

Report title	Relighting Our City: City of Wolverhampton Council Recovery Commitment	
Decision designation	RED	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Ian Brookfield Leader of the Council	
Key decision	Yes	
In forward plan	Yes	
Wards affected	All Wards	
Accountable Director	Charlotte Johns, Director of Strategy	
Originating service	Strategy and Policy	
Accountable employee	Laura Collings Tel Email	Policy and Strategy Manager 01902 550414 Laura.collings@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Report to be/has been considered by	Strategy Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board	21 August 2020 25 August 2020

Recommendation for decision:

That Cabinet recommends that Council:

1. Approve Relighting Our City, the City of Wolverhampton Council's Covid-19 recovery commitment (Appendix 1).

Recommendations for noting:

That Cabinet is recommended to:

2. Note that the Relighting Our City priorities were developed after extensive engagement with over 2,500 local people to ensure that the Council's recovery planning is reflective of the City's needs.
3. Note that a presentation detailing the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic was received by Scrutiny Board on the 16 June 2020.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve the Relighting Our City plan which outlines the City of Wolverhampton Council's commitment to continue to work with partners to support the City to live with and recover from Covid-19.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has required a response at a global, national and local level. In Wolverhampton, as elsewhere across the country, it continues to affect the lives of every resident in the City. Alongside managing the emergency response to the pandemic, the Council has also undertaken extensive planning for recovery. Over the past three months, we have engaged with around 2,500 people including residents, young people, the voluntary and community sector and other partners, employees, Councillors and businesses across the City. This engagement has shaped the Council's five-point recovery plan, Relighting Our City.
- 2.2 There is still much uncertainty about the pandemic, and the long-term impact on our communities and the economy. Therefore, this recovery framework is intended to be a live document, which will continue to evolve to meet the new challenges and opportunities which will develop in the coming months. The activity and actions set out in the plan are not exhaustive and working closely with City partners and residents the Council will continue to build on this framework to develop its approach to recovery.

3.0 Relighting Our City

- 3.1 Relighting Our City sets out the priorities which will guide the Council's approach as the organisation and the City starts to transition from the response to the recovery phase of the pandemic. These priorities together with the associated key actions and activity form a framework for recovery.

Priorities	Strategic Executive Board Lead
Support people who need us most	John Denley, Director of Public Health
Create more opportunities for young people	Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services
Support our vital local businesses	Ian Fegan, Director of Communications and External Relations
Generate more jobs and learning opportunities	Richard Lawrence, Director of Regeneration
Stimulate vibrant high streets and communities	Ross Cook, Director of City Environment

3.2 Supporting the five strategic priorities are three cross cutting thematic areas.

- Climate focused: The recovery commitment is aligned to the Council's climate change strategy 'Future Generations' and our target to make the Council net carbon zero by 2028.
- Driven by digital: The City 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 inclusive: The Council will continue to tackle the inequalities in our communities which impact on the opportunities of local people.

3.3 The priorities included in Relighting Our City are aligned to the Council Plan 2019 – 2024 and the City Vision 2030.

4.0 Citizen Panel and Wider Engagement

4.1 The engagement process was designed so that as many views could be gathered from across the city's diverse communities. Questions during engagement focussed on understanding the impact of Covid-19, priorities for recovery, strengths of the City and what participants wanted the City to look like in the future.

4.2 Various methods of engagement were used, including online surveys with businesses, residents and employees, focus groups with representatives from the voluntary community sector and equality groups. In addition, during August 2020 a Citizen Panel was held, and over four sessions local people fed back their view on the Relighting Our City priorities and actions.

4.3 The key themes from the Citizen Panel included;

4.4 Participants were supportive of the five key priorities and felt that they were rooted in a real understanding of Wolverhampton. The two themes which stood out for participants as particularly important for the City's recovery were, supporting those who need us most and generating jobs and learning opportunities.

4.5 When asked to consider what strengths the City has to help achieve recovery, themes included:

- The sense of community spirit and neighbourhood altruism that has emerged during the crisis;
- The perceived presence of 'unused' or 'empty' space in Wolverhampton, which it was felt could be repurposed (e.g. community events, accommodation); and,
- The role of the city centre in the recovery of the local economy and the importance of attracting residents and visitors.

4.6 Thinking about how different organisations might contribute to recovery, ideas included:

- Residents volunteering more and shopping locally;
- Local businesses providing work experience opportunities (both paid and unpaid) to help those seeking work (both young people and adults);
- Neighbourhood organisations working more closely with the Council to look after elderly and vulnerable neighbours;
- Local libraries, cafés and leisure centres running activities and events.

4.7 It is vital that city partners, residents, businesses and the voluntary community sector are actively engaged throughout the City's recovery. 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.

5.0 Evaluation of alternative options

5.1 Option 1 would be to do nothing. This would mean that the Council does not have a strategic framework to support the City to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic.

5.2 Option 2 would be to use an existing strategic framework such as the Council Plan 2019-2024. This option would not capture the significant change and impact on our communities as a result of the pandemic and may mean that the City would struggle to recover.

5.3 Option 3 and the chosen option is to develop a new strategic framework focused on recovery which will enable the city to address key challenges and capitalise on new opportunities as we transition out of the response phase of the pandemic.

6.0 Reasons for decision

6.1 The decision to develop a recovery plan for the City is in light of the significant changes and unique challenges brought by the Covid-19 pandemic, which meant that a targeted strategic framework focussed on the City's recovery was required.

7.0 Financial implications

7.1 The impact of Covid-19 has had a significant international, national and regional impact, and responding to the pandemic will continue to have significant financial implications for the Council. If Government do not provide sufficient grant to fund the full financial implications of Covid-19, the Council will need to re-prioritise resources to fund projects/activities associated with recovery.

7.2 There are no direct financial implications to the recovery plan itself although the actions outline projects and programmes that will have financial implications; these will be subject to individual reports.

7.3 All costs associated with engagement and the preparation of the plan will be accommodated within existing budget.
[MH/200820/M]

8.0 Legal implications

8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising as a result of this report.
[LMC/26/08/2020/P]

9.0 Equalities implications

9.1 Fair and inclusive is a key cross cutting theme in the Relighting Our City plan.

10.0 Climate change and environmental implications

10.1 Climate focused is a key cross cutting theme in the Righting Our City plan.

11.0 Human resources implications

11.1 There are no direct human resource implications arising from this report.

12.0 Corporate landlord implications

12.1 There are no direct corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

13.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications

13.1 There are no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

14.0 Covid Implications

14.1 Relighting Our City will be a key strategic framework to support the Council and the City to recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

15.0 Schedule of background papers

15.1 None

16.0 Appendices

16.1 Appendix 1 – *Relighting Our City*