

# Residents, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Panel

Minutes - 17 November 2022

## Attendance

### Members of the Residents, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Mary Bateman  
Cllr Philip Bateman MBE  
Cllr Greg Brackenridge  
Cllr Adam Collinge  
Cllr Carol Hyatt  
Cllr Barbara McGarrity QN (Chair)  
Cllr Andrew McNeil  
Cllr Zee Russell  
Cllr Ellis Turrell (Substituting for Christopher Haynes)  
Cllr Gillian Wildman

### In Attendance

Cllr Steve Evans (Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change)

### Employees

Martin Stevens DL (Scrutiny Team Leader)  
John Roseblade (Temporary Director for City Housing and Environment)  
Jenny Lewington (Deputy Director for City Housing)  
Michelle Garbett (Service Lead Housing Strategy)  
Marianne Page (Service Manager for Transport Strategy)  
Tim Philpot (Professional Lead for Transport Strategy City Housing and Environment)  
Ruth Taylor (Service Lead for Place Making City Housing and Environment)

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

*Item No.*     *Title*

1            **Apologies**  
Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Jas Dehar and Cllr Christopher Haynes.

Cllr Ellis Turrell substituted for Cllr Christopher Haynes.

**2 Declarations of interest**

Cllr Zee Russell declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the Wolverhampton Homes board.

**3 Minutes of the previous meeting**

Resolved : that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

**4 Performance, Budget Monitoring and MTFS**

The Temporary Director for Housing and Environment gave a presentation on Performance, Budget Monitoring and the Medium Term Financial Strategy. He stated that the Council had built up a strong track record over many years of managing its finances despite reductions in funding. The Council's strategic approach to strategic financial planning was to align resources to the Our City, Our Plan which was approved by Full Council on 2 March 2022.

The Temporary Director for Housing and Environment commented that Cabinet received a quarterly report on integrated performance and budget monitoring. The quarter 2 position had been presented to Cabinet on 16 November 2022. Overall a forecast overspend was reported across the Council of £1.5 million, this was in the main as a result of the 2022-2023 pay award. In total there were 56 Key Performance Indicators in the Our City: Our Plan Performance framework. 33 had shown an improvement or seen similar performance, 17 were yet to be updated in the year to date, with 8 of those falling in Healthy Communities. 6 of the 56 performance indicators had shown a decrease in performance.

The Temporary Director for Housing and Environment, talking specifically about the priority area, "Good Homes in Well-Connected Neighbourhoods," commented that of the 10 priorities in this area, 5 had showed improved or similar performance in the year to date and for 5 there had been no update in the year to date. The KPIs that had showed increased or similar performance were as follows: -

- Number of new builds completed in the City - Similar
- Percentage of carriageways in City assessed as high quality – Increased for all road types.
- Percentage of planning application decisions made with 13 weeks or agreed timescales – Increased
- Percentage of fly tipping incidents resolved in five working days - Increased.
- Number of homeless families moved into secure housing - Increased

The performance against the number of new builds completed in the City had remained at 70. This put Wolverhampton slightly lower than the statistical neighbour average which was 111. The increased performance against the number of carriage ways in the City judged as high quality included a large increase in the quality of C roads in the quarter. 100% of major planning applications had been completed within 13 weeks in the quarter. There had been a slight increase in the percentage of fly tipping incidents resolved in 5 days from 76% to 77.5%. More homeless families had been supported into secure accommodation. Homeless applicants made up 30% of the customers on the housing register. The additional support in place for the homeless customers placed in Temporary accommodation would increase the number of homeless applicants that were rehoused.

The Temporary Director for Housing and Environment commented that they were awaiting on data, which was expected to be published in November to update 5 KPIs, these were in the areas of:-

- Net additional dwellings in the City
- Housing affordability ratio
- Percentage of dwelling stock that was vacant in the City
- Energy efficiency of the housing stock

There was a financial pressure on Temporary Housing Accommodation. There was a pressure to the transportation budget of nearly £700,000 which was largely down to demographic growth. 1718 pupils were now transported to School, in 2020/2021 the travel unit were transporting 1147 pupils. The Travel Unit had recently been formed and transformed how the service was delivered. If the work had been given to a private contractor it was expected that costs would be in excess of £3 million per year than they were at the present time. Continued growth was expected to increase the demand further. There was a financial pressure on fleet services due to the increase cost pressures due to the hiring of vehicles. The planned fleet replacement programme would mitigate against the increased costs.

