scrutiny welcomes the preparation of a Wolverhampton Digital toolkit to facilitate the rollout in partnership with WM5G.

Scrutiny were supportive of the Council making available street furniture on a non-exclusive basis to facilitate the rollout of Small Cell technology. An expression of interest was released before Christmas and the Council received three responses from Operators. Scrutiny was pleased to hear that three expressions of interest had since been received and three leases signed. Scrutiny recommend that an update report be provided in relation to the Wolverhampton Digital toolkit and the use of street furniture for small cell technology will continue to monitor the implementation of this initiative.

## Digital Technology in Transportation

Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel received a presentation from the Head of City Transport in January 2021 in relation to digital technology in transportation. Scrutiny were pleased to hear that the Council had been successful in securing European Regional Development Funding to replace all of the City's 27,750 street lights to low energy light emitting diode (LED) lanterns, with smart enabled technology and a central management system. The programme is due to be completed in around 18 months and the energy saving will contribute to the Council's climate change agenda.

Scrutiny understands that the funding will also provide the infrastructure for the future deployment of smart city sensors and opportunities to remote control further council operations, thus unlocking urban data to provide unique insights to improve efficiencies, sustainability and citizen interaction.

An interactive map showing the progress of the LED replacement programme can be found here: <http://35.177.157.9/LED.aspx>

Scrutiny will continue to monitor how the roll out of full fibre and 5G improves the use of CCTV, the traffic management system and parking management systems. Scrutiny understands that CCTV, traffic management and parking management are part of phase 2 of the Public Services Network, whereby full fibre will connect our council assets and open up further opportunities for innovation.



## Full Fibre Broadband as a Basic and Essential Utility

Scrutiny are keen to ensure that having access to good quality broadband is a given and that during development, full fibre to all new premises is treated in the same way as the installation of gas or electricity. Scrutiny understands that guidance to Planning to encourage the installation of full fibre broadband has been produced to encourage discussions with developers at the planning stage. Scrutiny welcomes this and recommends that unless there are extenuating circumstances, all new developments should have access to full fibre broadband.

By adopting this approach, the need for expensive fibre retrofitting programmes in the future can be avoided (this often results in attaching fibre to existing copper networks resulting in a less than optimum solution when compared to new fibre networks being delivered). The cost of installing full fibre in new developments is considered to be relatively small during the build phase of the development. Any costs can be balanced with increased sales values that are likely to be achieved on account of fast and reliable broadband speeds being available. Developers are not required to deliver full fibre solutions themselves, but they should conduct early dialogue with providers

in order to best understand what their infrastructure specifications are and how these can be accommodated as part of the new development. The majority of the broadband infrastructure providers will install fibre into developments of a certain size at no or minimal costs during construction.

To futureproof our estates, scrutiny understands that the Council have sought to include a policy for fibre to the premise (FTTP) in the draft **Black Country Core Strategy**. This policy expects that all major residential and employment developments should be able to deliver FTTP. To facilitate this, any application for a qualifying development should be supported by an “FTTP Statement” which provides details of dialogue with the telecom operators, explains how FTTP will be provided and confirms that this process will be completed upon first occupation. By implementing this policy approach, the Black Country authorities are seeking to ensure that future developments remain at the forefront of advances in broadband technology, allowing the Black Country to be a market leader and remain an attractive location for businesses and residents alike. **Scrutiny is fully supportive of this approach.**

## Digital Inclusion

Scrutiny are keen that the Council continue to support access to computers and digital connectivity (MiFis and Sims) and to ensure that support is available to improve confidence and skills to get online. Scrutiny consider that this can be partly achieved by working closely with community and voluntary groups in the City.

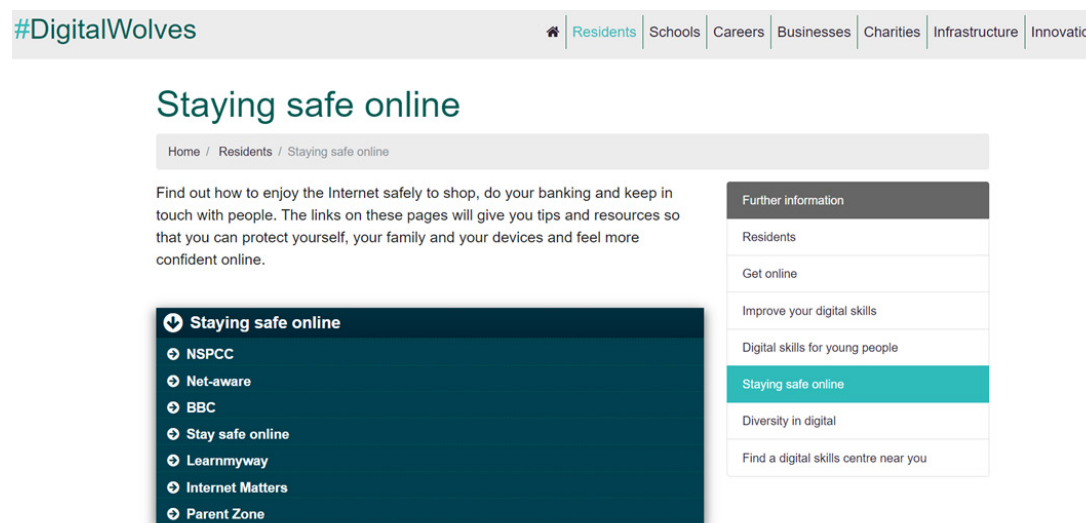
Scrutiny understand that nationally, 9 million people are struggling to use the internet. Prior to the pandemic, 35,000 residents had not been online in the last 3 months. Although age was considered to be the biggest indicator, 44% of those offline were under the age of 60, the pandemic highlighted the extent of the digital exclusion issue with many residents unable to access online learning, employment support and access to services including health, with low take up of online support for vulnerable groups.

