CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL	**Cabinet (Resources) Panel** 12 July 2023

Report title	**LEP Gainshare monies for Digital Innovation purposes**
Decision designation	AMBER
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Obaida Ahmed Resources and Digital
Key decision	Yes
In forward plan	Yes
Wards affected	All Wards
Accountable Director	Charlotte Johns, Director of Strategy
Originating service	Strategy
Accountable employee	Heather Clark Head of Digital Projects Tel 01902 555614 Email Heather.Clark2@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	CMB 26 June 2023 Strategic Executive Board 27 June 2023

Recommendation for decision:

The Cabinet (Resources) Panel is recommended to:

1. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital, in consultation with Director of Strategy and Director of Finance to:

   a. Approve allocation of Gainshare funding to support the digital innovation priority of the Digital Wolverhampton Strategy as a proof-of-concept fund.

   b. Authorise the Council to enter into a Collaboration Agreement with Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council as accountable body for Gainshare funding.

   c. Approve the establishment and spend within the Digital Infrastructure budget in line with the Collaboration Agreement.

   d. Approve further changes to support our smart city ambitions.

1.0   Purpose

1.1   To approve allocation of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Gainshare monies to support the digital innovation priority of Wolverhampton Digital Strategy in particular to transform delivery of services and develop new applications to unlock potential.

2.0   Background

2.1   The City of Wolverhampton Council is committed to digital with Driven by Digital being a cross cutting theme of Our City: Our Plan. Wolverhampton Digital Strategy was adopted in March 2023 as a live, action orientated partnership approach to delivering our overarching aims:

   A. Wolverhampton is a Gigabit and Smart City with futureproofed digital infrastructure including full fibre broadband and 5G utilised to transform delivery of services and develop new applications to unlock its potential.
   B. 100% digitally included Wolverhampton ensuring all residents have the access to devices, connectivity and skills to take advantage of what digital has to offer.
   C. Growing the Digital Economy and talent pipeline building on our futureproofed infrastructure to start and grow businesses creating jobs for local residents meeting skills needs for the future.

2.2   Futureproofed digital infrastructure is crucial to making Wolverhampton a more attractive place to live, run a business and invest and the backbone of a modern thriving economy driving productivity and spreading growth and in delivering effective and efficient public services. Significant progress has been made with Gigabit, coverage has increased from 2% in September 2020 to 90.8% December 2022 (Connected Nations 2022) and full fibre coverage (1 GB) from 1% in 2020 increasing to 49% of properties in February 2023 (Broadband Report March 2023 Think Broadband). In addition to CityFibre roll out in the city, Openreach and Virgin Media are also upgrading their infrastructure to full fibre with Virgin Media underway and Openreach starting in the near future. Our proactive approach to supporting the rollout of 5G has accelerated the rollout by at least six months.

2.3   Building on the progress with this key building block, we are looking to move forward with the other part of our ambition to become a Gigabit and Smart City through exploring how the use of technology can transform delivery of services including develop new applications to unlock its potential driving digital innovation in the city.

2.4   Gainshare was a result of the former Building Digital UK (BDUK) funded Black Country superfast programme increasing the number of premises across the Black Country to superfast broadband (30 MB), a share of any surplus generated through this project. It was originally managed by Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) which ceased to exist on 31 March 2023 with responsibility moving to Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council as accountable body. It is proposed that current and future Gainshare receipts are split equally between the four Black Country local authorities subject to a collaboration agreement. Each local authority will receive £250,273.50. Future Gainshare take-up assessments are due to take place in December 2023, the outcome

will be available from 31 January 2024. It is likely that a further payment will be distributed between the local authorities at a later date. Black Country LEP has requested that the Gainshare funding is spent on digital activities only.

2.5   Wolverhampton is proposing to use our share of Gainshare to support the digital innovation priority of the Digital Wolverhampton Strategy through funding Smart City proof-of-concepts.

3.0   Smart City ambitions

3.1   A smart city is an urban area that uses different types of Internet of Things (IoT) sensors to collect data and then use this data to manage assets and resources efficiently. The Digital Wolverhampton Strategy's digital innovation priority outlined how the Council will aim to use technology to improve services using technology. By streamlining processes, the Council will make savings that will contribute to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

3.2   Our Strategy's digital innovation priority outlined our intention to develop digital roadmaps for city priorities setting out how we will use technology to innovate services including:

- Utilise data to make smarter decisions enabling better targeting and delivery of services.

