



Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel Meeting

Thursday, 24 September 2020

Dear Councillor

VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE CITY SCRUTINY PANEL - THURSDAY, 24TH SEPTEMBER, 2020

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at next Thursday, 24th September, 2020 meeting of the Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel, the following presentation slides that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No Item

- 5 **Update on the response to the Covid-19 Crisis and Plans for Recovery (Pages 3 - 18)**

[To receive a presentation from the Director of City Environment on the areas that fall within the remit of the Panel relating to the Council's response to the Covid-19 Crisis and Plans for Recovery].

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the democratic support team:

Contact Martin Stevens

Tel 01902 550947

Email martin.stevens@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Address Scrutiny Office, Civic Centre, 1st floor, St Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton WV1 1RL

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Vibrant and Sustainable City Scrutiny Panel

Delivering Frontline Services during the Pandemic

24 September 2020

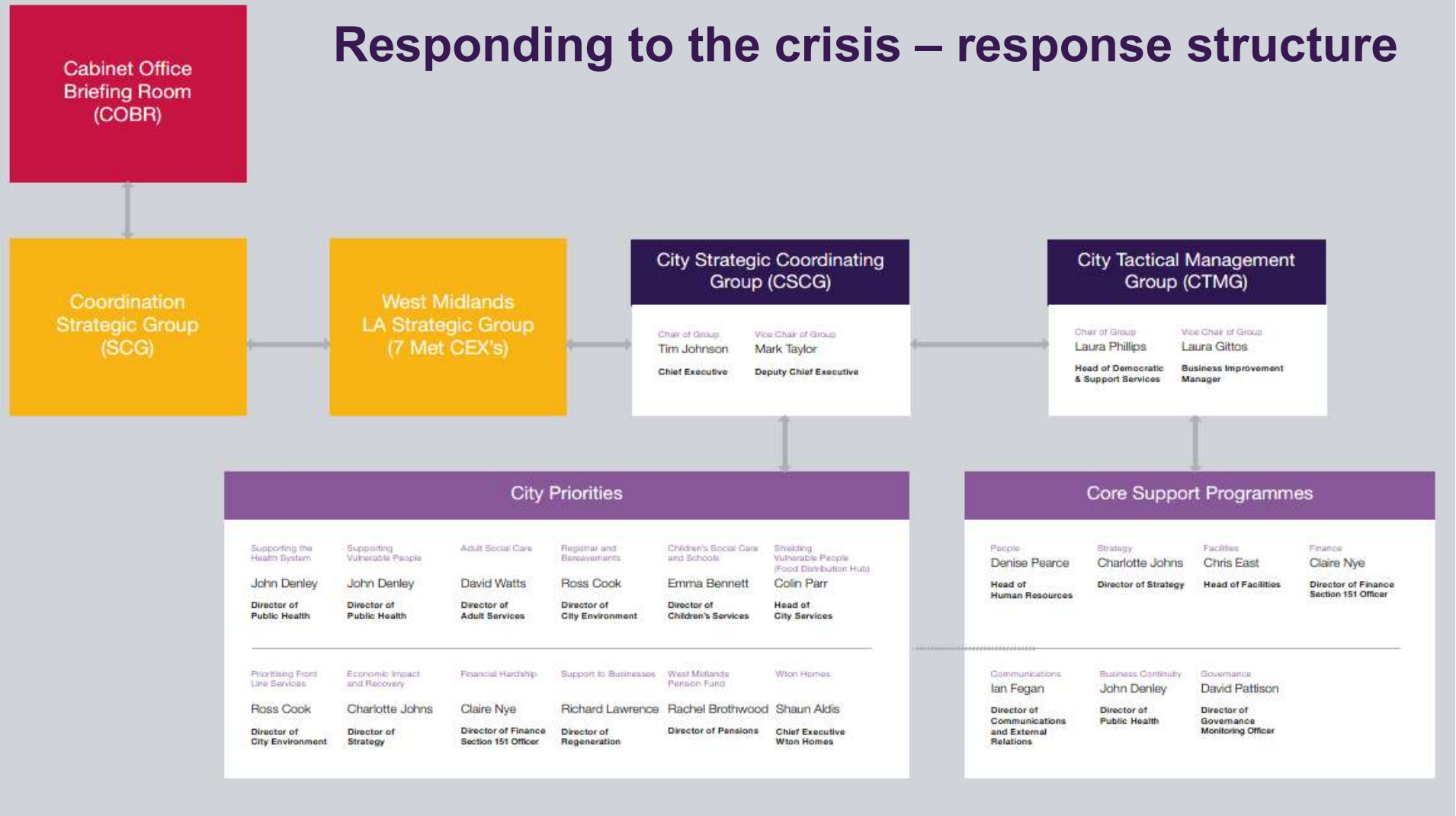
ROSS COOK

Director of City Environment

wolverhampton.gov.uk

Agenda Item No: 5

Responding to the crisis – response structure



Delivering key frontline services

- **Key services maintained – despite challenges**
- Early resource challenges overcome
- Priority: public and employee safety
- Approach: evidence and national guidance
- Regional coordination where possible
- Balancing R rate and safe access
- Recognise fantastic contribution of our key workers



Find, support, shield...

FIND: evidence-based, local partnership approach...

- **8,000** residents identified as most clinically vulnerable by Government
- **28,500** further clinically vulnerable with 2 underlying conditions written to by city partners
- **50,000 more** with one underlying condition written to by city partners
- Later, expanded support to **14,000** financially disadvantaged families





Find, support, shield...

SUPPORT: Stay Safe, Be Kind' hotline (launched 23 March 2020)...

- Redeployed council staff have responded to **over 16,000 calls and emails by mid June** for support such as for emergency food parcels, help with shopping and medication and debt advice
- Over **2,500** individuals referred for emergency food parcels
- Over **1000** people connected to volunteers who shop or get their medication for them
- Over 7100 outbound calls made since 1 May 2020

Find, support, shield...

SHIELD: Wolverhampton Food Hub (launched 31 March)...

- WV Active Aldersley: fully operational food distribution hub in days
- Core products sourced locally
- City partnership: local producers/suppliers and logistical support
