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| Time | 5.00 pm | Public Meeting? | YES | Type of meeting | Executive |
| Venue | Committee Room 3, Third Floor - Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1SH | | | | |

Membership

| | |
|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Chair | Cllr Stephen Simkins (Lab) |
| Vice-Chair | Cllr Steve Evans (Lab) |

Labour

Cllr Obaida Ahmed
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Chris Burden
Cllr Craig Collingswood
Cllr Jacqui Coogan
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Louise Miles

Quorum for this meeting is three voting members.

Information for the Public

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

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Contact | Dereck Francis |
| Tel/Email | Tel: 01902 555835 or dereck.francis@wolverhampton.gov.uk |
| Address | Democratic Services, Civic Centre, 1st floor, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1RL |

Copies of other agendas and reports are available from:

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Website | http://wolverhampton.moderngov.co.uk |
| Email | democratic.services@wolverhampton.gov.uk |
| Tel | 01902 550320 |

Please take note of the protocol for filming, recording, and use of social media in meetings, copies of which are displayed in the meeting room.

Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential or commercial nature. These reports are not available to the public.

Agenda

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

MEETING BUSINESS ITEMS

- 1 **Apologies for absence**
- 2 **Declaration of interests**
- 3 **Minutes of the previous meeting** (Pages 3 - 10)
[For approval]

DECISION ITEMS (AMBER - DELEGATED TO THE CABINET)

- 4 **Canalside South - Land Transaction & Wolverhampton New Cross Hospital
Wednesfield Sustainable Transport Solutions** (Pages 11 - 24)
[To report the final commercial terms of the Sale Agreement]
- 5 **Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Annual Update (April 2023 -
March 2024)** (Pages 25 - 44)
[To receive the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Service Annual
Report]
- 6 **Exclusion of press and public**
[To pass the following resolution:

That in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business as it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information on the grounds shown below]

Part 2 - exempt items, closed to press and public

- | | | | |
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| 7 | Canalside South - Land Transaction & Wolverhampton New Cross Hospital Wednesfield Sustainable Transport Solutions (Pages 45 - 58) [To report the final commercial terms of the sale agreement] | Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) | (3) |
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| CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL | Meeting of the Cabinet Minutes - 20 March 2024 |
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Attendance

Members of the Cabinet

Cllr Stephen Simkins (Chair)
Cllr Steve Evans (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Paula Brookfield
Cllr Chris Burden
Cllr Craig Collingswood
Cllr Jacqui Coogan
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Jasbir Jaspal
Cllr Louise Miles

Employees

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Tim Johnson | Chief Executive |
| Ian Fegan | Director of City Economy and Partnerships |
| Alison Hinds | Director of Children's Services |
| James Howse | Director of Finance |
| Charlotte Johns | Executive Director of Economy |
| Richard Lawrence | Director of City Development |
| David Pattison | Chief Operating Officer |
| John Roseblade | Director of Resident Services |
| Andrew Wolverson | Director of Adult Social Care (DASS) |
| Jaswinder Kaur | Democratic Services and Systems Manager |
| Dereck Francis | Democratic Services Officer |

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Apologies for absence Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Obaida Ahmed. |
| 2 | Declaration of interests No declarations of interests were made. |
| 3 | Minutes of the previous meeting Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21 February 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. |

4 **Pay Policy Statement 2024 - 2025**

Councillor Paula Brookfield presented the Council's Pay Policy Statement 2024-2025 for recommendation to Full Council for approval and publication in line with requirements of the Localism Act 2011. The Pay Policy Statement included data confirming the relationship between the remuneration of the Council's chief officers and the remuneration of employees who are not chief officers. The Council's pay ratio in 2023-2024 was 8:1, down from 8.5:1 in 2022-2023 and from 9.35:1 in 2018-2019. This compared favourably with the Council's neighbouring authorities. Councillor Brookfield also reported that having delivered senior management budget reductions of £2.8 million in the last 10 years, and following a review of the Council's strategic capacity to ensure that it had sufficient resources to deliver current services to residents as well as to deliver future ambitions, goals set out in the Vision 2030 and the Council's Our City: Our Plan, four additional deputy director posts had been included in the Pay Policy Statement for approval by Full Council.

Resolved:

That Council be recommended to approve:

1. The Pay Policy Statement for 2024-2025.
2. The publication of the Pay Policy Statement in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.
3. The additional Deputy Director posts detailed within the report and listed in Appendix 4 to the report.

That Council be recommended to note:

1. That the national pay award for 2024-2025 had not been agreed, at the time of writing the Pay Policy Statement.

That Cabinet approve:

1. The virement of £127,000 from non pay budgets held in Public Health Business Management to fund the Deputy Director of Public Health post.

5 **Gender Pay Gap Report 2023**

Councillor Paula Brookfield asked Cabinet to note the Gender Pay Gap Report 2023. The Report met a statutory requirement on public sector employers to produce and publish a snapshot of various figures to demonstrate how large the gender pay gap is between their male and female employees. Councillor Brookfield highlighted that the Council's mean gender pay gap for 31 March 2023 was 2.99% down from 4% on 31 March 2022. Demographic changes in each quartile had made a difference to the Council's medium pay gap, where female employees from certain levels had left the employment of the Council and men were appointed into the vacant roles. Cabinet was also asked to note the actions taken by the Council to improve equality, diversity and inclusion within the workplace.

Resolved:

1. That it be noted that the content of the Gender Pay Gap is as of the snapshot date of 31 March 2023.
2. That it be noted that the median gender pay gap for 31 March 2023 is 6.51% and the mean gender pay gap is 2.99%.

3. That it be noted that the difference in comparison to March 2022 data – the median gender pay gap was 1.18% and the mean gender pay gap was 4.00%.
4. That the proportion of men and women in each quartile in our pay structure as of 31 March 2023 be noted.
5. That the actions the Council continues to take to improve equality, diversity and inclusion within the workplace (pages 16-20 of Appendix 1 to the report) be noted.
6. That it be noted that the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) regulations 2017 only require organisations to report on the gender pay gap. In addition to this, the Council would report on the ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation pay gaps. These reports are currently in development.

6 **Performance and Budget Monitoring 2023-2024**

Councillor Louise Miles reported on the salient points from the Performance and Budget Monitoring 2023-2024 report. In doing so she was pleased to report that both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account projected outturn for 2023-2024 are forecast to be within budget. This reflected the careful management of the Council's finances. Cabinet was asked to approve the recommendations for decision contained within the report. These concerned: the use of reserves for various earmarked purposes; virements for transfers within directorates; write-off of debts in accordance with Council policy; and the Strategic Risk Register, which showed the Council's careful and proactive management of risk.

Resolved:

1. That it be noted that the General Fund projected outturn for 2023-2024 is currently forecast to be within budget.
2. That it be noted that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for 2023-2024 Housing Revenue Account is currently forecast to be within budget.
3. That it be noted that the interim Director of Finance has approved write-off of debts against the expected credit loss provision as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report.
4. That it be noted that it is anticipated that the cost of redundancies can be met from reserves.
5. That the Strategic Risk Register shown at Appendix 6 to the report be approved.
6. That the use of £40,070 from the Elections Reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.6 of the report and establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.
7. That the use of £300,000 from the Insurance Fund Reserve as detailed in paragraph 8.7 of the report and establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.

8. That the use of £20,000 from the Sustainable Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Reserve to fund feasibility study and specialist external advice to explore the opportunities available for using Aldersley Leisure Centre for major events as detailed in paragraph 8.8 of the report and establishment of associated supplementary budgets be approved.
9. That the use of £100,000 from the Building Control reserve to mitigate reduction in income within City Planning as detailed in paragraph 8.9 of the report be approved.
10. That 14 virements totalling £2.8 million on the General Fund, for transfers within directorates, as detailed in Appendix 8 to the report be approved.
11. That the delegation to the Interim Director of Finance to approve essential virements in relation to recharges and year end process, as detailed in section 10 of the report be approved.
12. That the write-off of debts against the expected credit loss provision as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report be approved.
13. That the General Fund Budget Risks 2023-2024 register as detailed in Appendix 7 to the report be approved.
14. That the establishment of supplementary budgets within 2023-2024 as detailed in Section 7 of the report be approved.

7 **Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027**

Councillor Jacqui Coogan presented a refreshed Wolverhampton SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027 for endorsement. The Strategy enables the Local Authority to fulfil its statutory duties to secure a continuum of provision and support with partners for pupils aged 0-25 with SEND and those with potential unmet SEND or social educational needs. It is based on a shared understanding that supporting the needs of children, young people and young adults regarding SEND and inclusion is everyone's business. A wider focus around inclusion had been incorporated into the Strategy enabling children and young people to have their needs met at the earliest point and where possible within local settings.

Resolved:

1. That the SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2027 and strategic priorities as set out in the report and in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.
2. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Education, in consultation with the Director of Children's Services, to review and amend the strategic priorities as required during the period of the Strategy.