- Technology enabled service delivery making better and more efficient services e.g. highways management including fly tipping detection, road condition monitoring and smart parking.

- Technology enabled independent living and health to improve quality of life, prevent and manage health conditions.

- Addressing key challenges and priorities through technology e.g. climate change.

- Become a leading Smart City for the future by maximising benefit from West Midlands Smart City Programme.

- Ensure digital skills of workforce to embrace and implement digital innovation solutions.

3.3   Examples of smart city proof of concepts the funding could support include visitor experience counters, air quality and environmental sensors. Environmental sensors include fly tipping detection, graffiti, street cleaning and smart bins. Home and care sensors will include heat and humidity sensors, damp and mould detection and falls detection.

Smart City Proof of concepts	Examples	Benefits
Visitor Experience	Capture footfall and visitor data to evidence impact and drawdown funding.	Evidence impact of events on high street vitality for funders and provide evidence base to attract future external funding. Opportunity to improve reporting of data and trends.
Air quality and environmental sensors	Deployed on key routes throughout the city. Can be deployed near schools to monitor traffic and air pollution. Sensors housed on street furniture.	Assess impact of poor air quality of public health, identify polluted areas to action. Monitor how families are affected by air quality at school drop off and pick up times.
Environmental sensors	Fly tipping detection, graffiti, street cleaning and smart bins	Reduce fly tipping by 80% and increase prosecutions (MTFS savings). Waste management system could improve efficiency of resource allocation by 50%, reduce complaints by 51%, savings on fuel and carbon reductions by 50%. (based on examples elsewhere)
Home and care sensors	Heat and humidity sensors, damp and mould detection, falls detection, water tap sensors, sleep sensors	Identify residents in fuel poverty so support can be provided, improve living conditions, support independent living and prevent health conditions (such as Asthma). 4 lives saved in South London Partnership (SLP) post sensor alerts received. Individuals feel looked after and safer.

3.4   We are currently exploring an IoT platform to capture data intelligence to show trends, triggering actions where required and finally produce reports.

4.0   Evaluation of alternative options

4.1   Option 1: Gainshare funding used to support the rollout of our smart city aims, using technology to improve service delivery, improve quality of life by enabling individuals to live in their own homes and manage health conditions and address key challenges. It will allow us to undertake proof of concepts to evidence benefits of interventions.

4.2   Option 2: do nothing. Funding could ultimately be lost to the City or used for other purposes which would not result in benefits to the Council and City as a whole.

5.0   Reasons for decision

5.1   Option 1 is recommended to ensure that we are able to achieve our digital innovation ambitions to provide better and more efficient services, improved quality of life and addressing challenges and priorities through technology. Service efficiencies can contribute to savings outlined in the MTFS.

6.0   Financial implications

6.1   Gainshare funding of £250,273.50 will be made available to support the digital activities, in line with conditions provided by BC LEP. It is intended that the proof of concepts funded through this pot will provide evidence for the business cases to invest and/or bid for external funding to rollout of the technology if proved successful.

6.2   It is proposed that current and future Gainshare receipts are split equally between the four Black Country local authorities subject to a collaboration agreement. Each local authority will receive £250,273.50. Future Gainshare take-up assessments are due to take place in December 2023, the outcome will be available from 31 January 2024. It is likely that a further payment will be distributed between the local authorities at a later date.

6.3   Deploying technology to improve services will allow returns on funding by being able to invest to save.
[CO/14062023/W]

7.0   Legal implications

7.1   Receipt of Gainshare funding is subject to entering into a Collaboration Agreement with the accountable body Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council. The Council must ensure that it complies with the terms of the Collaboration Agreement.
[SZ/20062023/P]

8.0   Equalities implications

8.1   Digital and smart technology can have significant positive equalities implications, for example making it easier for people with health problems to live more independently through the provision of telecare and e-health solutions.

9.0   All other implications

9.1   Smart technology can have positive implications on the environment and climate change, for example enabling the Council to capture environmental information and improve service delivery within these areas.

9.2   Smart technology can be used to improve building management. Corporate Landlord have been involved in the digital infrastructure priority including making available our assets to support the rollout and barrier busting through standardised agreements.

9.3   The Gainshare funding will allow the Council to achieve our digital innovation ambition to provide better and more efficient services, about addressing challenges and priorities through technology. Any service efficiencies will contribute to savings outlined in the MTFS.

10.0   Schedule of background papers

10.1   None