- **1.2 million meals delivered**
- Support for city food banks: 800 parcels a week and new steering group.



Supporting vulnerable homeless people

- Multi-agency approach: pooled resources at single city centre hotel
- Aim to safeguard from virus and streets – 150 supported
- **100** successfully supported into alternative appropriate, safe and suitable accommodation
- **30** clients supported into treatment for substance misuse
- Clear different types of provision needed to best support.
- Consultation and lessons learnt to formulate long-term plan



Delivering key services (1)

Customer services

- **230,000** customer contacts (calls, emails and report-it enquiries) since start of March
- **100%** of contact centre (103 employees) working remotely
- **96%** call answer rate
- **5%** abandoned rate
- **0.48** secs average waiting time.

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Bin collections

- Minimal service disruption
- Adaptations to staffing for safe social distancing
- Continued general, recycling and green waste
- Bulky waste collections and garden waste renewals restarted asap.

Recycling centres

- Reopened on 11 May and 1 June
- Positive feedback on traffic and site management
- System working well
- Averaging 350 – 400 visits per day.

Markets reopened

- Three-phased approach to reopening from 9 May
- Occupancy and footfall continues to increase
- Reviewing layout
- Wholesale market opened with social distancing measures.

Green exercise space

- Parks remained open – social distancing signage
- Regular patrols to advise and reassure public
- Play areas / outdoor gyms reopened at later stage
- Grounds maintenance continued throughout.

Bereavement and Registrars

- Established regional mortuary
- Death registrations moved online to support families
- Had 1200 births awaiting registration
- Marriage fees suspended
- Increased funeral provision
- Funeral attendee restrictions
- Initial restrictions on cemetery visiting times relaxed.

Delivering key services (2)

Repairing highways

- Carried out essential road maintenance – especially around New Cross
- Used **150 tonnes** of tarmac to fix **3,000 sqm** (or 15 tennis courts) of road
- Micro-asphalt programme
- Smart/LED programme - 2500 to date

Transport for vulnerable

- Prioritised support for our most vulnerable children so continued to access essential services
- Maximised capacity to deliver
- 100% of home-to-school transport requests supported throughout lockdown.

Tackling fly-tipping

- **94%** of all fly tipping reports on the highway, parks and green open spaces removed in **5 working days**
- Actively pursuing a number of cases where evidence exists with view to prosecution.

Cleaning our streets

- 24/7 emergency response maintained to clear collision debris, dead animals and other hazardous waste
- Litter bins emptied
- Litter picking prioritised in high footfall locations i.e. parks/green open spaces.