The Temporary Director for Housing and Environment remarked that there had been a reported overall budget deficit of £12.6 million in 2023-2024 rising to £25.8 million over the medium term to 2025-2026. Work had been ongoing to reduce the deficit with an update to Cabinet on 19 October 2022 reporting an updated forecast budget deficit of £7 million for 2023-2024 rising to £31.6 million by 2025-2026. Work would be undertaken to bring forward proposals to set a balanced budget for 2023-2024 and delivered a sustainable medium term financial strategy.

The Temporary Director for Housing and Environment highlighted a number of uncertainties in the budget. There continued to be significant uncertainty about the future funding the Council would receive, inflationary pressures and future pay awards. It was assumed that there would be a 4% increase in pay in 2023-2024 and 2% for future years. Under the remit of the Residents, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Panel the Medium Term Financial Strategy currently had a £250,000 Environmental Services saving target built into the budget. A growth of £142,000 for Waste Services was also built into the budget.

The Temporary Director for Housing and Environment explained that the budget setting process was still under way. The draft budget was subject to changes that were implemented to close the current deficit for 2022-2023. Some growth and saving targets were currently being held in Corporate Accounts and would be transferred to services. The draft budget did not currently reflect any virements between services in 2023-2024. Work was ongoing to review and challenge budget requirements.

The Temporary Director for Housing and Environment presented a slide on strategic risks. The strategic risks had last been reported to Audit and Risk Committee on 26 September 2022. Climate Change was a strategic risk which fell within the remit of the Residents, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Panel. He listed four strategic risks which could have an impact on the Panel these were, Businesses Closing,

Reputation / Loss of Public Trust, Employee Wellbeing and the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

A Panel Member asked for more information on the six key performance indicators which had showed a decrease in performance. He referred to the Markets budget which was forecasting an 80% overspend, Homeless and New Communities a 30% overspend and the Fleet Services budget a 40% overspend. He believed this suggested poor planning. He highlighted the underspend in the street lighting budget, which caused him concern as he had residents that were requesting street lighting, but had been told by Officers that the money was not available. He could not understand why the Council was intending to spend less on Environmental Services in next year's budget compared to the current year. A saving of a quarter of million pounds had been identified. He thought there was a lot of pressure on the service such as the maintenance of trees and did not believe a budget reduction could be justified. He asked if any earmarked reserves were going to be used to fill any gaps in the budget.

The Temporary Director for Housing and Environment responded that since the pandemic there had not been a return to normal levels of activity at the market and this was also applicable to the car parking budget. The underspend in streetlighting was due to the investment in LEDs, which was bringing savings to the operational budget. The LED replacement programme was near completion with over 18,000 units replaced. The £250,000 saving in the Environmental Services budget was an historic saving target that was put into the service some years before. This target could potentially be achieved by delivering efficiencies, without reducing service provision. He would resist any moves to reduce the budget allocated for trees. Some of the earmarked reserves were restricted by legislation in how they could be utilised, he cited the taxi licensing reserve and highways reserve as examples. He was happy to circulate a briefing note on the reserves to provide more detail.

A Member of the Panel was of the view that Environmental Services needed to move to a proactive management approach rather than a reactive management approach. He believed this was particularly applicable to the management of trees in the City. He referred to delays in the highway resurfacing programming projects, this had been partly down to a delay in the signing off of the Black Country wide surface treatment framework document. He wanted to ensure that next year's highway budget included any remaining from the current year. He asked for an update on road sweepers, as the current one's often broke down. It had been promised that they would be replaced in the current year.

The Temporary Director for Housing and Environment responded that they were nearly up to a full complement of staff who worked on the City's trees. There were only two vacancies left to complete. The Council had moved from a five year inspection strategy to every two years. Councillors would have access to a digital system showing data on tree inspections. He hoped Councillors would soon see a difference in how the service was approached. He agreed that it was disappointing about the delays on highway treatment. As soon as the weather permitted they would be looking to carry out maintenance work and he would ensure that finance rolled over any remaining budget into the new financial year. Four road sweepers would be operational for the Council in the next month, which were all electric. As they were so quiet, they were able to work in residential areas overnight.

