

# City Learning Quarter

Scrutiny Board

5 March 2024

Presenter:

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Executive Director of  
Economy

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[wolverhampton.gov.uk](https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk)

## Recommendations for action or decision

The Scrutiny Board is recommended to:

1. Consider the information presented on the current status, and plans for the City Learning Quarter, comment on the programme delivery, and make any recommendations for future activity as appropriate.
2. Endorse the presentation of future updates on the City Learning Quarter, to Scrutiny Board on a six-monthly basis, or to make recommendations on alternative arrangements for updating Councillors.

## **Key Questions for Scrutiny to consider:**

1. Do the arrangements in place for the delivery of the City Learning Quarter demonstrate robust and responsible corporate governance, having learnt lessons from previous major capital projects delivery?
2. Are there any additional improvements to the current arrangements that should be considered and actioned?
3. How might the Council ensure that the wider outcomes and legacy of the investment in the City Learning Quarter are maximised for the benefit of City residents?

## Purpose and Background

- The City Learning Quarter was originally approved by the Council in 2017, with many subsequent reports presented since that time.
- The most recent updated approval allowing the programme to proceed was at Cabinet in October 2023.
- This approval established a budget of £69.2m for the programme which is to be completed by the end of 2025, allowing use of the new facilities for the academic year 2025/2026.
- The following slides outline more detail on the vision, delivery arrangements, and proposed legacy of the City Learning Quarter.

## Key information for Scrutiny

- The City Learning Quarter directly targets improvements in skills and learning for our residents, which addresses well documented challenges for youth unemployment in our City.
- The complexity of the funding being used for the City Learning Quarter, and the involvement of many stakeholders requires multiple formal legal agreements to be in place. This has impacted the delivery timescale and been out of the direct control of the Council.
- These matters have been progressed by the Council and partners over recent months allowing the programme to proceed with the approval of the Council and appropriate oversight by Officers and Councillors in place.

## The City Learning Quarter

- The City Learning Quarter (CLQ) will bring together inspirational state of the art learning environments onto two strategically connected, and more easily accessible sites – the City Centre and Wellington Road, Bilston.
- The programme is being delivered through a partnership between the Council and the City of Wolverhampton College, with funding support from Government and West Midlands Combined Authority in addition to the College/ Council contributions. It is a key component in Levelling-Up Wolverhampton.
- The co-location of the City of Wolverhampton College, Wolverhampton Central Library and Adult Education Services will offer co-ordinated lifelong learning opportunities to people of all ages. Residents will be equipped with skills and learning relevant to the needs of local employers, contributing to economic growth and well-being, and wholly supporting the achievement of Our City; Our Plan priorities.

## The City Learning Quarter will deliver

- Over 10,000 sq.m. new learning space/ over 5,000 sq. m. learning spaces updated and improved
- Over 8,000 apprenticeship starts by 2035
- Over 50,000 learner assists by 2035
- Over 200 business assists by 2035
- Over 50 new jobs/ over 420 jobs safeguarded
- Over 100 residential units (once Paget Road is vacated)
- New EV charging points and increased use of renewable energy on both sites
- Public realm and heritage asset improvements