Schools reported lack or unsuitability of devices for pupils to access remote learning and challenges around connectivity.

Scrutiny were informed that as part of the Council's approach to supporting Wolverhampton to be 100% digitally included, the following activities had been carried out:

- **Wolves Online:** A new device and connectivity lending scheme launched to target residents to access online learning, employment support, access services and reduce isolation. Funding secured from European Social Fund for additional devices.
- **Wolves Tech Aid:** driven by Learnplay to seek donated devices that are recycled and distributed to school children to get online.
- **Community Online centres** have bid for devices from DevicesDotNow to distribute to residents to enable them to access learning and support and reduce isolation. The latest funding available is to provide devices to people with learning disabilities.
- **Schools proactively bid for DfE resources**, with additional devices available for schools to borrow for access for pupils who are remote learning. Connectivity and additional devices have been funded by ward funds and donated BT Hotspot vouchers.
- **Digital exclusion mapped** to inform a place-based approach going forward

Scrutiny understands that the Council is working closely with community and voluntary groups to support the distribution of devices through encouraging them to become **Online Centres** and trusted partners in the **Wolves Online scheme**. In addition, the Council is supporting the development of a **Digital Buddies** network, upskilling trusted partners and volunteers to help people get online and funding some capacity building with the intention of a larger bid to the **Community Renewal Fund** and subsequently the **Shared Prosperity Fund**. The Digital Buddies network will also signpost information on online harms and how to avoid scams etc. Scrutiny welcome the inclusion of staying safe online information on the **#DigitalWolves** website.



## Baseline for a Minimum Digital Living Standard - Device, Connectivity, Motivation and Skills

Scrutiny are keen that a baseline be established for a minimum digital living standard based on an agreed definition of what it means to be digitally included. Scrutiny understand that the definition currently being considered is **access to a device and connectivity, motivation and skills to use the device**. The nature of the device and connectivity should reflect the specific needs of the individual or particular group. In particular, the city has good connectivity infrastructure in the form of broadband and 4G, however data poverty has been identified as a particular issue during the pandemic e.g. remote learning consumes a lot of data so mobile connectivity may not be sufficient.

Scrutiny understand that a **Connectivity Working Group** is being developed as part of the **West Midlands Coalition for Digital Inclusion** to explore different means of connectivity and the exploration of innovative solutions such as redistributing unused data.

Data has indicated that 11,659 households in Wolverhampton are without broadband and that these households are often concentrated in the most deprived areas of the City as shown in figure 2 below. However, the **Good Things Foundation** estimates there are 118,000 limited and non-users of the internet in Wolverhampton, including those who may only have access to a smart phone, use their devices only when help is available or use a device for limited reasons such as social media.

Scrutiny are also minded that in agreeing such a baseline, that consultation should take place with our citizens and in particular those with lived experience of digital exclusion.

Scrutiny welcomed feedback from participants and understands that **Wolves Online** has used trusted partners and services to distribute and support residents to get online and improve their digital skills. As part of this, case studies will be part of the evaluation and feed into the future design of schemes.

The **Housing Assistance Policy** has been adopted which enables the use of disabled facilities grants to fund assisted technology. Personal budgets have also been used to buy devices and connectivity to get people online to address a range of issues e.g. isolation but also enable access to services. Scrutiny requests that the Council continue to explore the use of personal budgets, disabled facilities grants and other options for access to devices and connectivity.



Scrutiny understands that a Wolverhampton Assisted Technology Strategy is currently under development to explore the potential of technology enabled living aimed at supporting people to keep their independence through preventative measures, however there was scope to look broader to maximise the potential of technology to address a series of outcomes across partners. This strategy will be brought to a future meeting of Scrutiny for consideration.

### Accessibility of Information

Scrutiny recommends that any guidance developed be available in different formats that reflect the rich make up of our City. Scrutiny understands that amongst the Council's trusted partners for **Wolves Online**, the **Refugee Migrant Centre** and The **Learning College (TLC)** are supporting people where English is not their first language. Scrutiny welcomes the continuation of this work to develop the network of trusted partners and the link to the **Digital Buddies network** to ensure support is available in different languages/formats to meet the needs of our diverse communities.