A Panel Member asked about how the budget for the Coroners service was monitored. He was particularly interested in how the service operated in Wolverhampton and asked whether a full report could be given in the future. The Temporary Director for Housing and Environment responded that it was monitored on a regional basis. The Scrutiny Team Leader responded that there would be room in the Work Programme in the new municipal year for an item on the Coroners Service. He would send the minutes from a Health Scrutiny Panel meeting which had looked at the processes to be followed after death.

## 5 **New Housing Allocations Policy Impact**

The Chair invited the Deputy Director of City Housing and the Service Lead – Housing Strategy to give their presentation

The Deputy Director of City Housing began the presentation by explaining that Housing Strategy had 650 enquiries a year from Councillors and MPs about housing allocations, in addition to customer enquiries.

The Service Lead – Housing Strategy gave some background information on the Council's Housing Allocations Policy, which was rooted in the Housing Act 1996. The Council's Allocation Policy was managed through a choice based lettings scheme (CBL), called Homes in the City, implemented in 2007 and under yearly review. The aims of the new policy were as follows:

Ensure people in the greatest housing need have the greatest opportunity to access suitable housing that best meets their needs.

- Make use of a range of housing options and tenures to prevent and alleviate homelessness.
- Make best use of the Council's and partner registered providers housing stock.
- Manage applicants' expectations by being realistic about stock availability, to support them in making informed choices about their housing options, and the extent to which they are able to express reasonable preference.
- Ensure that the Council's legal duties and corporate responsibilities are met and that they contribute to delivering the Council's priorities.

The revision of the Council's Allocations Policy had been towards a focus on those in the greatest need of social housing. The current waiting list data showed 4,930 on the list, prior to the changes to the Allocations Policy, the list had over 11,000 applicants. The introduction of a new band, called "Emergency Plus" recognised not only homeless, but people with significant additional needs such as disabilities who needed adapted homes. The Service Lead – Housing Strategy then went on to discuss the supply and demand of Council Housing. They explained that demand was outstripping supply, with less than 900 homes becoming available by the end of the financial year (2022 – 2023). Of highest demand were two and three bedroom houses and bungalows, whereas 67% of the properties that became available across the previous year were flats and maisonettes.

Statistical data showed a yearly rise in applications for social housing as a constant trend. The Lettings Team received the highest number of enquiries from MPs and Councillors through Wolverhampton Homes. Void turnarounds were delayed during

the pandemic during its peak, however this had been improving monthly since. City housing and Lettings team were open and transparent with each other and this collaboration worked well. The Council continued to prioritise the increase of affordable housing supply in the City, with multiple schemes in support of this aim. Between 2021 and 2022 the Council bought 28 former Council Houses back into available stock, as of this financial year six properties had been bought and a further seven were in the process of being bought. Private Sector housing had contributed 20 empty homes back into use in the first two quarters of 2022-2023. New build housing development activity, funded by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), continued with the first phase of new homes being delivered in Heath Town. There would be 40 new homes - 16 x four bedroom houses and 24 x two bedroom houses. The Small Sites Programme would develop a number of small in-fill sites and bring forward a further 34 units of accommodation. In addition, there were two community led developments within Bushbury and Heath Town estates, that would result in a further 14 new properties. The Council's wholly owned housing company, WV Living, delivered approximately 200 new homes a year and endeavoured to deliver 25% affordable housing where possible. The Marches, Wednesfield development had brought forward a total of 266 homes – 99 for outright sale, 100 Help to Own, 29 Affordable Rent and 28 Shared Ownership. Hampton Park, Bushbury will bring forward 178 homes – 133 Outright Sale, 29 Affordable Rent and 16 Shared Ownership. All affordable units were owned and managed by the Council through its managing agents.

The Deputy Director of City Housing added that she had been to see the new build houses in Heath Town, specifically the 2 to 4 bedroom houses and semi-detached houses. She praised the new houses being built and extended an invite to the Panel to visit the site if interested. She stated that the earliest ones being built would be ready in February 2023.

The Service Lead – Housing Strategy explained that all new builds would have, as part of their Local Lettings Plan, a percentage of housing allocated to people who already live in the area and that this was to ensure communities didn't get broken apart through re-developments to areas.

The Service Lead – Housing Strategy asked the Panel to decide how best Housing Strategy could help Scrutiny further understand Housing and Housing Strategy; this included items such as data gathering and sharing, methods of communication, and supporting Councillors with residents housing enquiries.

The Chair thanked the Deputy Director of City Housing and The Service Lead – Housing Strategy for their presentation and sought further information on the buyback scheme, enquiring if these would be bought at market price.