Sensitivity: PROTECT

# Phase 2 City Centre College Campus



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Sensitivity: PROTECT

## Phase 2 Wolverhampton Central Library

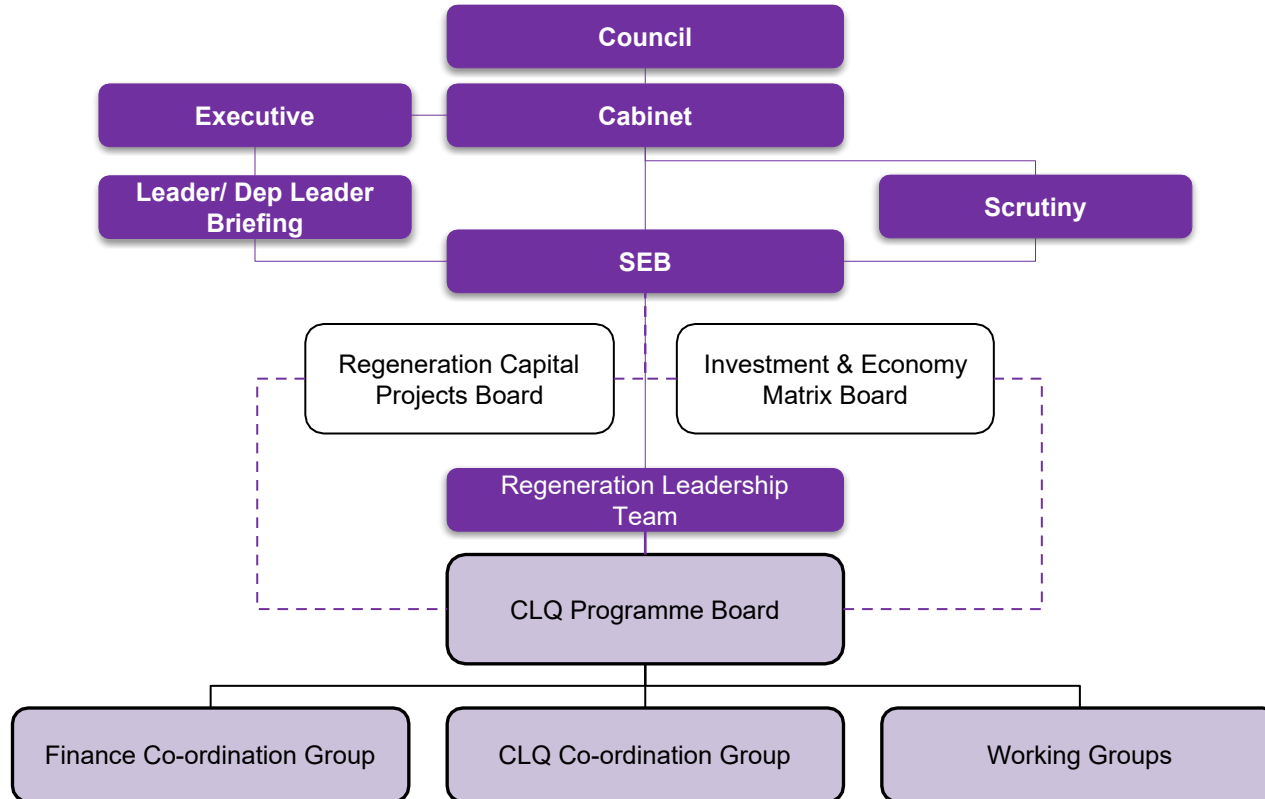


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## Programme Overview

- The Council has learnt key lessons from previous major capital schemes, including the Civic Halls project, and ensured this has been adopted as part of the City Learning Quarter programme delivery.
- Appropriate and proportionate corporate governance in place with decision making through a Programme Board, and the Director of City Development as Senior Responsible Officer – with council officers from a range of relevant services, and external professional consultants advising the Board
- Robust processes are in place to ensure effective monitoring and reporting to key stakeholders including Government departments.
- Overall Budget £69.2m (Approved by Cabinet October 2023) and contingency provision is distributed across the programme
- The programme is currently forecast to be delivered within the approved budget and agreed timescale – with pro-active risk management in place to ensure the required outputs are met.

## CLQ Governance



# City Learning Quarter Assurance Review – reported to the Audit and Risk Committee November 2023

## Overall Conclusion

Our audit provides **satisfactory** assurance over the adequacy of the controls reviewed as part of the process to mitigate risks to an acceptable level.

No Assurance	Limited	<b>Satisfactory</b>	Substantial
Immediate action is required to address fundamental gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance identified. The system of governance, risk management and control is inadequate to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.	Significant gaps, weaknesses or non-compliance were identified. Improvement is required to the system of governance, risk management and control to effectively manage risks to the achievement of objectives in the area audited.	<b>There is a generally sound system of governance, risk management and control in place. Some issues, non-compliance or scope for improvement were identified which may put at risk the achievement of objectives in the area audited.</b>	A sound system of governance, risk management and control exists, with internal controls operating effectively and being consistently applied to support the achievement of objectives in the area audited.