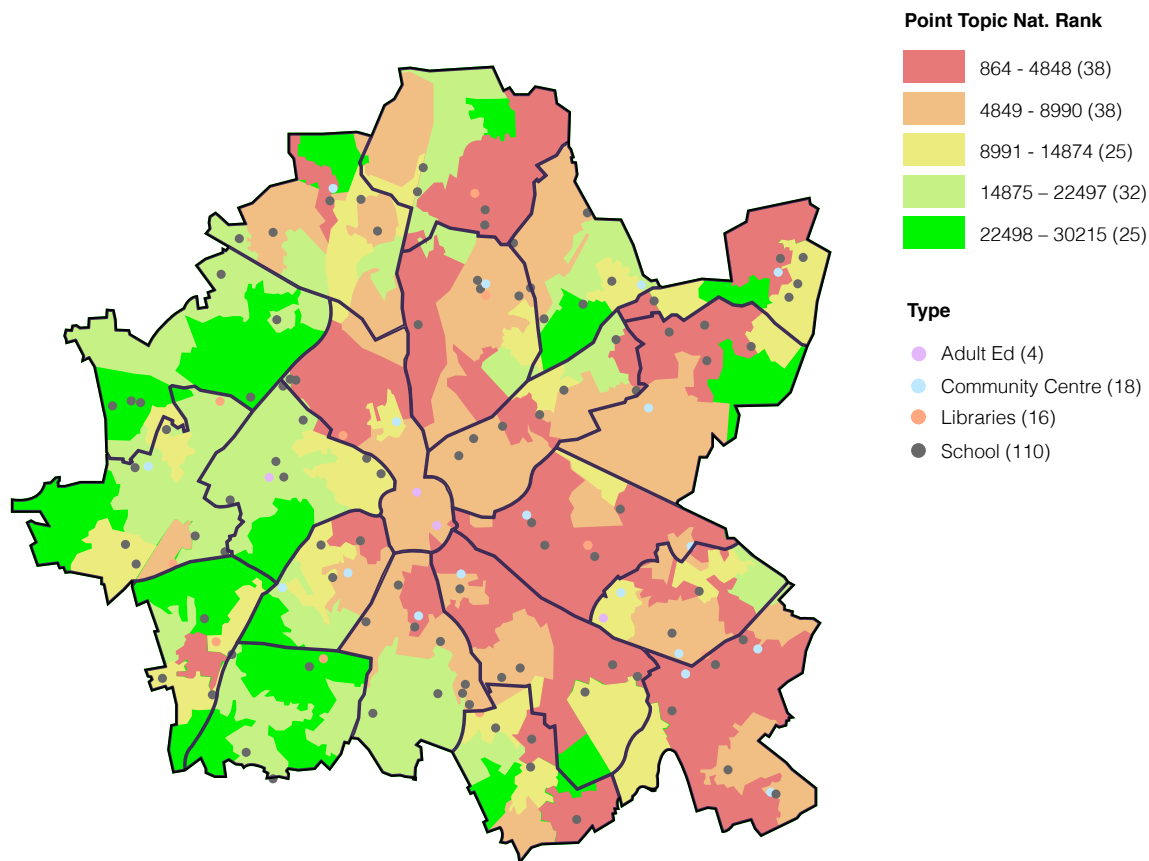
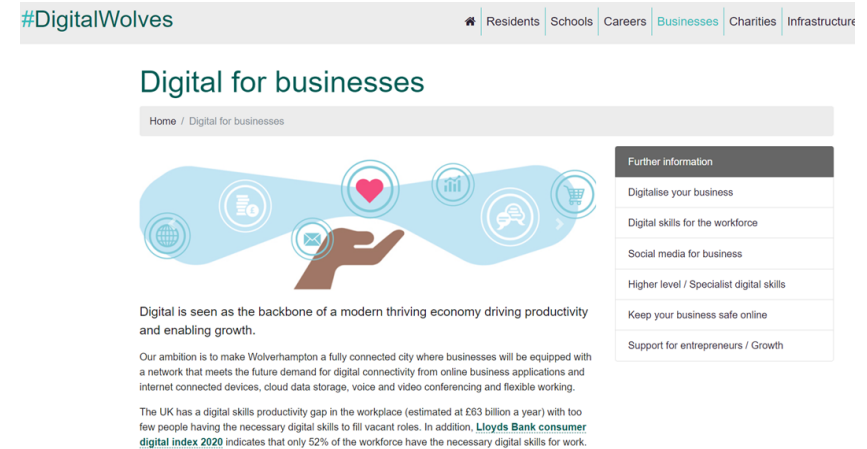
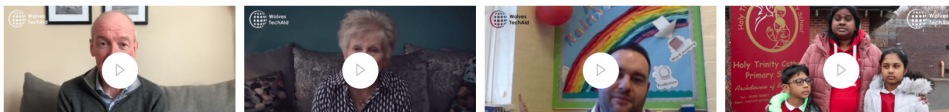
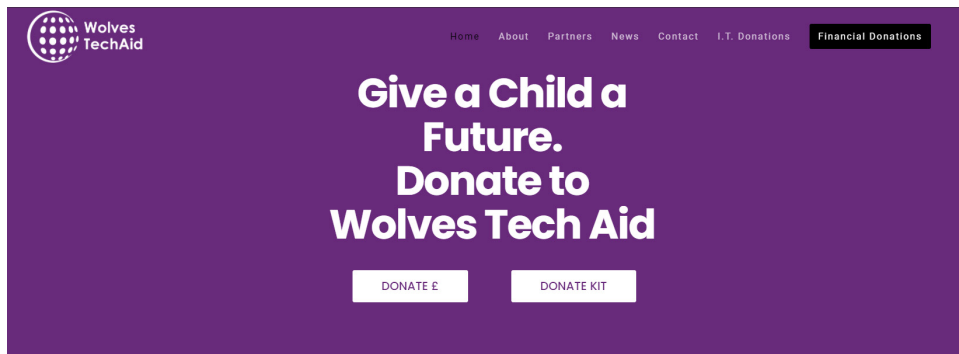


