

Report title	Relighting Our City Refresh	
Decision designation	AMBER	
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	Policy and Strategy Insight and Performance	
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Report to be/has been considered by	Strategy Leadership Team Strategic Executive Board	25 February 2021 26 February 2021

Recommendation for decision:

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the refreshed Relighting Our City recovery framework (Appendix 1).

Recommendations for noting:

The Cabinet is asked to note:

- 1 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.
2. The performance against the priorities during 2020-2021 and approach to performance management for 2021-2022.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve the refreshed 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.
- 1.2 This report will also provide an update on current council performance and approach to continue to develop the performance framework for 2021-2022.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 On the 16 September 2020 Full Council approved the Relighting Our City recovery framework to guide the Council's approach as we emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council's recovery plan was developed after extensive engagement with around 2,500 people including residents, young people, the voluntary and community sector and other partners, employees, Councillors and businesses across the City.
- 2.2 The plan set out five overarching priorities for recovery:
 - Support people who need us most
 - Create more opportunities for young people
 - Support our vital local businesses
 - Generate more jobs and learning opportunities
 - Stimulate vibrant high streets and communities
- 2.3 Relighting Our City was launched as a 'living' document and a commitment made to regularly review and refresh the plan to ensure that it continued to reflect the priorities of local people and captured the fast-changing nature of the pandemic.
- 2.4 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.
- 3.2 The refreshed recovery plan sets out what the Council, working alongside its partners have done against the priorities set by local people since the inception of the recovery commitment in September 2020. It captures key achievements and performance indicators which demonstrate the scale and scope of the Council's response to the pandemic over the last 12 months.

3.3 As well as reflecting on what has been achieved so far, the refreshed plan also provides an overview of future planned activity to support our communities and the local economy to recover from the impact of Covid-19.

4.0 Council Performance Management 2020-2021

- 4.1 The Council continues to use a variety of means in which to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of operations against organisational strategic priorities and statutory requirements.
- 4.2 Using data and analysis across all areas of the business, the Council actively encourages a golden thread of performance monitoring throughout all parts of every service.
- 4.3 Critically it continues to manage resources effectively, consistently setting a balanced budget, despite austerity, while maintaining an appropriate level of general balance reserves.
- 4.4 There are also several means of external verification of performance, including the sign off of the Council's accounts by external auditors, and external inspections such as those by Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and other regulatory bodies.
- 4.5 The Council continues to manage risks, with both a strategic risk register and Covid-19 risk register regularly reported through the Audit and Risk Committee.
- 4.6 The Council also ensures that data and statistics for the city are available on WV Insight (<https://insight.wolverhampton.gov.uk/>) which includes real time interactive dashboards, with regional and national comparator data.

5.0 Council Performance in Response to Covid-19 – as at 2 March 2021

- 5.1 The Council has continued to monitor performance throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. From the earliest days of this national emergency, the Council, working alongside city partners, residents and businesses, has prioritised helping the most vulnerable in society and to support the local economy. A summary of key Covid-19 related performance includes:
- Since the start of the pandemic our Food Hub has distributed over 60,000 food parcels to local people who needed our support.
 - Through the Winter Grant Scheme we have supported our most vulnerable families with meals. We provided meals to 13,225 children and young people and their families over the Christmas period. Over 10,000 children and young people are now being support with meals through the current scheme.
 - Working with the city's food banks we have helped to get 500,000 meals out to hundreds of families across the city with £450,000 of funding to continue the delivery of emergency food parcels.

- We have worked with partners to keep local people safe and stop the spread of the virus with over 43,923 people receiving a lateral flow test at community sites across the city.
- Supported our communities facing hardship with over 1,200 local people receiving debt and welfare advice over the last 12 months.
- 334 pieces of digital equipment including laptops, MIFIs and SIM Cards have been provided to the most vulnerable families to ensure young people can access education provision with more in the process of being delivered.
- We have paid over £54.5 million of grants to businesses across the City through the Business Grant scheme throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, with more being provided through the current grant scheme.
- Over 4,200,000 pieces of Personal Protective Equipment, including gloves, masks, aprons and sanitiser, have been dispatched in the last 12 months with the majority going to Care Homes or Care Providers.

6.0 Council Performance in 2020-2021

6.1 The Council has also continued to monitor performance throughout 2020-2021 on key priorities, which includes:

- The number of schools rated Good or Outstanding continue to improve with 13,000 more young people learning in Good or Outstanding schools than five years ago.
- We continue to ensure that the right support is offered to children, young people and families to prevent escalation into the children's social care system. The rate of children open to social care in Wolverhampton continues to decrease against increases regionally and nationally. Latest published data shows that Wolverhampton saw decreases in the number of Children in Need, Child Protection and Children and Young People in Care in 2019/20.
- Further to this, the percentage of re-referrals into children's social care have decreased with levels now lower than regional, statistical, and national comparators. The percentage of children in Wolverhampton who were subject to a child protection for a second or subsequent time was below regional and statistical comparators in the latest published data for 2019-2020. Internal data shows that this figure has decreased further in 2020-2021. Both these indicators show how the authority is working with families to become more resilient.
- Children and young people in care in Wolverhampton continue to have more stable placements than regional and national comparators, with almost three quarters in a stable placement.
- At the end of the last academic year over 5,000 young people received support from HeadSTART through school's community activities and interventions.

