

Report title	Our City: Our Plan Refresh 2024-2025	
Decision designation	RED	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Stephen Simkins Leader of the Council	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Charlotte Johns, Director of Strategy	
Originating service	Policy and Strategy	
Accountable employee	Laura Collings Tel Email	Head of Policy and Strategy 01902550414 laura.collings@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Scrutiny Board Full Council	6 February 2024 28 February 2024

Recommendations for decision:

That Cabinet recommends that Council:

1. Approve the Our City: Our Plan refresh for 2024-2025, the City of Wolverhampton Council Plan.
2. Seeks cross party engagement to deliver the priorities set out in Our City: Our Plan the strategic framework to level up our city.

Recommendations for noting:

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. That the priorities of Our City: Our Plan have been developed through a continuous conversation with our communities and partners.
2. That a presentation and draft Our City: Our Plan was received by Scrutiny Board on the 6 February 2024.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve the refreshed City of Wolverhampton Council Plan, Our City: Our Plan for the 2024-2025 municipal year.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Council Plan is a key component of the Council's policy framework and supports development of the medium-term financial strategy (MTFS) and annual budget. Our City: Our Plan was first approved by Full Council on 2 March 2022. It is good practice that the plan is refreshed annually to ensure that the Council's resource continues to be aligned to the needs and priorities of local people.
- 2.2 The plan has been shaped by Wolverhampton residents, businesses and partners and outlines the strategic vision for our city. The Council's approach to increasing economic prosperity, improving outcomes for local people and tackling inequalities within our communities; while addressing the net zero challenge.
- 2.3 These are things that the Council cannot do alone. We must continue to work in a way that ensures we maintain continued financial sustainability of the Council, as well as strengthening the Council's role as a partner, enabler, leader and as an anchor organisation in Wolverhampton. The plan describes the way that we bring people and organisations from across the city together, to work as one; in order to make the biggest positive difference to the lives of those who live, work, study and visit here.
- 2.4 The achievement of the vision and priorities in the plan will help Wolverhampton benefit from opportunities presented by levelling up and the region's new Deeper Devolution Deal; meeting the challenges of global economic uncertainty; and dealing with the issues most important to our communities, such as the cost-of-living crisis.
- 2.5 This item was considered as pre-decision scrutiny on 6 February 2024 by Scrutiny Board.

3.0 Our City: Our Plan Refresh 2024-2025

- 3.1 As part of the process to refresh the plan the priorities, principles, objectives and performance framework have been reviewed. The plan continues to set out an overarching ambition that 'Wulfrunians will live longer, healthier lives.' Delivery of this ambition is supported by six overarching priorities.

- Strong families where children grow up well and achieve their full potential
- Fulfilled lives for all with quality care for those that need it
- Healthy, inclusive communities
- Good homes in well-connected neighbourhoods
- More local people into good jobs and training
- Thriving economy in all parts of the city

3.2 These priorities together with the associated key outcomes, objectives and activity form a framework to improve outcomes for local people. Supporting the six overarching priorities are cross cutting principles. In the 2024-2025 refresh the Wolverhampton Pound has been added as a fourth principle.

- **Climate Action:** The plan is aligned to the Council's ambitious low carbon programme which includes commitment to 2028 Net Zero targets and likewise a city wide 2041 target.
- **Driven by Digital:** Wolverhampton is at the forefront of digital infrastructure and innovation, and now more than ever we have seen the importance of digital skills and connectivity to social and economic participation for the City's residents.
- **Fair and Equal:** The Council will continue to tackle the inequalities in our city which impact on the opportunities of local people. The plan is aligned to our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy which is underpinned by directorate level action plans.
- **Wolverhampton Pound:** Using the collective power of our local institutions, businesses and people to retain as much local wealth as possible. We are working closely with the city's anchor institutions to maximise the impact of the Wolverhampton Pound.

4.0 Service Planning

4.1 To support delivery of Our City: Our Plan a new service planning approach has been embedded across the Council. This ensures that we have a golden thread running from our overarching strategic framework through to on the ground delivery. Each service plan sets out how the service will contribute to the outcomes and priorities set out in Our City: Our Plan with consideration given to performance measures, timescales, interdependencies, resources, risk management and workforce planning. Service plans will be refreshed at appropriate points during the year to ensure that they include timely, up to date information.

5.0 Governance, Monitoring and Performance

5.1 Our City: Our Plan incorporates clear performance indicators against each of the six overarching priorities, as well as the Our Council priority. The performance framework provides high-level city data on key priorities, benchmarks city performance against national and regional data. This is supported by a suite of Council indicators which measure and track the impact of Council activity and interventions. As part of the refresh of Our City: Our Plan the performance framework has also been reviewed and small updates made to the indicators.

5.2 Quarterly reports are taken to Cabinet on performance against these measures alongside the budget. Regular reporting on performance is also taken to Scrutiny Board and relevant Scrutiny panels. This process helps to embed the golden thread of data flowing

between all levels of Council activity ensuring data driven decision making and that an understanding of performance is evident in everything we do.