Figure 2 oncentrations of geographic digital exclusion

# Role of Business

Scrutiny considers that it is important to highlight the role that businesses can play in closing the digital divide, including the donation of devices for recycling for digital inclusion initiatives. Scrutiny understood that some work was already being undertaken in this field through Learnplay, a local tech company who are leading the recycling scheme **Wolves Tech Aid** which launched in March 2021. The scheme invites donations from local businesses and residents of devices that can be recycled and redistributed initially to schools then to other digitally excluded residents of funding to cover the cost of recycling and connectivity.

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Scrutiny understands that **Wolves in Business** offers a comprehensive support package to businesses in Wolverhampton and advice on how to digitalise a business, increase productivity and upskill the workforce with the latest digital skills to improve communications, sell online, and develop employees in specialist roles. Scrutiny recommends that all businesses should be encouraged to invest in the digital capabilities of their employees to develop a more skilled and confident workforce through the **Wolves in Business Brand**

## Becoming a Community of Providers

Scrutiny would like to see the City of Wolverhampton become a Community of Providers by continuing to encourage and support public provision of digital access in public and community spaces and through doing this to provide a safety net to those who need it.

This would include encouraging more community organisations to sign up to the **Online Centres Network** and promoting the take up of the **device recycling scheme** **Wolves Online** to help form a network of digital hubs. This would also include continuing to build on the relationships that have been made during the pandemic with community, voluntary and faith-based groups and to strengthen community capacity and resilience.

Feedback provided to scrutiny stated that in order to become 100% digitally included, the Council will continue to work with a range of organisations; public, private and in the voluntary community sector to address the issues linked to digital exclusion. A range of trusted partners are part of the **Wolves Online** lending scheme and play a critical role in supporting residents to get online and improve digital skills to access services, learning and employment opportunities. As part of this approach, Scrutiny supports the Council in ensuring that there are physical digital hubs in communities, including libraries, online centres and community venues which have access to free Wi-Fi and support to enable citizens to get online and improve their digital skills.

In recognition of the role of community organisations and charities in supporting their communities to get online and become

more digitally included, scrutiny supports the move to invite these organisations to become trusted partners under **Wolves Online** and to become **Online Centres**. Benefits of joining the network include an e-learning platform **Learn My Way**, access to free training and tutor support resources, marketing materials and opportunities to apply for funding.

The emerging **Digital Buddies Network** will also bring together trusted partners and digital and non-digital volunteers, to build their capacity to support residents to get online and improve their digital skills. As part of 100% digitally included Wolverhampton, scrutiny understands that it is proposed to commission intensive support to residents to get online whilst building the capacity of other trusted partners and volunteers who are supporting residents through the **Digital Buddies Network**. Scrutiny is fully supportive of this approach.

## Education

Scrutiny propose that any citizen of any age who is learning (school, FE, HE, apprentice, other) be guaranteed access to a suitable, connected device and the skills to use the device. Scrutiny understands that there are a number of national and local schemes to help learners get online.