8 **Major Investment in Our City's Strategic Transport Infrastructure**

Councillor Craig Collingswood presented the report that outlined ambitious long term plans to invest in Wolverhampton's transport offer to residents, businesses and visitors. The report identified planned work over the 2024-2025 financial year to develop and deliver over £145 million of potential improvements for the city to be delivered across the next ten years. The extensive programme of development and

delivery for 2024-2025 would be resource entirely from secured external funds. The report also included approvals to continue design work, consult on plans, advertise relevant Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and to enter into delivery, where appropriate. As host authority for Black Country Transport, City of Wolverhampton Council was also enabling effective, efficient and collaborative working across transport for the four Black Country authorities. The report detailed the financial position to support those activities.

Resolved:

1. That the list of projects for Wolverhampton Strategic Transport and Black Country Transport development and implementation as part of the Transportation Capital Programme 2024-2025 and future years, as set out in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report be approved.
2. That the Head of Strategic Transport be authorised to proceed with development work for each project detailed in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report including surveying, site investigation, options appraisal. Feasibility analysis, traffic modelling, detailed design, statutory advertising and public consultation, as appropriate.
3. That capital and revenue budgets for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 as set out in section 6.2 of the report be approved subject to the confirmation of funding. Approve entering into grant agreements for those named projects for approval.
4. That revenue development schemes in section 6.5 of the report to be funded as part of the approved revenue budgets for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 and transfer the relevant grant to Walsall Council for development work they have undertaken be approved.
5. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance to approve the implementation of any development and delivery works on projects in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report subject to the satisfactory outcome of public consultation, budget approval and any other relevant considerations.
6. That authority be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance to approve appropriate virements between existing approved budgets within the transport capital programme, maximising use of resources.
7. That the Chief Operating Officer be authorised to serve all necessary notices in respect of the projects listed in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report and, subject to there being no unresolved objections, to make traffic regulation orders as required.
8. That the Black Country Director of Transport be authorised to enter into funding agreements with Black Country Authorities to passport Black Country Transport scheme funding in accordance with the approved collaboration agreement.

9. That it be noted that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services, Director of Finance and Chief Operating Officer would approve any new supplementary capital and revenue budgets for any projects from Appendices 2 and 3 to the report, fully funded through either external resources or reserves, in accordance with supplementary budget procedures.
10. That the inclusion of revenue funding as part of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) Development Funding package, Capacity Funding and Capability and Ambition Fund (CAF) to support the development of the programme and the wider Black Country Transport Programme be noted. The projected revenue outturn for 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 and that this would be subject to ongoing review be noted.
11. That it be noted that the Head of Strategic Transport and Black Country Director of Transport would make applications and bids for additional external funding and that agreement ahead of submission would be obtained from the Director of Finance and appropriate governance would be followed to amend budgets on receipt of such funding.
12. That it be noted that the Director of Finance would approve the Council entering into funding agreements with the various funding bodies to receive both capital and revenue grant funding in respect of the delivery of projects included in the report including the development of schemes and management of the Black Country Transport Programme.
13. That it be noted that the Black Country Transport and Wolverhampton Major Transport Investment Programme is complementary and aligns with the work of the Highways Capital Programme Report that it also scheduled to be considered by Cabinet on 20 March 2024. The inclusion of £100,000 of Advanced Design budget in the Highways Report for the development of schemes included in this programme also be noted.

9

Investing to Improve Our City's Roads in 2024-2025

Councillor Craig Collingswood presented, for approval, the report on a programme of capital projects to develop and maintain the City of Wolverhampton highway network for the financial year 2024-2025, subject to available resources and annual review. Referring to the general condition of roads, Councillor Collingswood reported that the issue of potholes was not unique to Wolverhampton, it is a nationwide problem. However, in the last year over 13.8 kilometres of carriageway benefited from surface treatment in Wolverhampton and 4.5 kilometres of carriageway was fully resurfaced. Councillor Collingswood went on to highlight other notable schemes delivered during 2023-2024 including: six Road Safety and Safer Routes to School projects; the continued upgrade of street lights to LED; piloting smart photocells installed on streetlights to support remote lighting level control; expansion of the Wolverhampton CCTV network; further rollouts of electronic driver information signs which support the introduction of a new car park guidance system for Civic quarter car parks; and the trialling of other technologies through the Local Network Improvement Plan.

Resolved:

1. That the list of projects for development and implementation as part of the Highway Capital Programme 2024-2025, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report be approved.

2. That the Head of Network Management be authorised to proceed with development work for each project detailed in Appendix 3 to the report including surveying, site investigation, options appraisal, feasibility analysis, traffic modelling, detailed design, statutory advertising, and public consultation, as appropriate.
3. That capital budgets for 2024-2025 for the projects marked 'Approve' in the 'Decision' column of Appendix 3 to the report be approved for implementation, subject to the confirmation of funding.
4. That the virement of existing approved budgets for 2024-2025 totalling £105,000 within the Highway Capital Programme to other projects as per table 3.4 in the report be approved.
5. That the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance be authorised to approve the implementation of any development work on projects detailed in Appendix 3 to the report subject to the satisfactory outcome of public consultation, budget approval and any other relevant considerations.
6. That the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance be authorised to approve the implementation of any delivery works not exceeding £1.0 million on projects covered in Appendix 3 to the report subject to the satisfactory outcome of public consultation, budget approval and any other relevant considerations.
7. That the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance be authorised to approve appropriate virements between existing approved budgets within the highway capital programme, maximising use of resources.
8. That the Chief Operating Officer be authorised to serve all necessary notices in respect of the projects listed in Appendix 3 to the report and, subject to there being no unresolved objections, make traffic regulation orders as required.
9. That the expenditure and progress made in delivering £30.9 million worth of projects in the Transportation Capital programme during 2020-2021, 2021-2022, 2022-2023 and forecast in 2023-24 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be noted.
10. That the Council's continuing success in bidding for additional funding and delivering new projects through the West Midlands Combined Authority be noted.

11. That it be noted that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services, Director of Finance and Chief Operating Officer would approve any new supplementary capital and revenue budgets for any projects from Appendix 3 to the report, fully funded through either external resources or reserves, in accordance with supplementary budget procedures.
12. That it be noted that the Head of Network Management would make applications and bids for additional external funding noting that agreement ahead of submission would be obtained from the Director of Finance and appropriate governance would be followed to amend budgets on receipt of such funding.
13. That it be noted that the Director of Finance would approve the Council entering into funding agreements with the various funding bodies to receive both capital and revenue grant funding in respect of the delivery of projects included in the report.
14. That it be noted that this Highways Capital Programme Report is complementary and aligns with the work of the Black Country Transport and Wolverhampton Major Transport Investment Programme that it also seeking approval at the 20 March 2024 Cabinet meeting.

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| CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL | Cabinet 24 April 2024 |
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| Report title | Canalside South - Land Transaction & Wolverhampton to New Cross Hospital Wednesfield Sustainable Transport Solutions | |
| Decision designation | AMBER | |
| Cabinet member with lead responsibility | Councillor Stephen Simkins Leader of the Council | |
| Key decision | Yes | |
| In forward plan | Yes | |
| Wards affected | Heath Town | |
| Accountable Director | Richard Lawrence, Director of City Development | |
| Originating service | City Development | |
| Accountable employee | Claire Prince Tel Email | Regeneration Officer 07392 137573 Claire.Prince@wolverhampton.gov.uk |
| Report to be/has been considered by | Directorate Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board Leaders Briefing | 5 February 2024 19 March 2024 25 March 2024 |

Recommendations for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve entering into the legal agreements and any associated ancillary documents to give effect to the disposal and development.
2. Ratify the Council's decision to enter into an extended exclusivity period with the development partner.
3. Delegate authority to the Leader of the Council in consultation with Director of City Development and Chief Operating Officer to finalise and execute any other necessary legal agreements to facilitate completion of the land transaction.

Recommendation for noting:

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. The intention for City of Wolverhampton Council and Transport for West Midlands to undertake further development work to identify alternative alignments for public transport improvements for the A4124 Wednesfield Road Corridor, facilitating a change to the reserved Metro alignment.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the sale of the Council's land holdings at Canalside South to Wavensmere. The report provides an overview of the agreed terms of the sale agreement and proposed scheme.

2.0 Background

2.1 The main site owners, which include the Council and the Canal & River Trust (CRT), have come together to form a partnership to bring forward the development of Canalside South which reflects the need for comprehensive regeneration across ownerships to drive placemaking principles and associated residential values. Collectively the partners have assembled a 17.5-acre development opportunity which positions Canalside South as one of the most significant city centre residential opportunities in the region.

2.2 On 26 July 2023, Cabinet approved the selection of Wavensmere as the preferred developer for the Canalside South scheme following the initial preferred developer Legal and General Modular Homes ceasing production of modular homes in May 2023.

2.3 Following agreement of the Heads of Terms, the Council and Canal and River Trust entered into a two month exclusivity agreement period with the Developer on 4 December 2023 (with provision to extend if required). However, it was necessary to extend the exclusivity beyond this date. The current exclusivity period expires on the 12 April 2024 with the intention to extend this by a further two weeks.