- 5.3 As we move into 2024-2025 a section will be added to the Council's corporate report template where report authors will be asked to detail Our City: Our Plan implications. Delivery of the plan will continue to be at the forefront of how we shape and deliver the Council core activity and priorities.

6.0 Scrutiny and Consultation

- 6.1 The annual refresh of Our City: Our Plan forms part of a continuous process of engagement with residents, businesses and other key stakeholders throughout the year which focuses on understanding people's priorities for Wolverhampton.
- 6.2 Throughout the year there are opportunities for local people to help shape future strategy, service delivery and feedback their priorities for the city. Between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2023 over 4,400 people responded to online consultations through the Council's Citizen Space platform. There is a continuous process to ensure these views are fed into the annual refresh of Our City: Our Plan.
- 6.3 In addition, the 'Your Priorities for Wolverhampton' survey was launched between the 13 December 2023 and 7 February 2024. It received 541 responses and provided an opportunity for local people to tell us what is most important to them. Respondents were asked to feed back which elements of Our City: Our Plan were most important to them and what their priorities were for the city. Feedback included:
- When asked to select which of the six Our City: Our Plan priorities were most important to them, the top three priorities were:
 1. Strong families where children grow up well and achieve their full potential
 2. Fulfilled lives with quality care for those that need it
 3. Thriving economy in all parts of the city
 - When asked which of the three cross cutting principles in Our City: Our Plan was important to them 59.1% said Fair and Inclusive.
 - When asked which public services were most important to them Adult Services was the most selected at 44.9%.
- 6.4 We will continue to engage with communities and city partners as we deliver our Council Plan throughout 2024-2025. This will be taken forward as a continuous conversation with our communities and targeted opportunities to co-produce innovative solutions to the City's challenges.
- 6.5 On the 6 February 2024, Scrutiny Board was presented with the draft Our City: Our Plan. Comments from Scrutiny Board included:

- The importance of the sixth priority ‘Thriving economy in all parts of the city’ to the economic prosperity of Wolverhampton and the role foreign direct investment can have to support this.
- Highlighting the Council’s role to support health partners to ensure residents have access to healthcare services.
- Continuing to monitor delivery of our central vision that ‘Wulfrunians will live longer, healthier lives’ through our the Our City: Our Plan performance framework.

7.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 7.1 Option 1 would be to not refresh Our City: Our Plan.
- 7.2 Option 2 and the chosen option is to refresh Our City: Our Plan which will enable the city to address key emerging challenges and priorities, and to capitalise on new opportunities to level up our city.

8.0 Reasons for decision(s)

- 8.1 The Council Plan is a key component of the Council’s policy framework and supports development of the medium-term financial strategy and annual budget. Cabinet is recommended to approve the refreshed Our City: Our Plan to ensure the Council’s to have a strong strategic framework which reflects the needs of local people and ensures resources continue to be aligned to city priorities.

9.0 Financial implications

- 9.1 There are no direct financial implications to the plan itself although the actions outline projects and programmes that will have financial implications; these will be subject to individual reports as appropriate in line with financial procedure rules.
- 9.2 All costs associated with engagement and the preparation of the plan will be accommodated within existing budgets.
[LD/08012024/F]

10.0 Legal implications

- 10.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. The approval of the Council Plan is a function reserved to Council under the constitution and that includes a refresh of the Plan and as such Cabinet can make a recommendation but ultimately the decision must be taken by Council.
- 10.2 Legal Services will be engaged if and when required to advise should any legal matters arise from this report.
[RR/11012024/Q]

11.0 Equalities implications

11.1 Fair and Equal is one of the three cross cutting principles of the refreshed plan. All programmes and projects noted in the plan will also be subject to individual equalities analysis.

12.0 All other implications

12.1 Our City: Our Plan has implications across the Council, including climate change, Wolverhampton Pound, health, and wellbeing and digital which will continue to be considered and managed as part of the delivery of this plan.

12.2 Health and wellbeing is an important part of everyday life. It is integral to leading a happy and healthy lifestyle. Through its focus on these wider determinants the delivery of the Our City: Our Plan priorities recognises the role of the council in contributing to ensuring that our communities are stronger, healthier, and thriving places to live.

12.3 We will continue to contribute to the delivery of the council's climate change action plan to meet our commitment to be next carbon neutral as a Council by 2028, with regular progress reports to Cabinet.

12.4 The plan is aligned to the Digital Wolves strategy approved by Cabinet in March 2022, setting out how as a city and as a council we can harness the benefits of digital and technology for local people.

12.5 The performance framework for each thematic area of the plan will enable continued oversight of the indicators that underpin the central commitment to Wulfrunians living longer, healthier lives.

13.0 Schedule of background papers

13.1 N/A

14.0 Appendices

14.1 Appendix 1: Our City: Our Plan Document