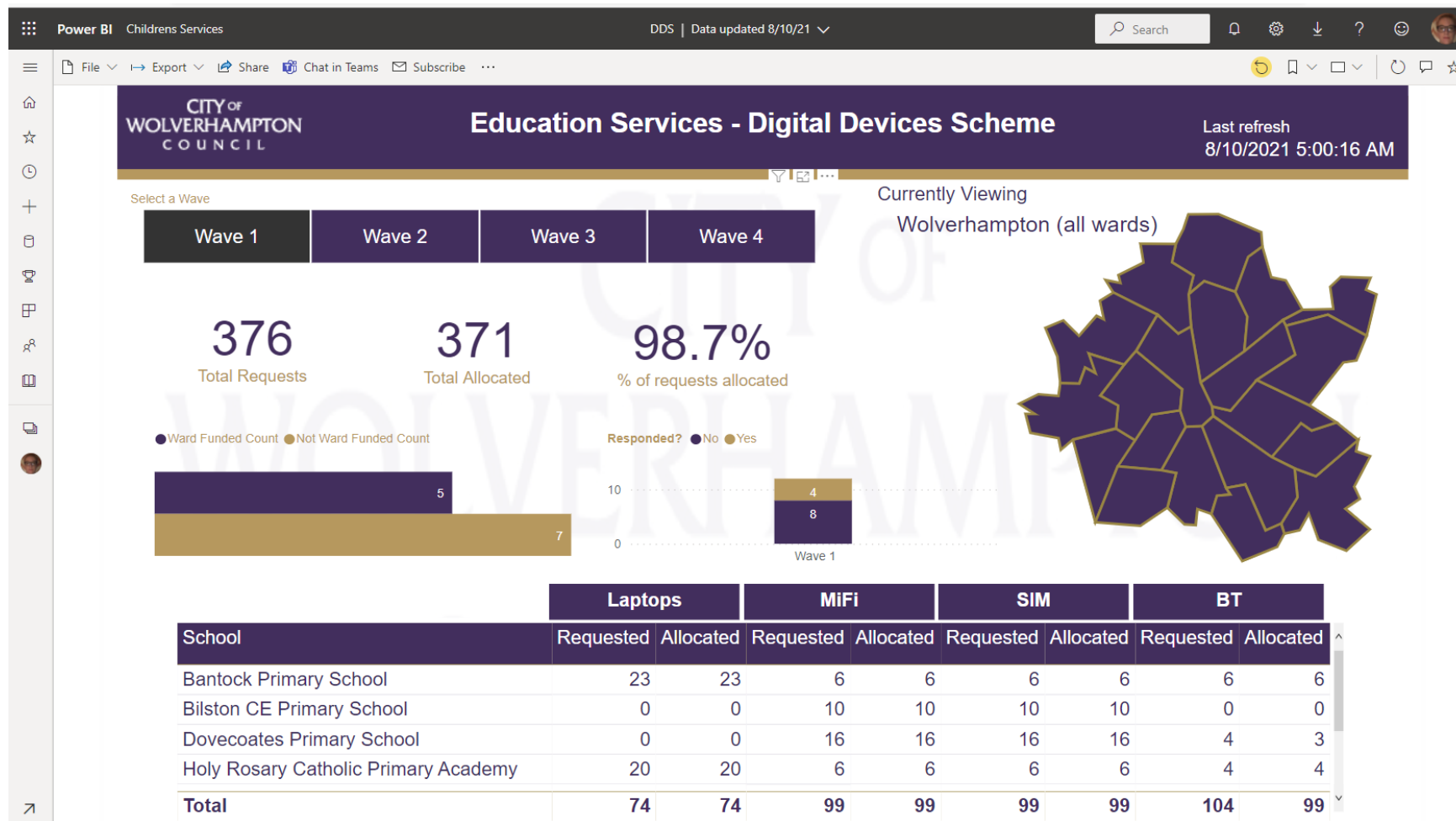
The Schools team have been supporting schools to apply for nationally available **Department for Education** devices and connectivity as well as filling the gaps through a local device and connectivity lending scheme part funded by ward funds. To date, the local scheme has received 259 laptop requests and 214 MiFi requests.

However, findings based on early responses to a school survey show that a third of schools responding are identifying more device access as a priority. Out of 12 schools, 2 reported that only 50-74% of pupils have access to a device at home, 2 different schools are citing mobile phones as the most prominent device for learning and that device sharing continues to be a barrier. To complement the other schemes aimed at schools, **Learnplay**, a local tech company, are leading the recycling scheme for launch in March 2021. The Council will facilitate this scheme through comms and promotion, offering drop off points at libraries and the Civic Centre and helping to distribute to schools. Feedback from schools is that some parents have been reluctant to take up the loan scheme as they were worried about breakages. To complement the device and connectivity lending schemes, the Schools team and Adult Education have organised digital literacy training for parents to increase their digital skills to help them support remote learning.



# Digital Inclusion Dashboard

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Scrutiny Board received a presentation and report from the **Head of Adult Education** at its meeting in March. Scrutiny understood that in relation to the digital divide:

**Issues facing residents included:**

- Large numbers not going online at all; lacking basic digital skills; lacking devices and connectivity; not being able to take advantage of offers and information online; not being able to apply for jobs online and not having digital skills for work

**Issues facing employers included:**

- Accelerated digitalisation of businesses during Covid-19; businesses needing more digitalisation to survive; difficulty upskilling and recruiting people with the skills needed for now and the future

A survey showed that 25% of learners didn't have a laptop or a PC and 35% didn't have Wi-Fi at home. Learners responded that a laptop or PC would help them (26%), a Wi-Fi connection (24%) and more digital skills (12%).

Scrutiny are supportive of the measures taken by the **Head of Adult Education** and her team in response to the survey results, and the on-going disruption from the pandemic, scrutiny support the implementation of the following:

- Intensive digital skills development frontloaded at the beginning of learning
- An enhanced loan service with over 100 laptops available to loan to students
- A 'dongle/MiFi' service providing internet cards to students with enough connectivity at home.
- 64 laptops have been loaned and 6 MiFi 30GB 'dongles' have been provided to students.

Scrutiny understands that the Service has devised a digital transformation plan to implement changes that will enhance its service to staff and students that will enable the Service to continue to make rapid progress in this area and position it well for the future. Scrutiny will seek to monitor the implementation of this plan.