3.0 Transaction Details

3.1 The terms of the proposed agreement herein have been agreed by all parties:

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| | Subject | Canalside South, Qualcast Road, Wolverhampton |
| 1 | Landlords | City of Wolverhampton Council Canal & River Trading CIC |
| 2 | Purchaser | Wavensmere B4 Limited |
| 3 | Property | Land and Buildings know as Canalside South, Qualcast Road, Wolverhampton extending to approximately 17.54 acres as detailed in Appendix 1 The property comprises two ownerships as delineated in Appendix 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Landlord 1 freehold ownership is identified edged green and• Landlord 2 freehold ownership is identified as edged red. |

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| 4 | Lease terms | <p>Long leasehold interest of 250 Years commencing on completion of the contract.</p> <p>Freehold interest to be transferred to the Purchaser inline with completion of construction phases.</p> |
| 5 | Development | <p>Total 524 homes to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21% affordable housing provision on site as shared ownership • 384, 2 and 3 bed houses • 140, 1 and 2 bed apartments • All homes will have a target A EPC • All houses to be solely headed via Air Source heat pumps. • PV panels on all available roof space • Provision of c.4.4 acres of public Open Space <p>(subject to planning and detailed design)</p> |
| 6 | Purchase Price | <p>£X</p> <p>A non-refundable deposit of 10% will be payable by the Purchaser on exchange of sale contract.</p> <p>The Purchase Price will be apportioned between the Landlords.</p> |
| 7 | Conditions | <p>Completion of the contract is conditional on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Full implementable planning permission for a residential development in accordance with the scheme approved by the Landlord(s) ii) The grant of either a stopping up or traffic regulation order in relation to section of Qualcast Road that is located within the Site). |

4.0 Exclusivity Period

4.1 The Council and Canal and River Trust entered into an exclusivity agreement with the developer on 4 December 2023.

- 4.2 Key activities during the Exclusivity Agreement period are the conclusion of legal agreements (agreement for sale and lease, building lease, option agreement any ancillary agreements) and progression of detailed design towards a planning application submission.
- 4.3 The Council has in place its in-house legal team and external legal (Pinsent Masons) together with commercial (Avison Young) support (working closely with in-house teams) to provide advice to enable the conclusion of these activities.
- 4.4 Significant progress has been on drafting of the legal agreements although the parties agreed that additional time was required to conclude negotiation of third-party land and connective with the railway arches. As such the Council and Canal and River Trust agreed to exercise the extension provision within the agreement, taking the expiry date to 12 April 2024. With a further agreement to extend by two weeks.
- 4.5 As per the heads of terms and approval of the recommendations the parties will seek to agree and exchange a form of conditional agreements prior to the expiry of the exclusivity period. The transaction will complete at the point that a satisfactory planning application has been achieved.

5.0 Wolverhampton to New Cross Hospital Wednesfield Sustainable Transport Solutions

- 5.1 Public Transport connectivity through the Heath Town area and into New Cross Hospital and Wednesfield is a well-established priority for the city, with a reserved future Metro alignment identified along the corridor. This proposed alignment falls within the Interchange and Canalside priority development areas and is a potentially significant constraint to the future opportunities within these sites.
- 5.2 Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) have undertaken a feasibility study to explore the deliverability of the proposed alignment for future Metro, considering physical buildability of the scheme and the likely high-level costs, risks and issues, to inform a future recommendation for the Metro proposals. The outcome of the work suggests that the current alignment shown through the Interchange and Canalside area (see appendix 3) would not be deliverable, without excessive costs and impacts.
- 5.3 As a result further work is recommended to i) formally discount the current reserved metro alignment including removal from appropriate strategy / policy document(s) and ii) consider alternative opportunities to deliver a high-quality sustainable transport offer for this priority corridor.

5.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 5.1 The alternative option is not to proceed with the sale though this is not recommended as the landowning partner have been through an extensive marketing and bid evaluation process to select an experienced and ambitious developer to deliver a scheme that responds to the regeneration aims of the partners and the city.

6.0 Reasons for decision(s)

- 6.1 Not proceeding with the sale would result in a missed opportunity to; deliver a significant number of new homes for the city and make use of interest from the developer market to build and invest in Wolverhampton. Furthermore it is likely that the sites will not come forward for development independently meaning that both landowners would be required to find alternative meanwhile uses for their vacant sites or continue to hold the assets as void sites. It should be noted that to continue to hold a void asset of this scale over the short or medium term would require a significant revenue budget.

7.0 Financial implications

- 7.1 A land receipt of £X has been agreed. The receipt will be apportioned between the landowners reflecting a pro rata approach to quantum of land ownership. A 10% non-refundable deposit is due on exchange of contract, this will be held by Pinsent Masons. The deposit together with the balance of the Completion Monies will then be released to CWC and CRT in the relevant proportions following completion- anticipated Q4 2024/2025.
- 7.2 The Council will receive a capital receipt of £X for the site. This is not yet assumed in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and so will be considered in future planning of the Council's budget strategy.
[DW/14032024/P]

8.0 Legal implications

- 8.1 As detailed in the body of the report, the Council entered into an exclusivity agreement with Canal and River Trust and Wavensmere. During this period the parties have worked diligently to draft the agreement for sale and lease, building lease, option agreements and ancillary legal documents. The substantive legal work has been achieved although there is further legal work related to land in third party ownership and connectivity with the railway arches. Consequently, the Council and Canal and River Trust agreed to extensions of an existing Exclusivity Agreement. The current Exclusivity Agreement expires on 12 April 2024, with agreement of a further two-week extension It states that Wavensmere will contribute a maximum of £X towards legal costs. The contribution will be split equally between the Council and the Canal and River Trust. It should be noted that if either the Council or the Canal and River Trust withdraws from the transaction, Wavensmere is no longer liable for these costs.
- 8.2 Pursuant to Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 ('the Act') the Council may dispose of land held by it in any manner it wishes, subject to certain caveats. Under that Act, the Council also has a statutory duty to ensure that the Council does not dispose of land for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained. The Council carried out an open market exercise and commissioned its commercial advisors to prepare a Marketing Completion and Sales Recommendation report.

- 8.3 The Council will be obliged to provide the site with Vacant Possession and free from encumbrances with all future liability and insurances for the land and property (in the sales demise). It may be the case that there are some title anomalies that will need to be addressed ahead of any disposals.
- 8.4 Subject to approval of the recommendation in this report, the Council will enter into a conditional Agreement for Sale and Lease with Wavensmere. There are two conditions relating to planning and traffic regulation order of Qualcast Road. In addition to this, there are ongoing discussions with Network Rail in regards to use of the railway arches for commercial use. The conditional Agreement for Sale and Lease with Wavensmere places an obligation on the landowners (both Council and Canals and Rivers Trust) to use all reasonable endeavours to secure agreement to a lease with Network Rail to use the arches for their intended commercial use. The outcome of such is subject to further negotiations and agreement with all parties. Upon these conditions being satisfied the Council and Canal and River Trust will grant Wavensmere a long leasehold interest of 250 years in relation to their respective landholding in the site. This will enable Wavensmere to commence construction works. The transfer of the freehold interest will occur once each construction phase is complete.
- 8.5 As part of the transaction the parties will enter into an option agreement whereby the Council will have the option to re-acquire all or part of its former landholding and Canal and River Trust's former landholdings in the event that Wavensmere seeks to assign or underlet its interest in the building lease other than in accordance with the terms of the building lease and/or without prior approval of the Council and Canal and River Trust either submits an application to vary the existing planning permission or alter the development so as to materially change the development.
- 8.6 The Council has appointed an external law firm, which has to date provided advice relating to the property, procurement and governance structure of the transaction. The Council's Legal Services will continue to provide legal advice and support throughout this transaction.
[JA/14032024/D]

9.0 Equalities implications

- 9.1 The City Centre Area Action Plan has been informed by an Equality Analysis which assessed the potential effects of the policies on different types of people.
- 9.2 An initial Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken. Engagement with the Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion team will continue to ensure that on this initiative pays due regard to the three aims of the Equality Duty.

10.0 All other implications

- 10.1 The Council will continue to hold the vacant Former British Steel site as part of its portfolio of void properties until the site is drawn down by the Developer- anticipated Q4 2024/2025.