The Deputy Director of City Housing explained that residents could buy their Council home as part of the Right to Buy Policy. After 2 years, if the house went onto the market for sale, the Council had first rights to consider purchasing. An independent financial assessment would be done on the property and considerations were made about any alterations that would need to be accounted for financially in the event of the purchase. Should the property be deemed strategically relevant to the Council, then Housing Strategy use their allocated budget to buy back and develop the property to bring it back into existing Council housing stock.

A Councillor thanked the team for their presentation and expressed satisfaction with housing developments that had occurred in areas he was responsible for. The Councillor asked for clarification on Housing Policy in regard to resettlements of people in areas they were deemed to have a local connection.

The Service Lead – Housing Strategy answered that the policy applied to new build estates and that when an older estate had been knocked down and re-developed, it could uproot and change community dynamics. To mitigate these impacts and to try maintain community cohesion, the Council attempted to re-house those uprooted during developments back into the new homes that have replaced their former estates.

The Councillor replied praising the team for building on Brownfield sites within the Wolverhampton Local Authority area, rather than relying on the South Staffordshire overflow new build estates. He said that it took the Housing team around 15 days to reply to him on average and asked if it would be possible for replies to become quicker, but was keen to stress a 15 day turn around was not a terrible response time.

A Councillor recounted some of the difficulties her residents had with applying to the housing register and putting bids on houses. After investigation by the Councillor it turned out many residents were doing it wrong. The Councillor requested training to allow her to understand residents housing problems better and potentially avoid sending enquiries to the housing team. The Councillor suggested such training could be included in the induction process for new Councillors. The Councillor then referred to older policy where those moving in to a social housing area often needed to have local contacts, which the councillor felt aided community cohesion. The Councillor believed this piece of policy to be dropped however, now that the newer requirements focused on those most in need. The Councillor asked why this decision had been taken.

The Service Lead – Housing Strategy replied agreeing with the Councillor that training would be beneficial, she said she would enquire into capacity to decide if training could be incorporated more broadly into Councillor induction programs and at occasional community outreach events. The Deputy Director of City Housing stated that the policy requirements changed during the 2020 review to meet the newer objectives, which focused on giving those in the greatest need the greatest opportunity to be housed under the Local Authority. The original aims came into conflict when the local connection policy was still in place, given limited housing stock, it had to be reviewed to meet the needs of the City. There was a legal responsibility to prioritise the homeless, veterans, domestic abuse victims and so on. Housing nationally had become increasingly residualised due to lack of supply and Wolverhampton reflected the trend.

A Councillor made the point that one of the biggest challenges residents faced was getting in contact via phone with managing agent, Wolverhampton Homes. He said residents would wait at length on the phone, with response times being poor. Whilst he agreed additional training for Councillors would help, he argued that the housing experts should remain the housing experts and that the move to digital and website based contact did not help those who were not technologically literate or those with vulnerabilities. The Councillor explained that if the response time and customer

service from Wolverhampton Homes could improve, he believed less inquiries would be sent to Councillors and Members for Parliament and this would reduce pressure on the Council's Housing Strategy Team.

The Service Lead – Housing Strategy replied saying she had taken the Councillors points on board. The Councillor further mentioned that Wolverhampton Homes phone handlers were informing residents to contact their Members for Parliament to escalate their cases quicker, which was not the right way of doing things when the managing agent should be dealing with the enquiry. The Service Lead – Housing Strategy asked if they could contact the Councillor outside of the meeting for further discussion and investigation into this matter.

The Deputy Director of City Housing added that the Housing Strategy team could consider developing a dashboard access application for Councillors so that they could see what social housing stock was available in their wards, this would help them answer residents inquiries quicker and give them more information.

A Councillor raised the local connection policy removal, explaining that whilst he understood the pros and cons with regards to removing the policy, it did reduce community networks and other networks, such as informal caring capacity within a family unit or the local school. The Councillor explained that due to low stock in some areas, there had been displacement for some families, especially if a family grew. The housing size they require would be available in their local area, forcing them to have to move to the other side of the city and causing a multitude of issues. The Councillor asked if it was possible for those residents who refused to move, having things like room separation or a loft conversion to help adapt the house to their needs.

The Service Lead – Housing Strategy understood and agreed with the points the Councillor raised, she answered that she would need to come back to the question at a later date to answer.