## Workforce Planning, Organisational Development and Digital Inclusion

Scrutiny have sought assurance that future workforce planning includes detailed plans that are clearly aligned with the Council's digital transformation plans in order to ensure there is capacity to meet digital aims. A presentation to the **Our Council Scrutiny Panel** updated councillors on the **Our People Strategy 2019-2024**.

The presentation included the following points in relation to digital and future opportunities for the **Our People Strategy**:

- Move to Provance (Customer Relationship Management system, with improved forms for raising HR queries)
- Agresso/Talentlink integration for an improved service to new entrants to the Council
- Review of all HR forms - move to electronic
- Improved dashboards for HR information including equalities
- Digital inclusion - including ability to engage with employees who do not have corporate access to the network (e.g. HR app)
- Consider use of 'chatbots' for frequently asked HR questions
- External HR website - aimed at candidates who want to work for the Council (including videos/testimonials of our employees, information on staff equality forums etc)

Scrutiny understands that the **Our People Strategy** is due to be refreshed and requests to be involved in this process. It was understood that significant changes in the context the Council was operating in needed to be referenced, including:

- Implications of Covid-19
- Relight Our City
- Equalities
- Apprenticeships including Kick Start
- Health and wellbeing
- Climate change
- Digital
- Refreshed narrative, action plans and performance framework planned – proposal to include on forward plan for future pre-decision scrutiny

## Workforce Planning, Organisational Development and Digital Inclusion

As the use of digital increases so does the amount of digital data that the Council and its partners collect and store. Concerns as to how we manage, share and protect this data were considered across many of the panel meetings. Scrutiny recommends that if one is not already in place, that an appropriate data sharing and use policy be developed to detail exactly what data is being collected, where it is collected from, what it will be used for and how or if it will be shared with partners. Scrutiny suggested that consideration be given as to whether an open data sharing arrangement with partners was a viable way forward.

Scrutiny were keen that such a policy should also seek to monitor and record the implementation of Smart technology as it is introduced across the City, and where possible evidence the impact that this technology has had (an example may be where smart street lighting has helped to reduce crime).

Scrutiny considers that any policy relating to data should also be able to show how the data collected is being used to make evidence-based decisions and to help inform future planning. It is recommended that where appropriate, dashboards continue to be developed to enable easy visualisation of the data collected, making it more accessible and able to demonstrate where it has impacted decision making and future planning. Where possible this data should be used to build common solutions that can be reused and shared to create better value for money.

Scrutiny recommend that where data is held on many different legacy systems, work should be undertaken to connect these systems or move to a new more integrated system such as has happened with the move to **ECLIPSE** in **Children's Services**.



## Digital and City Environment

Scrutiny was pleased to see and supported the use and continued role out of digital in relation to the following areas **Environmental Maintenance, Waste & Recycling Services, Parks and Open Spaces, Public Protection and Environmental Crime and Bereavement Services.**

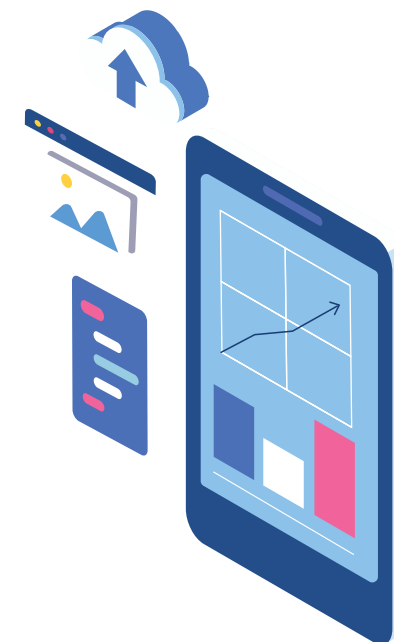
In particular, scrutiny was very impressed with the **Digital Autopsy** programme in Partnership with 'iGene' who provide **Digital Autopsy** facilities in Sandwell on behalf of the **HM Coroner** for the **Black Country** four authority jurisdiction.

Scrutiny understood that a **Digital Autopsy** is a non-invasive post-mortem in which digital imaging technology, with Computerised Tomography (CT) images, are used to develop cross-sectional images for a virtual exploration of a human body. Through Digital Autopsy the need for invasive procedures can be reduced which can help to minimise the pain for bereaved families. Digital Autopsy can establish cause of death in around 75% of all post-mortems ordered by the Coroner. The procedure is conducted by an iGene radiographer and reported by a UK based GMC

registered radiologist on the post-processed CT images of the deceased to produce a radiological interpretation in the form of a Digital Autopsy report that is then sent to the Coroner and their pathologists.

The use of a Digital Autopsy facility is still in its infancy within the UK, but the City of Wolverhampton Council with scrutiny's backing is keen to support the use of the system and save the need for invasive Post Mortems, which are obviously upsetting for families and can ultimately cause delays to funeral services being arranged.