- This year, six care leavers graduated from university and 27 care leavers are currently in Higher Education, three times the generally recognised national average.
- Latest data published showed that the proportion of older people still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement services in 2019-2020 was 81%, much improved on the previous year's return of 74.7% and the highest result in five years.
- Unemployment Claimants for working aged adults was at 10.3% at the end of January 2021, increases seen in Wolverhampton through the pandemic are in line with those seen regionally and nationally.
- Wolves at Work employment programme has helped 6,034 local people into work in the last four years with support from over 600 businesses.
- Wolves WorkBox, our bespoke one stop digital hub continues to provide access to training and employment opportunities for local people and businesses and currently has 3,250 subscribers.
- Our Black Country Impact programme has supported 15,100 school and college students with careers advice, and supported 392 young people into work, an apprenticeship or further education.
- Since April 2020, through the AIM for GOLD programme, we have supported 91 businesses to complete a business review, of these 20 have secured grant assistance. The AIM FOR Gold programme are currently working with six more businesses to complete a business review.

7.0 Council Performance Framework 2021-2022

- 7.1 A new performance framework has been developed to reflect how the Council is performing against city new and changing priorities, as articulated in Relighting Our City.
- 7.2 This performance framework will provide high-level city data on key priorities, benchmark city performance against national and regional data, highlight the impact of targeted interventions, inform strategic decision-making in relation to provision and encourage scrutiny of those strategic decisions.
- 7.3 The performance framework will look at two different types of indicators, city indicators and impact indicators which will be reported to Cabinet on a quarterly basis: city indicators are high level indicators that although the council will influence, they may not be able to directly effect. Impact indicators are indicators that demonstrate what the Council is directly doing to improve outcomes and in turn influence the city indicators.

8.0 Continuous Conversation with Communities

- 8.1 It is vital that city partners, residents, businesses and the voluntary community sector are actively engaged throughout the city's recovery and that there are opportunities to co-

produce innovative solutions to the challenges the pandemic has brought. Relighting Our City will continue to be a 'living' document and be taken forward as a continuous conversation with our communities through our Commonplace platform (<https://wolverhamptonrecovery.commonplace.is>).

9.0 Reasons for decision(s)

- 9.1 Option one would be to do nothing. This would not be viable as the Council has already made a commitment to regularly refresh the Relighting Our City recovery framework to reflect the fast changing nature of the pandemic.
- 9.2 Option two and the chosen option is to refresh the Relighting Our City recovery framework to capture key achievements and activity since the plan was launched and to highlight emerging new activity to support the community and economic recovery of the city.

10.0 Financial implications

- 10.1 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.
- 10.2 The refreshed Relighting Our City recovery framework at Appendix 1 demonstrates our commitment to recovery and aligns the Council's medium term financial strategy (MTFS) to the priorities as set out in the framework. In addition to this, the 2021-2022 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy report approved by Full Council on 3 March 2021, included budget growth of £510,000 to support the Relighting Our City agenda; this is in addition to the £3.0 million Recovery Reserve which was established as part of the 2019-2020 closedown process.
- 10.3 It is vital that the city has the resources to be able to focus on recovery which will enable the city to address key challenges and assist the government to deliver its 'levelling up' agenda and capitalise on new opportunities as the city transitions out of the response phase of the pandemic.
- 10.4 Whilst it is projected that Government funding will be sufficient for 2020-2021 and that they have announced some resources to support the impact of Covid-19 in 2021-2022, if the impact of the pandemic continues over a prolonged period of time and additional Government funding is not forthcoming, the Council may need to make significant reductions to existing budgets and potentially make use of earmarked reserves in order to meet the costs of increased activity or loss of income.
- 10.5 All costs associated with engagement and the preparation of the plan will be accommodated within existing budgets. The actions, outline projects and programmes detailed within the Relighting Our City plan will have financial implications; these will be subject to individual reports.

11.0 Legal implications

11.1 There are no direct legal implications arising as a result of this report.

[TS/08032021/H]

12.0 Equalities implications

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

13.0 All other Implications

13.1 Implications of the actions in the Relighting Our City plan will be included in the relevant individual reports.

14.0 Schedule of background papers

14.1 [Relighting Our City: City of Wolverhampton Council Recovery Commitment](#) to Full Council on 16 September 2020

15.0 Appendices

15.1 Appendix 1: Relighting Our City – March 2021