11.0 Schedule of background papers

11.1 Cabinet – 28 July 2021 - [Canalside South- Delivery Strategy update](#)

11.2 IEDN – 18 October 2021 - [Canalside South- Marketing Update](#)

11.3 IEDN – 21 September 2022 – [Canalside South – Selection of Preferred Development Partner](#)

11.4 Cabinet - 26 July 2023 - [Canalside South – Selection of Preferred Developer](#)

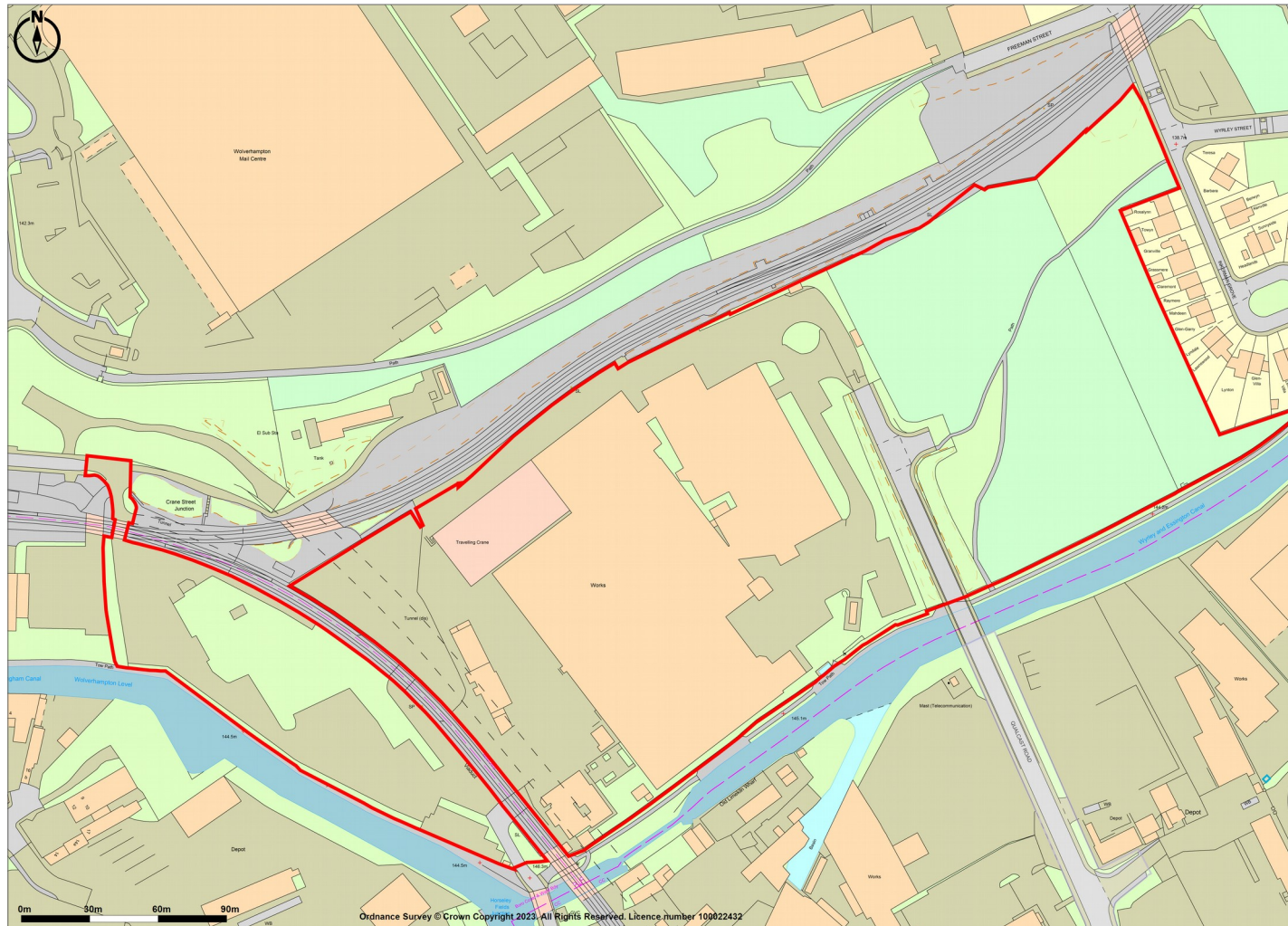
12.0 Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1: Site plan

12.2 Appendix 2: Land ownership plan

12.3 Appendix 3: Proposed Metro extension route to Wednesfield

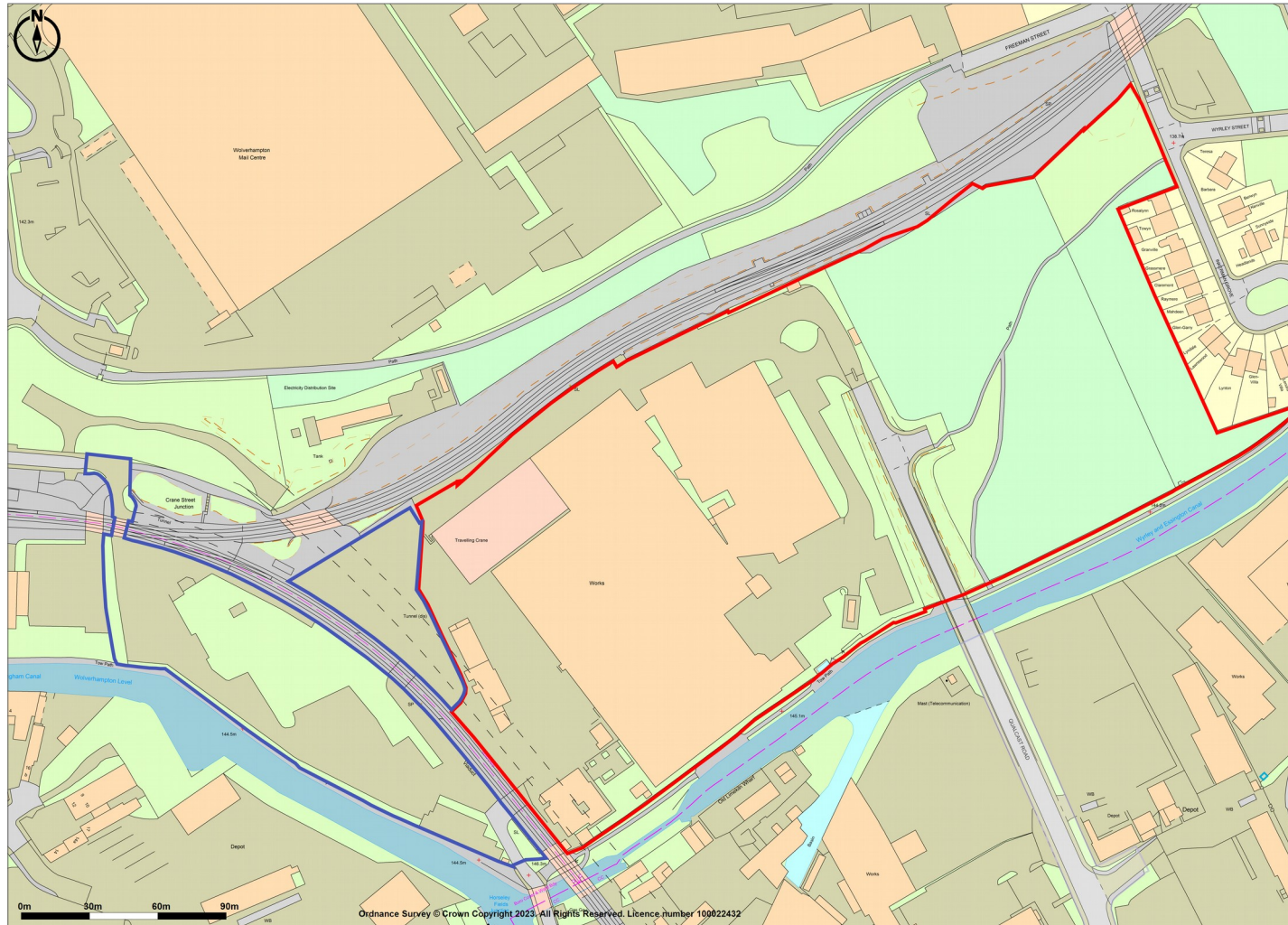
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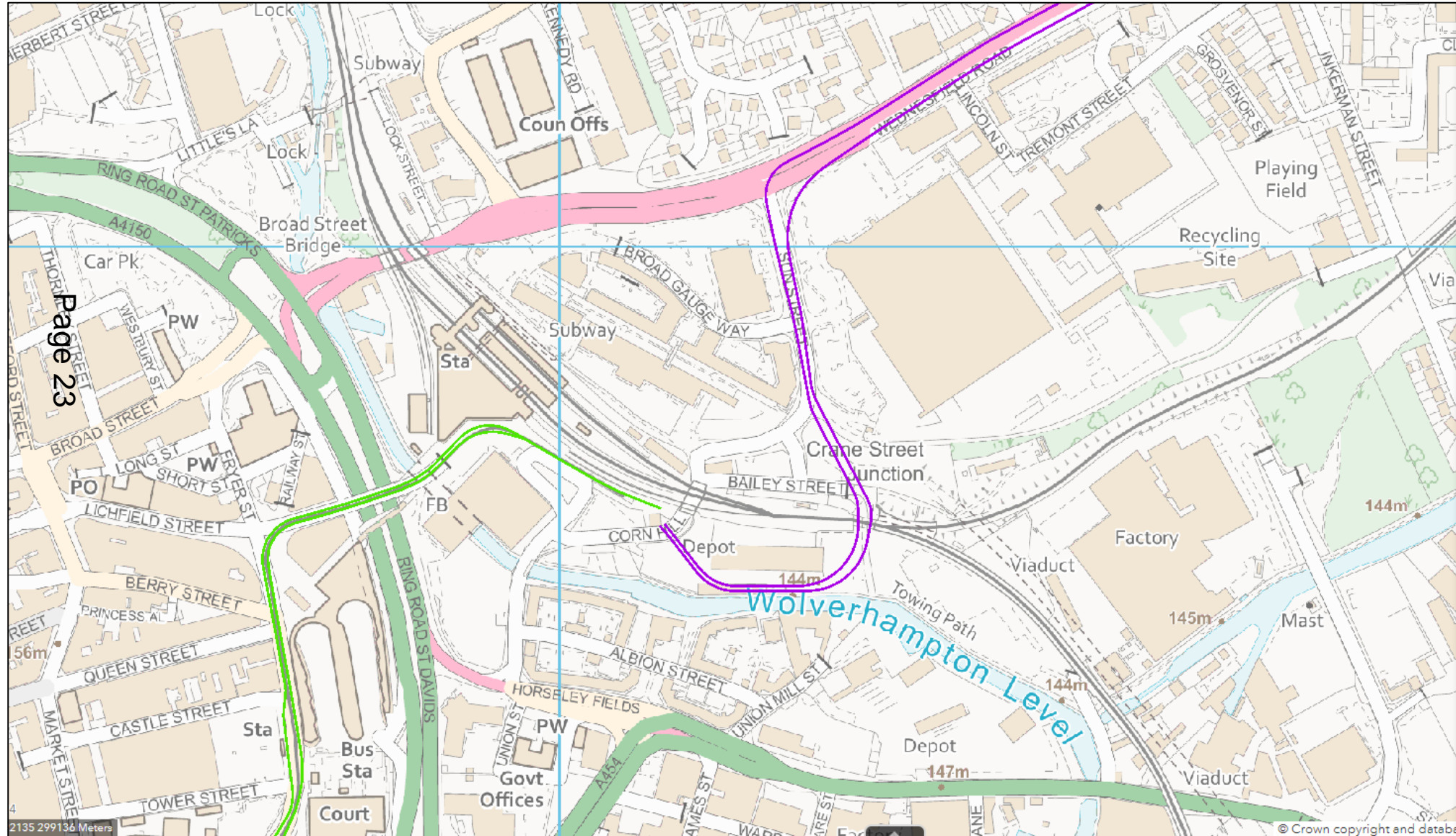
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Proposed Metro extension route to Wednesfield