**All recommendations in relation to the Connected City theme are attached at Appendix 1**



## Challenges and Future Direction for Scrutiny

One of the main challenges faced by scrutiny is how to evidence that work carried out has actually had a positive impact or added value to a process under consideration and that items being considered are the right items.

Improvements were made this year which included introducing an overarching theme of **'Connected City'** for all the scrutiny panels. This did help to provide some additional structure and cohesion to scrutiny, but feedback has also suggested that it was too constrictive when considering what items should be brought to scrutiny and did lead to duplication of information across the different panels. One possible option going forward may be to agree on one substantive issue for each panel to consider and to receive updates and to monitor this issue across the year, with informal meetings held in between panel meetings to gather evidence and carry out discussions with relevant officers and partners. Other, appropriate items could also be added to the agendas for panel meetings alongside the substantive items under consideration.

Feedback received from officers and partners has suggested that before an issue is added to a scrutiny agenda, the objectives of the scrutiny should be explicitly agreed and more consideration given as to why a certain issue should come before a scrutiny panel and what answers or solutions scrutiny is seeking that cannot be achieved through a briefing note or informal meeting with a relevant officer or partner.

There should be a focus on establishing scrutiny as a place to which critical local issues can be escalated. These may be complex matters of developing policy, poor performance in a certain area, or worries about future priorities driven by changes in national policy in a given area. Understanding which are the "right" things to escalate depends on a clear understanding of scrutiny's role. Briefing meetings with the Chair, Vice Chair, SEB Lead and Scrutiny Officer should focus on agreeing and designing topics to maximise effect, add clear value and show impact.

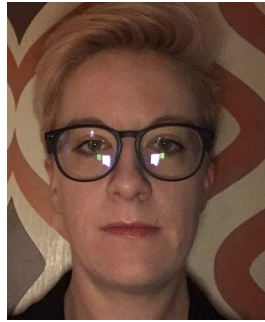
**The following should be agreed and documented:**

- The objectives for undertaking the work
- The basics on method - how evidence will be gathered
- The likely, or hoped for, outcomes - what impact will it have or how will it add value?

**Reasons for not carrying out a specific piece of work may include:**

- It relates to similar review being carried out by the Executive
- It is not happening at the right time. The timescale may be too tight to influence a decision
- It does not relate to an issue on which scrutiny can influence a decision maker. The main issues involved may lie within the purview of central Government, or another partners, to resolve

Once scrutiny has considered an issue (and recommendations have been submitted) the chair, along with other members, and support officers should meet to consider how the work went and how the recommendations or outcomes should be monitored and followed up.



Julia Cleary

## Statement from Julia Cleary (Scrutiny and Systems Manager)

I have been immensely proud this year with how the Team have adapted to remote working and have managed to live stream all scrutiny meetings successfully by harnessing all the digital tools available. Since legislation was passed allowing **Virtual Local Government** meetings, we have held a total of **35 Live Public Scrutiny meetings**, with the first one being Scrutiny Board on 16 June 2020 and the rest as follows:

- Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel - five meetings
- Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel - five meetings
- Health Scrutiny Panel - seven meetings
- Our Council Scrutiny Panel - four meetings
- Scrutiny Board - six meetings
- Stronger City Economy Scrutiny Panel - four meetings
- Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel - four meetings
- Specific Reserves Working Group - one meeting

As we continue to improve and enhance the scrutiny function, it will also be important to consider how we better engage with our citizens, I was especially encouraged to receive the below feedback from a member of the public following a meeting of the Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel:

**“ I’ve just been watching tonight’s scrutiny panel meeting.**

***I was blown away by the wonderful video that was presented. As a citizen of Wolverhampton, it made me really proud to see the work that you and your colleagues are doing under very difficult circumstances. So good to see the joy on some many faces.***

***Well done to you all.*** ”

I would like to thank the Scrutiny and Systems Team for all their extremely hard work during the year, all our colleagues who we have constantly chased for reports, the SEB leads who have provided advice and guidance throughout and of course our Chairs, Vice Chairs and scrutiny councillors.

## Appendix 1

1. To continue to communicate a clear digital vision and ambition and to create an innovative and collaborative culture that drives change.
2. To continue to champion and advance an understanding of the potential of people and digital technologies to transform services for citizens.
3. To commit to ensuring that all council members and employees have the right level of digital awareness, expertise and skills to enable the implementation of a successful digital strategy.
4. To continue to identify and mitigate any barriers to the use of smart infrastructure and 5G wireless technology, including the development of non-exclusive wayleave agreements covering residential estates, the standardisation of procedures and guidance, and principles for commercial providers.
5. To ensure that unless there are extenuating circumstances, all new developments should have access to full fibre broadband.
6. To establish a baseline for a minimum digital living standard based on an agreed definition of what it means to be digitally included and that all devices and connectivity provided should reflect the specific needs of the individual or particular group. In agreeing a base line consultation should take place with our citizens and in particular those with lived experience of digital exclusion.
7. To continue to explore the use of personal budgets, disabled facilities grants and other options for access to devices and connectivity and that the Wolverhampton Assisted Technology Strategy be brought to a future meeting of Scrutiny for consideration.
8. To ensure that any guidance developed be available in different formats that reflect the rich make up of our City.
9. To see the City of Wolverhampton become a Community of Providers by continuing to encourage and support public provision of digital access in public and community spaces and through doing this to provide a safety net to those who need it.
10. To ensure that any citizen of any age who is learning (school, FE, HE, apprentice, other) be guaranteed access to a suitable, connected device and the skills to use the device.
11. To put in place an appropriate data sharing and use policy, detailing exactly what data is being collected, where it is collected from, what it will be used for and how or if it will be shared with partners.
12. To ensure that where data is held on many different legacy systems, work is being undertaken to connect these systems or to move to a new more integrated system.
13. To support the further use of the Digital Autopsy system and save the need for invasive Post Mortems, which are obviously upsetting for families and can ultimately cause delays to funeral services being arranged.