# City Learning Quarter Assurance Review – reported to the Audit and Risk Committee November 2023

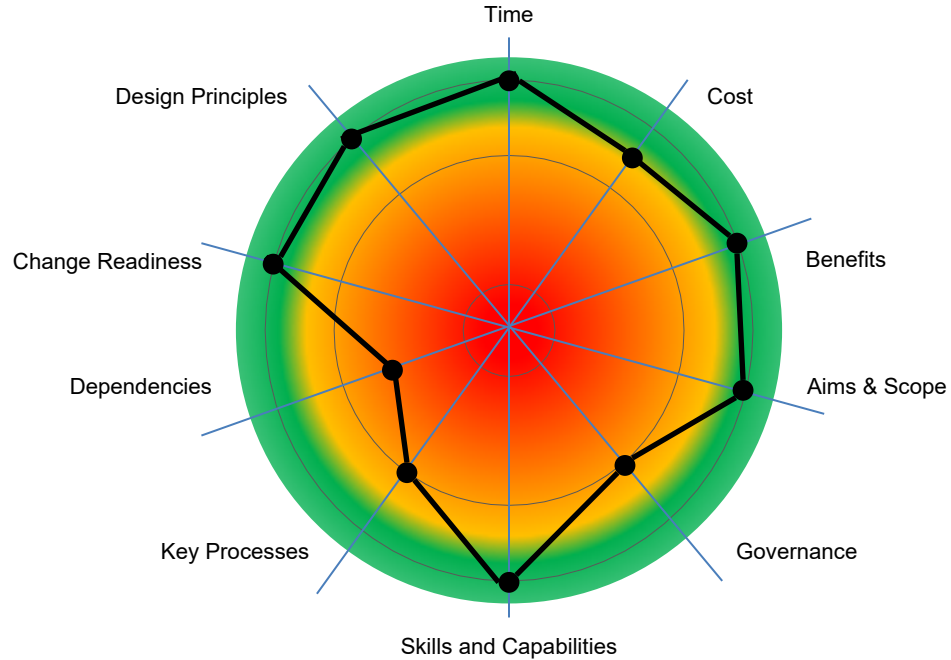
## Examples of good practice identified:

During our review we identified the following examples of good practice in the management of risk, as achieved through the effective design and application of controls:

- A detailed and comprehensive Project Execution Plan (PEP) is in place which is subject to regular updates, scrutiny and review which was approved by the Project Board.
- A Project Board has been established and meets on a monthly basis.
- A dedicated Programme Director has been appointed to oversee the project.
- Up until December 2022 assurance work was also undertaken through a Project Management Office Supported Member Reference Group which met every quarter to discuss four capital projects, one of which was CLQ.
- Various specialist teams sit beneath the Project Board to provide support in delivering the project. This includes a Co-ordination Team and Finance Team.
- A signed contract with main Contractor setting out the scope of works was in place.
- A signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) was in place for project funding.
- Quarterly Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Returns were found to be submitted to DLUHC which were signed off by the Section 151 Officer.
- A grant agreement with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) had been executed.
- Councillors have been kept updated with progress on the project and appropriate approvals have been sought, as required, in accordance with the Constitution and the Scheme of Delegation.