- Key**
- Existing Metro line terminating at Wolverhampton Railway Station
 - Proposed metro extension to Wednesfield

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| CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL | Cabinet 24 April 2024 |
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|--|--|--|
| Report title | Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Annual Update (April 2023-March 2024) | |
| Decision designation | AMBER | |
| Cabinet member with lead responsibility | Councillor Paula Brookfield Governance and Equalities | |
| Key decision | No | |
| In forward plan | No | |
| Wards affected | All Wards | |
| Accountable Director | David Pattison, Chief Operating Officer | |
| Originating service | Emergency Planning and Business Continuity | |
| Accountable employee | Chelsea Sibley | Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Manager |
| | Tel | 01902 554362 |
| | Email | Chelsea.sibley@wolverhampton.gov.uk |
| Report to be/has been considered by | Strategic Executive Board | 9 April 2024 |
| | Scrutiny Board | 16 April 2024 |

Recommendation for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Agree the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Annual Report (April 2023 - March 2024) and the ongoing work of the team in continued improvement of the service.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To update members on the recent activity and progress in development of the Council's Emergency Planning and Business Continuity service over the past 12 months, particularly on its work to ensure that the City of Wolverhampton Council meets its statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 ("the Act").

2.0 Background

- 2.1 This update will provide assurances to members around the work of the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team to prepare the Council for response to a major incident or emergency.

- 2.2 The City of Wolverhampton Council has statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, which identifies it as a Category 1 Core Responder. This categorisation requires the Council to meet the following statutory duties:

- To assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning.
- To put in place emergency plans.
- To put in place business continuity management arrangements.
- To put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency.
- To share information with other local responders to enhance coordination.
- To cooperate with other local responders to enhance coordination and efficiency.
- To provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.

3.0 Overview

- 3.1 The management of the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity service in the Council is assessed by officers as being good, following substantial progress to improve our arrangements made in 2023 as part of our continuous improvement drive. In particular, our response to emergencies and the ability to learn lessons has been improved. Employees engaged in providing the response have received a significant amount of upskilling development, along with training and information on adopting and embedding effective processes.
- 3.2 Ensuring that the city's businesses and communities are able to be more resilient in their own right remains a priority area of focus and whilst the level of resilience has improved, it is acknowledged that there is more work to do in this area.

4.0 Service objectives

- 4.1 The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team work to ensure that the authority is meeting its obligations under the Act, outlined above, as well as working under the direction and scrutiny of the Council's Resilience Board to deliver the necessary assurances required. The Resilience Board is chaired by the Chief Operating Officer.
- 4.2 The service works towards ensuring all levels of management across the organisation are aware of and embed emergency and continuity management policies and procedures into their strategic and operational plans, major projects, and partnership working arrangements.
- 4.3 A summary of the service's key objectives are to:
- Ensure the authority are meeting its obligations under the Act.
 - Develop, test and improve on capabilities in place for incident preparedness, response and recovery.
 - Train and prepare council responders for incident response activity in the event of an emergency.
 - Work collaboratively alongside other local partners and responding agencies to build an increasingly resilient environment to improve on response capabilities for the city.
 - Successfully embed the corporate business continuity programme across the organisation.
 - Make available advice to both local businesses and voluntary sector organisations across the city on business continuity.
- 4.4 As a business-critical service, the team have a far-reaching remit supporting residents and the city's business community who sit at the heart of what we do; whether that be developing plans and putting in place arrangements in preparation to support residents and business when needed, or ensuring that the Council has the ability to maintain critical service delivery despite any disruption that may arise.
- 4.5 As part of the development of emergency planning and business continuity arrangements, it is key to design and deliver exercises to 'test' the response plans and capabilities – both within the Council and alongside partner agencies. These tests will be debriefed in the same way an incident would be, to identify future improvement required.
- 4.6 Moreover, work is underway to provide an innovative programme of action for advice and support to local businesses, community groups and the voluntary sector, in order to develop and establish greater resilience (including self-reliance) within Wolverhampton communities themselves.

5.0 Annual Report

- 5.1 Commencing this year, the service will provide an annual update on the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity service activity. The purpose of which is to provide assurances on the Teams progress in continually improving service arrangements.
- 5.2 The report provides members with an overview of incident related calls received over the past 12 months, in addition to the training and exercising undertaken (both delivered and participated in). A key emphasis is on the service's priority to take every opportunity to learn from those actual, or mock, incidents; utilising a Recommendations Register to record identified learning and to monitor progress.
- 5.3 Demonstrated within the document is the multitude of workstreams that the service either leads with or engages with; both in a multi-agency setting with emergency services and other key partners, and internally across service directorates.
- 5.4 A significant amount of improvement has been made over the last 12 months, despite changes in the team. The transfer of the team into the Governance Directorate in November 2022 provided an opportunity to refresh and review the approach to Emergency Planning and Business Continuity and build on past achievements and strengths to drive and embed further improvements.
- 5.5 Since the Covid pandemic there has been a need to refresh and review the work of the Resilience Board. The meetings of the Board are now well attended, and the attendees held to account to ensure agreed actions are implemented effectively and in a timely manner. Such rigour is essential to ensuring we continue to deliver tangible, progressive improvements in both our Emergency Planning and Business Continuity approach and arrangements. This Board is a key means of providing assurance on the governance arrangements relating to emergency planning and business continuity and ensuring improvement are delivered effectively and at pace.
- 5.6 Commitment to the emergency planning and business continuity agenda cannot be solely the responsibility of the team. In order to be effective, the team needs to be visible throughout the organisation and at all levels. The team has specifically adopted an outreach approach which has significantly increased its direct engagement and involvement with the senior executive team and also all leadership teams across the council over the last 12 months. This has increased the number of requests for service support coming into the team, which serves as an important indicator of the approach having the desired effect across the Council.
- 5.7 Over the next 12 months, the team will continue to look to ensure that wider services have greater awareness of the Council's role in emergency preparedness and response, and how their roles contribute to this. This will involve delivering training opportunities rolled out to build resilience across the organisation from the bottom up.

- 5.8 Another key area for focus next year will be embedding of the business continuity programme across all council services to increase our ability to respond to and recover from known and foreseeable interruptions to the usual service delivery.
- 5.9 Our business continuity responsibilities relate to our neighbourhoods, communities and business as well. This already identified as an area for improvement will help further fulfil our responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act. We will look to prepare a plan of engagement with this sector to boost our city's resilience.
- 5.10 Finally, the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity service has made notable progress in the last year in ensuring the Council and our communities are prepared. We have made significant progress, and acknowledge there is still much to be done, and enter the next year, confident of our plans and approach to continue to deliver to these needs and demands.

6.0 Evaluation of alternative options

- 6.1 The option to do nothing and continue without recognition or discussion of emergency planning and business continuity would present an obvious failure of the organisation to adequately consider, address and plan for organisational resilience. With significant major incidents occurring across the UK in recent years, this would present a failed opportunity for the organisation to demonstrate its commitment to boosting and strengthening local response and contingency arrangements to prepare for likewise events.