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audio or in another language by calling 01902 551155

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# Scrutiny Work Planning

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Agenda Item No: 9

# Our City : Our Plan





## Cross Cutting Principles

- The Relighting Our City recovery framework identified three cross cutting principles.
  - **Climate Conscious** – The climate emergency remains one of the biggest challenges facing the city.
  - **Driven by Digital** – Covid 19 has highlighted that digital connectivity and skills are vital to the social and economic prosperity of our communities.
  - **Fair and Equal** – We will continue to tackle the inequalities which impact the opportunities of local people.
- These principles are as important now as they were at the launch of Relighting Our City and have been taken forward and incorporated into the refreshed plan.

# Planning Work and Delivering Impact – First Principles:

## **Jointly owned work programme but remains Member led**

- Insight and perspective
- Legitimacy as elected representatives
- Evidence led

## **Rolling work programme updated throughout the year**

- Dynamic business with changing priorities
- Proportionate and effective with flexibility to escalate topics when appropriate

# Planning Work and Delivering Impact – First Principles continued:

## Individual panel work plans coordinated and agreed at Scrutiny Board:

- Better coordination and identification of cross cutting themes
- Ensures consistent focus on priorities

The focus should be on seeing scrutiny as a place to which critical local issues can be escalated. These may be complex matters of developing policy, stubbornly poor performance in a certain area, or worries about future priorities driven by changes in national policy in a given area. Understanding which are the “right” things to escalate depends on a clear understanding of scrutiny’s role.

(CfGS 2020)

# Scoping out work and setting objectives WHY are we doing this – what difference will it make – so what if we don't do it?

- Briefing meetings with the Chair, Vice Chair, SEB Leads and Scrutiny Officer
- Agreeing and designing topics to maximise effect, add clear value and show impact

## Agreeing:

- The objectives for undertaking the work;
- The basics on method – how evidence will be gathered;
- The likely, or hoped for, outcomes.

Impact is the main  
criterion of whether a  
piece of work  
is worth developing or not

(CfGS 2020)

## Reasons to not proceed:

- It relates to similar review being carried out by the Executive
- It is not happening at the right time. The timescale may be too tight to influence a decision;
- It does not relate to an issue on which scrutiny can influence a decision maker. The main issues involved may lie within the purview of central Government, or another partners, to resolve.

## Different Ways to Proceed

- Single Item Committee Meeting
- A single meeting (not necessarily a committee meeting, informal scrutiny)
- Inquiry day
- Single member being commissioned to carry out research on behalf of a committee
- Short review
- Longer term task and finish group / Select Committee
- Public engagement
  - Local surveys, Workshops, Site visits, Focus Groups, Witnesses, co option of stakeholders, co-production



# Evidencing Impact

## Debriefing shortly after the work is complete:

- Once scrutiny has considered an issue (and recommendations have been submitted) the chair, along with other members, and support officers might get together for half an hour and think about how the work went

## Debriefing on outcomes:

- This is a longer term proposition. Some months, or possibly more than a year, after the work has concluded members and officers can meet to consider the actual impact of the work. Were recommendations implemented? Have things now improved for local people

## Annual Report or Review

## Pre-Decision Scrutiny

Item	Cabinet Date	Considered by
Healthwatch Tender	City of Wolverhampton Council	Health Scrutiny Panel on 8 July 2021
Public Health Annual Report	28 July 2021 Cabinet	Health Scrutiny Panel on 8 July 2021
Education Excellence Strategy	28 July 2021 Cabinet	Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel on 14 July 2021
Urology Services	Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust/CCG	Health Scrutiny 29 July 2021 Special meeting
Our People Strategy	17 November 2021 Cabinet	Our Council Scrutiny Panel on 2 November 2021
SEND Inspection Outcome	19 January 2022 Cabinet and 26 January 2022 Council	Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel on 6 January 2022
Our City : Our Plan; MTFs and Performance Framework	23 February 2022 Cabinet	Scrutiny Board on 8 February 2022
Wolverhampton Pound Select Committee Report	27 April 2022 Cabinet	Scrutiny Board on 19 April 2022
City Centre Hotel Delivery	25 May 2022 Cabinet	TBC
Five Year Events Programme	TBC	TBC
PFI Leisure Contract	25 May 2022 Cabinet	TBC

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