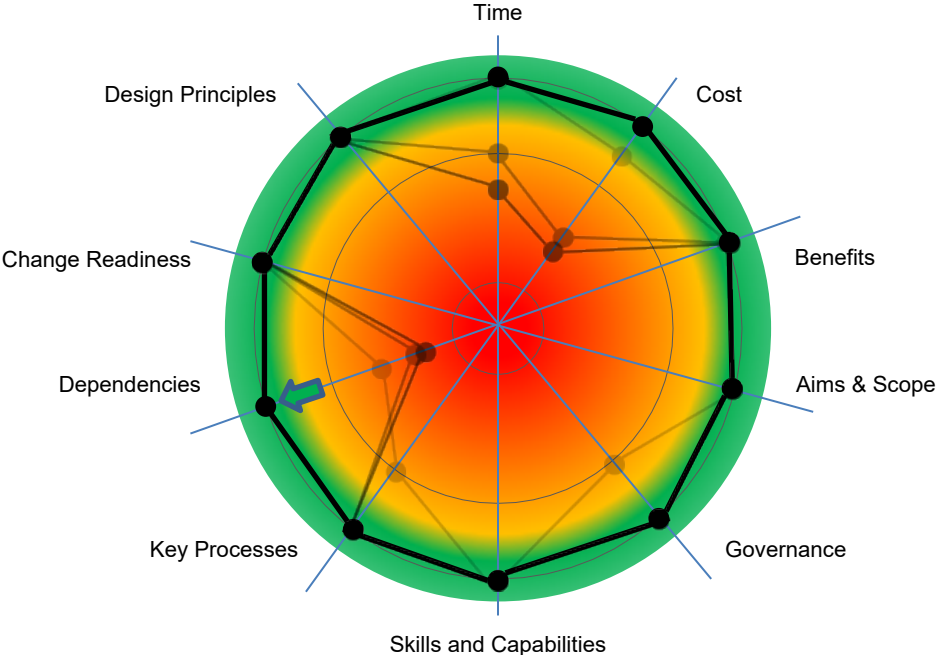
# City Learning Quarter Assurance Self-Assessment – November 2022



*Adapted from HM Gov Infrastructure and Projects Authority Assurance Review Guidance*

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# City Learning Quarter Assurance Self-Assessment – February 2024



*Adapted from HM Gov Infrastructure and Projects Authority Assurance Review Guidance*

## Programme elements

### Phase 1 Advanced Technology and Automotive Centre, Bilston

Contractor	Speller Metcalfe	Budget	c. £8.1m	Planned completion	July 2024
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### Phase 2 City Centre College

Contractor	McLaughlin & Harvey	Budget	c. £46.2m	Planned completion	September 2025
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### Phase 2 Central Library Façade and Internal Alterations to co-locate Adult Education

Contractor	TBC	Budget	c. £5.2m	Planned completion	July 2025
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### Phase 3 College exit from Paget Road and redevelopment of site

Anticipated commencement	Late 2025
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# Programme Delivery

Programme Phase	2022				2023				2024				2025			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Phase 1 - Advanced Technology & Automotive Centre, Bilston				Contractor appointed Feb 2023	ATAC Construction Feb 2023 - July 2024											
Phase 2 - City Centre College	PSSC 05/09/2022 - 16/05/2023								College and External Works Construction Oct 2023 - Sep 2025							
Phase 2 - Central Library/ Adult Education Works								Procurement to March 24*	Pre-con to May 24*	Library Construction July 2024* - July 2025*						

\* Dates still subject to final confirmation

## The CLQ Legacy

It is critical that we seek to define and realise the full potential of the City Learning Quarter, ensuring this is relevant and recognisable to Councillors and other stakeholders, and benefits our City.

We will therefore work with stakeholders and partners, including through the Education, Skills and Employment Board to

- Pro-actively influence the positive impact for the Wolverhampton Pound; Climate Action; and Fairness, Equality and Inclusion through the activities of the programme and the future operations across the City Learning Quarter.
- Co-produce pathways to work, with the college and other stakeholders such as the University, schools, and other organisations.
- Ensure the input and inclusion of key stakeholders, including services and service users (e.g. Central Library/ Adult Education).

### Priorities

- Strong families where children grow up well and achieve their full potential
- Healthy, inclusive communities
- More local people into good jobs and training
- Thriving economy in all parts of the City

### Inputs

- Vision/ leadership /strategic direction – Partnership working to create an integrated City Learning Quarter
- Blended funding from multiple stakeholders £69.2m
- Education, Skills & Employment Strategy 2030

### Outcomes

- Development and sustained growth of a skilled workforce
- More people supported to be active within their communities
- Growth and development of local businesses
- Reduction of the City's carbon footprint and elimination of unnecessary waste

### Principles

- Driven by Digital
- Climate Action
- Fair and Equal

### Outputs

- Phase 1 - ATAC
- Phase 2 - City Centre Campus
- Phase 2 - Central Library
- Phase 3 - Paget Road

### Benefits

- Reduction in youth unemployment
- Increase in community activities and engagement
- Increases in turnover and growth for local businesses
- Reduction of the City's carbon footprint



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