Reopening the High Street

- The city was allocated £234,488 from an ERDF fund to 'Reopen High Streets', which commenced on the 15th June.
- A team from across City Environment with support from partners made alterations to shopping street layouts, introduced a one-way pedestrian system in the city centre, worked with businesses to ensure that they were covid-secure, produced publicity material to advise shoppers and support retailers, provided queueing infrastructure where needed, marshalled spaces once retailers opened and liaised with street traders.
- Later in the project, the team were deployed to hand out face coverings to the general public as the new rules came into force across England.
- The team also supported Central Mosque in its plans to reopen and supplied barriers in order to control access.
- In early July, the hospitality industry was allowed to reopen, and the team supported businesses in planning for queueing, working closely with neighbouring businesses to work through any challenges.

Recovering from this pandemic means reconnecting as a community; fundamentally re-thinking how we live, work and travel to protect our environment as we recover; and rejuvenating our economy.

- Repurposing our city and town centres – with initial focus on creating safe and welcoming spaces in the City Centre, encouraging walking and cycling
- Reduced speed on the Ring Road, created new spaces in Victoria Street, Lichfield Street and new bus priority measures across the City
- Climate change opportunities
- Employment, skills and business support
- Dynamic approach: refresh and refocus



Relighting our Council – Delivering Frontline Services - Differently

- Business Services – Regulation, Licensing and Trading Standards
- City Events / Markets
- City Transport
- Climate Change - Commitments
- Customer Services / Registrars
- Environmental Services
- Housing and Homelessness

STIMULATE **VIBRANT** HIGH STREETS AND **COMMUNITIES**

We have a huge challenge to rebuild our high streets, with many of our shops, markets and attractions closed almost overnight. The pandemic has accelerated many trends that were already happening like online shopping, home delivery apps and cashless transactions. Working closely with local businesses and partners we have successfully and safely reopened our high streets, but now more than ever, it is vital that we continue to deliver our ambitious plans to reimagine and transform our city and town centres. We have a clear vision for the future, which builds on the fantastic assets in our local communities, a world class football team, excellent transport links and a growing reputation as a digital and cultural hub in the West Midlands.

TACKLING THE ISSUES THAT MATTER

YOU TOLD US THAT

YOU WANT **MORE CULTURAL
EVENTS** AND **EXCITING
PLACES** TO VISIT

MORE GREEN AND OPEN SPACES

BETTER **PUBLIC TRANSPORT LINKS**
AND MORE **CYCLE LANES**

SUPPORT FOR RETAILERS
TO ADAPT TO THE CHANGING HIGH STREET

GROW OUR **VISITOR ECONOMY**

WHAT WE ARE DOING. WE WILL DELIVER:

We're delivering our vision to be an events city

- £38m investment in our vital entertainment venues creating new jobs and consolidating the city's place as key cultural hub in the West Midlands.
- A new vibrant public events programme bringing thousands of people into our city and town centres which will include the launch of the prestigious British Art Show in March 2021.
- £2m investment in Bilston town centre to bring a thriving night time economy offer and Christmas events package.
- A package of support for our local retailers jointly developed with partners which will include a 'shop local' campaign.
- A new market offer, building on our £5m city centre investment and sustaining entrepreneurial local supply chains.

We'll continue to drive investment into our communities

- The UK's first city centre solar farm at Bowman's Harbour to provide our fantastic NHS colleagues at New Cross Hospital with clean, green energy for their life saving work.
- 1,000 new city centre homes underway in the next 2 years establishing a residential population in the core of our city, increasing footfall and support for local retailers.
- £5m investment to deliver full fibre network across the city alongside one of the first 5G accelerator hubs in the country making Wolverhampton a world leading 5G city.
- Council housing company WV Living, supported by investment of up to £40m, is midway through a programme to build 1,000 homes over five years. It is building the first Passivhaus - world's leading low-energy building standard - homes in the city.

Reimagining our High Streets

- £250,000 invested across our city and town centres to make Covid-19 adaptations giving confidence to visitors and ensuring businesses can continue to trade.
- £23m bid to access future high street funding from Government has been submitted which will transform the west of our city centre with fantastic public event spaces, a new 'box' park and bring 440 new jobs.
- Completion of phase 2 of our new train station and metro extension completing a £150m investment in our public transport links which will also support the development of the Wolverhampton to Walsall line.
- We're investing over £350,000 to improve walking and cycling routes between our high streets and residential areas.



Wolverhampton Interchange

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