7.0 Reasons for decision(s)

- 7.1 The decision to agree the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Annual Report is recommended to enable the Authority to demonstrate its commitment to developing local response and contingency arrangements, in addition to enabling opportunity for wider consideration to ongoing activity of the service to improve and strengthen organisational and city resilience

8.0 Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no direct financial implications from the recommendations of this report.
- 8.2 During the 2023-2024 financial year the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity service have had no instances of unplanned spend with regards to responding to emergencies or callouts.
[LDW/12022024/E]

9.0 Legal implications

- 9.1 As there are no decisions to be made, there are no associated legal implications with regard to this service update. The update intends to provide assurances of ongoing council activity to meet its statutory obligations under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 which it continues to meet.
[DP/15042024]

10.0 Equalities implications

10.1 Although no decision is being requested as part of this service update, it is important to note that equalities implications are an important aspect when developing city response plans. The Team over the past year have sought out involvement with the Council's variety of Equality Forums to increase awareness of ongoing concerns and considerations, with intention to have a team representative at each Board meeting. Equalities implications arising through the operational implementation of emergency planning and business continuity procedures are included as part of operational delivery.

11.0 All other implications

11.1 There are no further implications for Cabinet to consider in relation to this service update report.

12.0 Schedule of background papers

12.1 There are no additional background papers.

13.0 Appendices

13.1 Appendix 1 : Annual Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Report - 2024

City of Wolverhampton Council
Annual Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Service Report
April 2024

1.0 Purpose of the report

1.1 To update members on the recent activity and progress in development of the Council's Emergency Planning and Business Continuity service over the past 12 months, particularly on its work to ensure that the City of Wolverhampton Council meets its statutory duties under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 ("the Act").

2.0 Introduction and background

2.1 This report will focus on providing assurances to members around the work of the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team to prepare the City Council for response to a major incident or emergency.

2.2 Overall responsibility for meeting the duties of the Act remains strategically with the Chief Executive, with delegated responsibility for the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity function now sitting with the Chief Operating Officer.

2.3 Since October 2022, the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team have sat operationally within the Governance Directorate, reporting into the Head of Service – Health and Safety, Emergency Planning and Business Continuity, following its move from the Public Health Directorate. The team specialise in emergency planning, preparedness, and response, as well as in the practice of business continuity management.

2.4 The Act, identifies the City of Wolverhampton Council as a Category 1 Core Responder. This categorisation requires the Council to meet the following statutory duties:

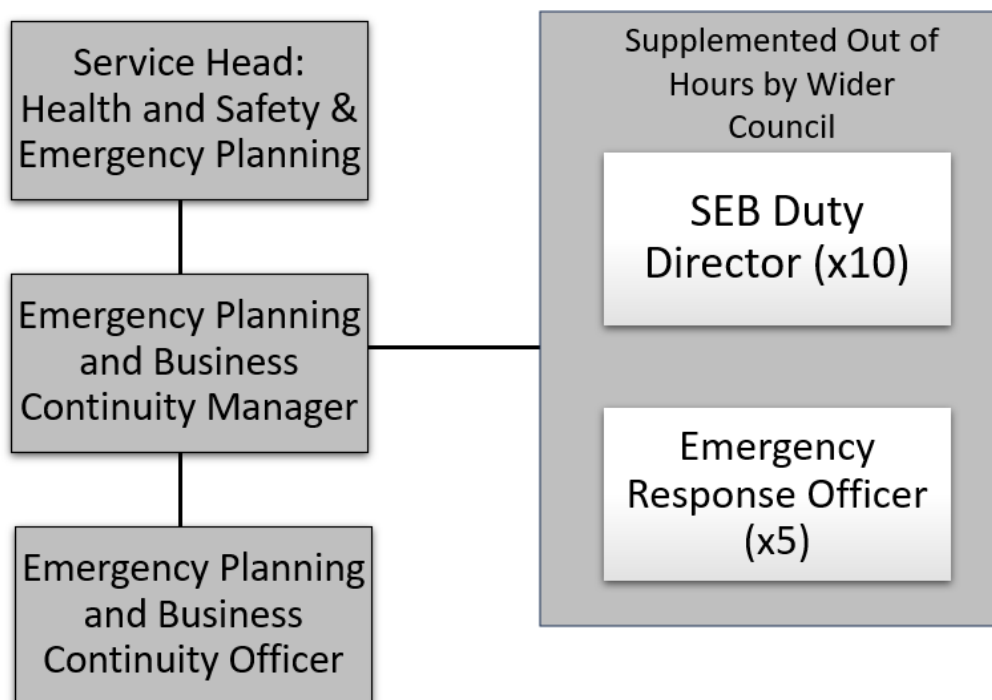
- To assess the risk of emergencies occurring and use this to inform contingency planning.
- To put in place emergency plans.
- To put in place business continuity management arrangements.
- To put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency.
- To share information with other local responders to enhance coordination.
- To cooperate with other local responders to enhance coordination and efficiency.
- To provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 In summary, the management of the emergency planning and business continuity service in the Council is assessed by officers as being good, following substantial progress to improve our arrangements having been made in 2023 as part of our continuous improvement drive. In particular, our response to emergencies and the ability to learn lessons has been improved. Employees engaged in providing the response have received a significant amount of upskilling development, along with training and information on adopting and embedding effective processes.
- 3.2 Ensuring that the City's business and communities are able to be more resilient in their own right remains a priority area of focus and whilst the level of resilience has improved, it is acknowledged that there is more work to do in this area.

4.0 The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity team

- 4.1 The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team consists of an Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Manager and an Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer. Both of which report into the Head of Service for Health, Safety and Emergency Planning.



- 4.2 The team have gone through some recent staffing changes. Significantly the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Manager resigned in August 2023, immediately reducing the 'personnel' in the team by 50%. The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Officer postholder applied for and was appointed to the manager's role on a secondment basis, however this has resulted in the postholder's substantive post becoming vacant.

Recruitment to the manager post is currently underway, and once appointed to, steps will be taken, if necessary, to address any vacancy remaining in the team.

- 4.3 As outlined in the structure at paragraph 4.1 above, the team is supplemented by an 'out of hours 24/7 emergency response' support provided via a rota system that is managed by the service. This support consists of 10 directors and 5 council officers from varied services (one of each role on standby at any one time). The Emergency Response Officers are existing council employees who, in addition to their substantive roles, provide emergency cover in the event of an incident, and who have the requisite knowledge, skillsets and experience to undertake the role.

5.0 Service key objectives

- 5.1 The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team work to ensure that the authority is meeting its obligations under the Act, outlined above, as well as working under the direction and scrutiny of the City Council's Resilience Board to deliver the necessary assurances required. The Resilience Board is chaired by the Chief Operating Officer.
- 5.2 The service works towards ensuring all levels of management across the organisation are aware of and embed emergency and continuity management policies and procedures into their strategic and operational plans, major projects, and partnership working arrangements.
- 5.3 A summary of the service's key objectives are to:
- Ensure the authority are meeting its obligations under the Act.
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 - Work collaboratively alongside other local partners and responding agencies to build an increasingly resilient environment to improve on response capabilities for the City.
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- 5.4 As a business-critical service, the team have a far-reaching remit supporting residents and the City's business community who sit at the heart of what we do; whether that be developing plans and putting in place arrangements in preparation to support residents and business when needed, or ensuring that the Council has the ability to maintain critical service delivery despite any disruption that may arise.
- 5.5 As part of the development of emergency planning and business continuity arrangements, it is key to design and deliver exercises to 'test' the response

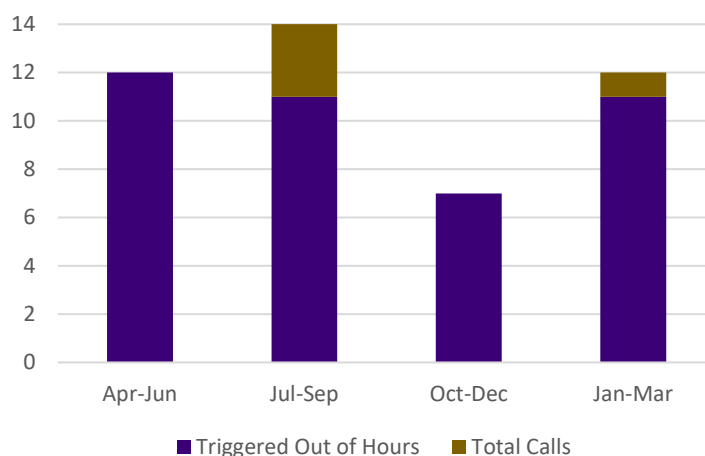
plans and capabilities – both within the Council and alongside partner agencies. These tests will be debriefed in the same way an incident would be, to identify future improvement required.

5.6 Moreover, work is underway to provide an innovative programme of action for advice and support to local businesses, community groups and the voluntary sector, in order to develop and establish greater resilience (including self-reliance) within Wolverhampton communities themselves.