The Deputy Director of City Housing said that the banding process for Local Lettings Policies did take into consideration instances of multiple needs. She added that adaptations could not often be done to older stock houses due to health and safety reasons.

A Councillor asked if the number of empty properties managed by Wolverhampton Homes could be provided to the Panel. The Councillor requested if information was available for Councillors on what areas people were moving into their wards from in the event of it being someone formerly external to the ward.

The Service Lead – Housing Strategy confirmed they could obtain the information on the amount of voids, as well as increase the updates. The Deputy Director of City Housing gave examples of reasons for voids, such as those in need of repair to match the Lettings Standards policy. Reasons for voids would need to be given so a fair assessment could be made of void counts.

A Panel member said a lot of pensioners in social housing were living in 4 to 5 bedroom houses and asked if the Council was able to relocate them to smaller homes to free up larger houses for families.



The Service Lead – Housing Strategy replied stating that if the Council could build a lot of two bedroom bungalows, the problem would be solved. Bungalows were in high demand for residents who were downsizing. The Deputy Director of City Housing further stressed this point and said they were trying where they could to get properties built. The Housing Strategy department use their budget allocation every year to try to buy back and build as many homes as possible every year and where they can build the housing stock residents required. They also encouraged people to downsize where appropriate.

A Panel Member expressed their view that the Right To Buy policy had caused major problems for all Councils in the country. They stated that they felt that Wolverhampton Homes and the Council were doing their very best with the difficult situation they were in. The Councillor discussed proposals for an accreditation scheme of private landlords or multiple home owners in the City. He explained these property owners had around 4 to 5 thousand houses in the city which were lying empty. The scheme, which would cost them yearly to be apart of, would enable the managing agent to work with private landlords to allocate people into privately rented housing, which the Council had been able to verify as being up to Lettings Standard. The Councillor asked if this scheme has been further developed.

The Service Lead – Housing Strategy explained that the policy was launched a few years ago, but had some issues and went on hiatus for a few years whilst it was being reviewed. The Scheme was now back and fully operational and sat with the Homeless Services team. She offered to find out more information from the relevant team for the Councillor.

The Councillor praised the teams work and explained he understood the difficult circumstances they were under. He said his concern was those who were hidden homeless and said that the answer to the problem was that Councils need to be able to build more Council houses.

The Chair thanked the Housing Strategy Team for their presentation and answers. The Chair then confirmed the Panel would want to visit the new build houses.

Resolved: That the proposed interactive housing dashboard for housing information be proved to Councillors.

## 6 **Active Travel**

The Service Manager for Transport Strategy opened the presentation explaining National Government policy for the implementation of cycling lanes throughout cities. They then addressed how the City of Wolverhampton Council was delivering on the policy. A Copy of the presentation is attached to the signed minutes. The Service Manager for Transport Strategy explained that cycling transport was accessible and, affordable for people; because of this the Council was keen to promote the uptake of cycling.

The Professional Lead for Transport Strategy City Housing & Environment began by explaining where main priority development roads were, in co-ordination with the other Black Country Network Local Authorities, for cycle lanes. Professional Lead for Transport Strategy City Housing & Environment informed the Panel that these developments were subject to national policy, with specific standards expected to

meet the criteria for national funding. All major road developments required cycle lanes to be implemented alongside them and this needed to follow the set standards.

The Professional Lead for Transport Strategy City Housing & Environment set out that the Council was utilising the Active Travel fund money to build cycle lanes across the City and provided updates on completed as well as on going works across the City. The Cycle Hire Scheme had been taken up by residents since the scheme was launched, statistics show the useage. The Professional Lead for Transport Strategy City Housing & Environment noted the electric bikes were out performing the pedal bikes in hire uptake. Docks for bikes were currently located at the City centre end of the Wednesfield Road, at Springfield Campus and at New Cross Hospital, with an additional one in Heath Town planned.

Future oversight of cycling development aims were:

- Proposal to make standing report to Climate Change Advisory Group
- Look to convene an officer led forum to embed Active Travel discussions across service areas
- Maintain the existing and well attended public Cycle Forum to encourage stakeholder input and encourage collaborative working.
- Continue promotion through public champions in the form of Hugh Porter as Cycling Ambassador and Adam Tranter as the West Midlands Cycling and Walking Commissioner

A Panel Member enquired if data was available on how many loaned cycles accrued damages or were written off.