6.0 Incident response

6.1 Over the past 12 months there have been 45 calls into the service using the Emergency Response activation process. These have been broken down below to demonstrate out of the total number of calls, the number received in and outside of office hours.

Call Figures April 2023- March 2024



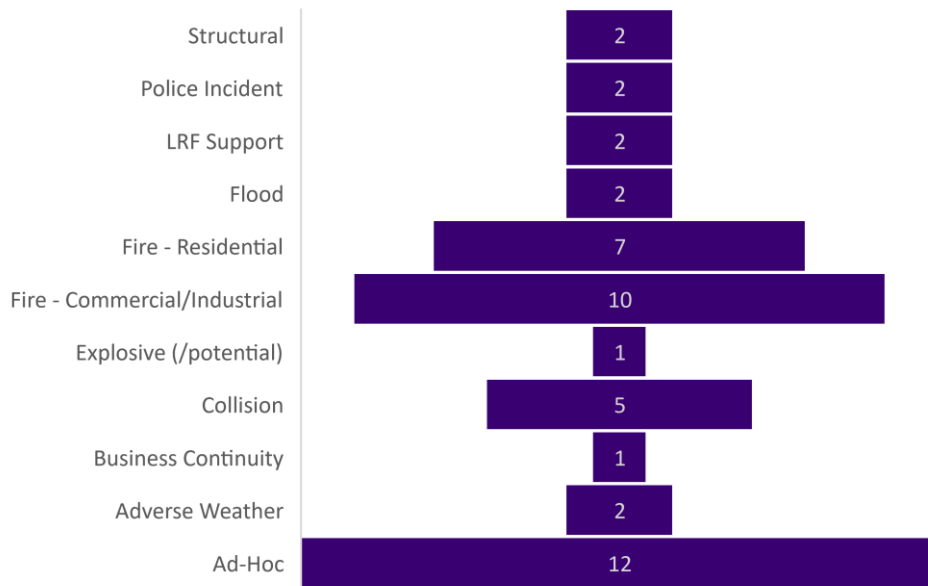
6.2 To further breakdown the calls received, the following chart highlights the percentage of calls that required a physical attendance of either a member of the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team or an Emergency Response Officer. Out of the 45 identified calls, only 6 had a physical attendance from the team (this does not account for other services who may have been present at the time).

Emergency Response Officer - On-Site Presence



Most of the calls received were for advice or information only and did not meet trigger criteria, with others able to be coordinated remotely.

- 6.3 All Councillor and MP requests for response received outside of office hours where they cannot be resolved via an out of hours service instruction, are passed on to the SEB Duty Director via the Emergency Response Officer. Records of these calls are now being captured to ensure that where possible, unless in the event of emergency, that they are submitted via the Councillor Enquiries Unit.
- 6.4 To provide overview to members, the below highlights the range of incidents the team have been called for since April 2023:



It must be noted that not all of the above calls triggered an emergency response. Notwithstanding the trigger threshold not being met, work has been ongoing to ensure all the issues raised are addressed through other appropriate and effective avenues. For example, the approach taken to address traveller incursions and lower-level general security concerns.

- 6.5 There have been no major incidents that the City Council have been required to respond to over the past year. The last Major Incident for the City was in December 2022 in response to the Horseley Fields Fire.

7.0 Training

- 7.1 It is essential to ensure that Council colleagues and services are prepared to deliver their roles as part of an emergency response within the City. It is part of the team's responsibilities to facilitate any training, either by developing bespoke training or coordinating the role out of pre-existing or externally available training.
- 7.2 A training and competencies document has been developed to outline requirements and all training delivered is now captured using a Training and Exercise Record. This allows the team to monitor who has been offered the opportunity for training, who has taken it up and where training gaps may remain.

7.3 Recent training provided by the service to colleagues within the Council includes the following:

- Emergency Response Officer training sessions
- Concierge Management Centre Shift Leader training session
- SEB Duty Director training sessions
- Councillor induction training sessions
- Business continuity workshop for businesses
- Military aid to the civil authorities awareness session

7.4 Training attended by team members over the past 12 months has been extensive, to improve on skill and knowledge and build it into internal activity. The courses/awareness sessions attended were:

- Multi-Agency Tactical Incident Command course (Protect)
- Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles Commanders Course – Molineux scenario (Emergency Services)
- Military Aid to the Civil Authorities training (Ministry of Defence)
- Lockdown training for school and education providers (Counter-Terrorism Police)
- Exercising Crisis and Business Continuity Plans course (Emergency Planning College)
- Regional Protect and Prepare workshop (Counter-Terrorism Police)
- Rest Centre Management course (Emergency Planning College)
- Debrief course (Emergency Planning College)
- Operational Action Counters Terrorism (ACT) training with The Halls (Counter-Terrorism Police)
- Climate Adaption and Preparedness sessions 1 and 2 (West Midlands Combined Authority)
- Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles Commanders Course – Civic Centre scenario (Emergency Services)
- Crisis Communications course (Emergency Planning College)
- Document verification training (Counter-Terrorism Police)
- Service Director attendance at Multi-Agency Gold Incident Command course (Protect)

8.0 Exercising

8.1 In order to check that plans and arrangements are operationally effective, the team adopts a 'scenario-based test' approach wherever possible. Such an approach enables the team to apply rigour and stress test the actual operational response and identify any gaps and areas for improvement in a safe environment. Scenario based exercises can take a variety of different format; some tested via a table-top scenario and some with live activation.

8.2 Since April, the team have participated in a number of external multi-agency exercises and delivered a number locally, these include:

- Numerous Tactical Coordinating Group test activations (multi-agency response event)
- Exercise Snowfall (adverse weather event)
- Exercise Whiskey (fire/evacuation event)
- Exercise Wolves-Snowfall (adverse weather event)

8.3 The team recently tested it's out of hours activation and response arrangements through a live scenario, named Exercise Whiskey. This was a joint exercise between the Council, West Midlands Fire Service and Wolverhampton Homes, based around a fire evacuation scenario in Heath Town. It allowed opportunity to review development needs for on-call devices, tested notification and deployment procedures as well as helped familiarise colleagues with appliances at the scene of an incident and build relationships.



8.4 A multi-agency desktop exercise was also delivered in January 2024, to walkthrough arrangements for response to a severe snowfall event in the city. This enabled a wider awareness of partnership considerations in response to an event and resources available, as well as to build on relationships and networking with partner agencies within the City.

8.5 Following on from feedback in recent exercises held, there will be a higher emphasis on exercising within workplans over the next year to maximise on the benefits and outcomes of such events.

8.6 Exercises are debriefed in the same way as an incident, to capture lessons identified and recommendations for future improvements.

9.0 Response resourcing

9.1 The Council must ensure it can respond to an emergency incident within the City at any time. This requires maintenance of a duty rota to ensure cover for response 24/7, inclusive of bank holidays and weekends, which is managed by the team.

9.2 The duty rota consists of two roles at any one time: an Emergency Response Officer and a SEB Duty Director.

9.3 At time of writing this report, there are a total of 10 directors on the duty rota and a total of 5 Emergency Response Officers.

- 9.4 The SEB Duty Director and Emergency Response Officer are supported in response by a Duty Communications Officer managed by the Council's Communications Team. In addition, Wolverhampton Homes support with deployment of Council resources provided by a variety of services, via its Concierge Management Centre.
- 9.5 Development has been ongoing into the use of Microsoft Teams for emergency response. A site dedicated to emergency response is maintained by the team and includes electronic duty packs for use in response by on-call officers.
- 9.6 Electronic documentation has now been supported by issue of a Duty Handbook for officers to enable quick reference support in the immediate response phase.
- 9.7 This year, the Council's Incident Control Room, previously based in the Hickman Avenue offices, has relocated into the Civic Centre. This is to provide a more accessible location in the event of emergency but also to allow regular maintenance of the resources whilst not in active use.
- 9.8 Work is ongoing to review where resource is best placed to ensure the Council maximise effectiveness in response to an incident.

10.0 Learning and assurance

- 10.1 This section provides members with more information on what the team do to capture any key learning to use in improvements to the service and its arrangements.
- 10.2 After each significant incident, a Microsoft Forms feedback form is issued to request data. Where an incident is of significant size or complexity, or where inconsistencies may have been found in data provided, a formal debrief session will be arranged by the team. All data collected forms a set of recommended actions, for both elements to repeat in the future and areas where improvements are required / gaps identified.
- 10.3 A Recommendations Register has been newly developed to capture recommendations and monitor progress in actioning them. This will be accessible to the Council's Resilience Board who will be asked to agree recommendations and support where escalation may be required to make progress.
- 10.4 In addition to the work internally to monitor learning, the team also sit on the Local Resilience Forum's new Learning and Assurance group and will feed in sharing of local learning where it may be applicable.

11.0 Business Continuity

- 11.1 The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team manage the Council's Business Continuity Programme. The Council's Business Continuity Policy has been reviewed and updated together with a supporting Scoping

Document, as well as a new Business Continuity Framework to outline how the Council plan to progress with the latest programme.

- 11.2 Development of the new policy and framework has incorporated key learning ascertained throughout the Covid-19 pandemic response, leading to improvements in the way the team approach business continuity management.
- 11.3 The policy provides clarity on the roles, responsibilities and expectations set out across the council for the purposes of contingency planning, with emphasis on this being to embed understanding of an all-council approach. Each service will retain a responsibility for having tried and tested business continuity plans in place for their critical areas, with one-to-one support available from the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team in development of those arrangements. The team retain a responsibility for coordination of the programme and ensuring that tools and templates are available to services when developing on arrangements.
- 11.4 The framework defines the stages that will be undertaken to build the new corporate programme. These stages have been identified in line with the good practice guidelines set out by the Business Continuity Institute, as well as the Plan, Do, Check, Act model outlined in the international standard for business continuity management systems (ISO 22301).
- 11.5 The team have been undertaking a strategic business impact assessment across directorates to establish an updated critical service list. This list helps identify time critical services when faced with an organisation, or City wide, disruption. The data captured is assisting the team in identifying priority order in which to approach and support council services.
- 11.6 Among resources made available, a Business Continuity SharePoint site is linked to the Council's intranet page, with additional resources made easily accessible to colleagues who require them. These resources are under continuous development and include a suite of 'off-the-shelf' exercises for service management teams to utilise and wider embed within teams. Introductory awareness material has also been made available via the Council's Our People Portal.
- 11.7 The one-to-one support to managers is being introduced in order to step away from the exercise of sending out individual spreadsheets for management completion, instead the team will now meet with managers to discuss service detail and complete the assessments on a central database. This way of working seeks to take away the burden of managers in completing a complex spreadsheet, enables to the team to retain a level of consistency in data collated, and most importantly embeds better understanding and awareness of services within the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team.
- 11.8 It has also been acknowledged as part of the move into the new programme, that no 'one size fits all' and this has been recognised when developing templates for the service level continuity plans and is supported in

discussions. A good example of an area with unique requirements is the Elections Service, and the one-to-one support provided helped identify this and adapt a plan template fit for its needs.

- 11.9 The team have also worked alongside People Services to update arrangements around any potential industrial action disruption and continue to provide data as it is captured to support this.

12.0 Internal activities

- 12.1 City of Wolverhampton Council has an established Resilience Board, chaired by the Chief Operating Officer. The team coordinate this meeting and ensure all key items from within the service and relevant other areas of the Council are brought into the agendas to ensure visibility.

- 12.2 The team continues to respond to requests for support from a variety of internal services where its advice can contribute to workstreams. Some recent accounts of this include:

- Business continuity
 - Supporting on local elections planning
 - Support to housing on advice to tenant management organisations
 - Advice to schools
 - Advice to local voluntary organisations
 - Advice to businesses via Aim for Gold workshops

- 12.3 Workstreams that the team have been working upon over the past 12 months have been of wide variety. In addition to Business Continuity work, there has been considerable focus on various emergency planning and response workstreams. Some of these include:

- Cyber response coordination
- Corporate condolence / Operation Bridge coordination
- Flood, severe weather response coordination
- Emergency mortuary considerations
- Evacuation and rest centre response
- On-call resourcing proposals
- Emergency incident logging system development
- Community Safety discussions over police reporting of incidents

- 12.4 In 2023, the Flood Scrutiny Task and Finish Group was re-established in follow up to the previous scrutiny undertaken in 2019. The team have actively engaged with each meeting to provide updates and assurances on changes implemented in response to learning identified in previous years. The group have provided positive feedback and some further areas for future consideration which the team will reflect upon following receipt of a final recommendations report.

- 12.5 Emergency Planning and Business Continuity is regularly included on the Agenda for the weekly SEB Forward Planning meetings. This enables an

opportunity to provide SEB with key information when awareness needs raising to specific activities.

- 12.6 This year, the team have also taken on the role of coordination of 'Out of Hours Service Instructions' for the Concierge Management Centre at Wolverhampton Homes, who deliver the Council's out of hours customer service function. This was in response to some areas of concern around ownership of the processes and some examples of 'uncoordinated responses'.

The team carried out a comprehensive review to develop new system for service instructions, all service instructions allocated an owner responsible for updating the instruction, (which are reviewed by the instruction owner on a monthly basis) and training was delivered to Wolverhampton Homes CMC.

Since the review there have been significantly less errors or confusion in responding to calls.

13.0 Multi-Agency Engagement

- 13.1 The Council, as a Category 1 responding body under the Civil Contingencies Act, play an active role in the West Midlands Conurbation Local Resilience Forum. The team represent the authority at all the relevant sub-groups of the Forum, (including undertaking the vice-chair role on the Business Continuity group), these include:

- Risk Assessment Working Group
- Command, Control and Coordination Group
- Training and Exercising Group
- Learning and Assurance Group
- Mortality Group
- National Power Outage Group
- Sudden Influx Group
- Severe Weather Group
- Cyber Preparedness Group
- Business Continuity Group (the team vice-chair this)
- Manchester Arena Inquiry Group
- Recovery Group
- Funding Group
- Fuel Disruption Group
- Operation Bridge Group
- Telecommunications Group

- 13.2 In addition to the contributions to the Local Resilience Forum, the service locally support the Wolverhampton multi-agency Protect and Prepare Board which looks specifically at planning around counterterrorism, with much focus on future potential for the implementation of Martyn's Law.

- 13.3 The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Manager has taken up chairship of the newly established Training, Exercising and Learning sub-group of the Protect and Prepare Board. The vice chair is from West Midlands Police. Terms of reference have already been developed and agreed, with the group's membership also confirmed. The team will contribute to preparation and delivery of an exercise under the Prepare remit but will also work with the group to collate data on training and exercising undertaken and available across member organisations; with the intention of providing assurances and/or identifying gaps. The group reports directly into the Protect and Prepare Board, chaired by the Director of Public Health.
- 13.4 Representation is also provided by the team to the Wolverhampton Health Protection Forum to feed in any emergency preparedness discussions where necessary.

14.0 Councillor engagement

- 14.1 The role of elected members is a critical part of response and recovery to emergencies within Wolverhampton; recovery being an aspect of response that the local authority leads with. Councillors, although not given a specific role within the operational response due to the need for immediate decisions, have a key role in leadership: civic, political and community. Communication and community engagement is a vital role played by elected members and it is of key importance to prepare and embed understanding of this responsibility among members prior to an incident occurring.
- 14.2 The Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Team provide an induction session offer to all new councillors each year, this session accompanies a general introduction to the team shared within the corporate Councillor's Handbook. Using the national guidance provided by the Local Government Association '[A Councillors Guide to Civil Emergencies](#)', further resource will continue to be developed upon to provide increased awareness and preparedness of elected members to their role during, and after, an emergency.
- 14.3 To quote the Local Government Association; "experience has shown that where respective roles have not been clearly established prior to an emergency, or where agreed roles are exceeded or disregarded, the coherence of the council's position is undermined". This will drive a key focus to ensure emphasis on Councillor engagement over the coming months, and will be tied into the next steps of development in local recovery planning and the support made available to members.

15.0 Conclusion

- 15.1 A significant amount of improvement has been made over the last 12 months, despite changes in the team. The transfer of the team into the Governance Directorate in November 2022 provided an opportunity to refresh and review the approach to Emergency Planning and Business Continuity and build on past achievements and strengths to drive and embed further improvements.

- 15.2 Since the Covid pandemic there has been a need to refresh and review the work of the Resilience Board. The meetings of the Board are now well attended, and the attendees held to account to ensure agreed actions are implemented effectively and in a timely manner. Such rigour is essential to ensuring we continue to deliver tangible, progressive improvements in both our Emergency Planning and Business Continuity approach and arrangements. This Board is a key means of providing assurance on the governance arrangements relating to emergency planning and business continuity and ensuring improvement are delivered effectively and at pace.
- 15.3 Commitment to the emergency planning and business continuity agenda cannot be solely the responsibility of the team. In order to be effective, the team needs to be visible throughout the organisation and at all levels. The team has specifically adopted an outreach approach which has significantly increased its direct engagement and involvement with senior executive team and also all leadership teams across the council over the last 12 months. This has increased the number of requests for service support coming into the team, which serves as an important indicator of the approach having the desired effect across the Council.
- 15.4 Over the next 12 months, the team will continue to look to ensure that wider services have greater awareness of the Council's role in emergency preparedness and response, and how their roles contribute to this. This will involve delivering training opportunities rolled out to build resilience across the organisation from the bottom up.
- 15.5 Another key area for focus next year will be embedding of the business continuity programme across all Council services to increase our ability to respond to and recover from known and foreseeable interruptions to the usual service delivery.
- 15.6 Our business continuity responsibilities relate to our neighbourhoods, communities and business as well. This already identified as an area for improvement will help further fulfil our responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act. We will look to prepare a plan of engagement with this sector to boost our City's resilience.
- 15.7 Finally, the Emergency Planning and Business Continuity Service has made notable progress in the last year in ensuring the Council and our communities are prepared. We have made significant progress, and acknowledge there is still much to be done, and enter the next year, confident of our plans and approach to continue to deliver to these needs and demands.

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