The Professional Lead for Transport Strategy City Housing & Environment answered that the company who managed the bikes who had that information which could be provided if required. He added that the company have advertised the fact that the bikes were particularly difficult to damage however.

A Councillor asked for more information on the Future oversight of cycling development, in particular the Officer led forum and the Cycle led forum, citing concerns about how the cycle paths may impact residential areas. He felt having that early engagement with the public was crucial to getting them on board.

The Professional Lead for Transport Strategy City Housing & Environment agreed with the Councillors point and explained that the Council would be using multiple methods to promote its consultation on the matter including social media, letters, and other communication methods to inform the public.

A Councillor stated they agreed cyclists should be encouraged, although he would prefer if they were kept away from the main roads. He said that recent data had shown that car usage had increased in the West Midlands and the City of Wolverhampton and did not want these developments to be at the expense of road users. He finished by asking if usage of the cycle lanes could be monitored so that the Council could be sure these schemes were beneficial to the public.

The Professional Lead for Transport Strategy City Housing & Environment replied that the Department for Transport required Councils to measure usage of the cycle lanes to be able to access the funding. He confirmed they were monitoring and would continue to monitor usage.

The Councillor on the Board for Active Travel stated that rather than implement congestion charges on the City, they made the bold decision to choose to introduce the cycling lane network to help encourage the reduction in carbon emissions around the City. He explained the national policy setting strict criteria to gain funding for the project and added that it was done on a competitive basis, alongside hundreds of other local authorities. He stated he didn't want people who want to take up cycling to work to compete with lorries on the road and by building these networks it meant they hadn't had to ban buses and cars from areas. The Cabinet Member for City & Environment, Steve Evans, continued to praise the works being done and asked it to be recorded his thanks to the Officers for their work. He was supportive of equality of respect and access to all types of transport users.

## 7 **Public Realm**

The Service Lead for Place Making City Housing and Environment summarised the Public Realm Improvement Programme background information which began as the Connected Places Strategy in 2017. It went through multiple consultation periods and phases, and suffered from a delay due to Covid-19. Main works on the site started in November 2021.

The Head of Network Management for City Housing and Environment gave an overview of the City Centre Destination plan, a copy of the presentation is attached to the signed minutes. The presentation set out road traffic management changes, pedestrianised area, events and more. Cycling routes and bus routes were displayed on a map for the Panel to view. Disabled parking, new and current, as well as taxi ranks and bays were also shown.

The Service Lead for Place Making City Housing and Environment explained the purpose of the development was to improve links between the City centre and future developments, improve cycling and pedestrian access in and around the city, create green spaces and improve the cities appearance. It also aimed to reduce pollution and traffic, as well as support local businesses with the creation of new event spaces. Phase 1, Victoria Street and Phase 3, Civic Halls developments were currently active and ongoing, their original dates of estimated completion were February 2023 and October 2022; however they were now both set to finish in April 2023. The later completion dates were caused by a variety of issues, the Service Lead for Place Making City Housing and Environment explained some of these to the Panel, which included material delays, adjacent works and poor ground conditions.

The Service Lead for Place Making City Housing and Environment then took the Panel through conceptual photos of what the events areas would look like. She added that the raised section in the modelling photo was no longer being implemented as it was not friendly to vehicular movement. Photos were then displayed showing the Panel the progress of all on-going works. The Service Lead for Place Making City Housing and Environment informed the Councillors about the Council's contractor, Eurovia, and listed numerous Social Value related projects they

had previously assisted with.

A Councillor asked if the Council had planned to make sure the Victoria Street phase 1 event area materials would be suitable for long term usage by heavy vehicles for events and would not wear down quickly. The Councillor also believed more development should be done in Queen's street and asked if this could be done.

The Director of City Housing & Environment stated that he believed the construction techniques and materials being used in the phase 1 area were future proofed, and that a degree of back up materials has been stocked in case of repairs and maintenance. He agreed with the Councillors comments about Queen's Street but stated that Phase 2 had not yet begun and was subject to budgetary restrictions which limit what can and cannot be done with this project.

A Councillor welcomed all the information provided to the Panel but said he was concerned to see only one cycle lane in each concept photo and asked if cyclists could be given more consideration.

A Panel Member praised everything that had been show and gave his full support to it.

The Chair thanked the Officers for their presentation and praised their efforts.

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### **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next, Residents, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Panel was confirmed as 16 February 2023 at 6pm.

The meeting closed at 8.58pm.