

# Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday, 24 June 2020  
Time: 2.00pm  
Venue: Virtual Meeting - Microsoft Teams

## Membership

Councillor Adrian Warwick (Chair)  
Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Sarah Boad  
Councillor John Cooke  
Councillor Judy Falp  
Councillor Peter Gilbert  
Councillor Andy Jenns  
Councillor Maggie O'Rourke  
Councillor David Reilly

Items on the agenda: -

## 1. General

### (1) Apologies

### (2) Members' Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

Members are required to register their disclosable pecuniary interests within 28 days of their election or appointment to the Council. A member attending a meeting where a matter arises in which s/he has a disclosable pecuniary interest must (unless s/he has a dispensation):

- Declare the interest if s/he has not already registered it;
- Not participate in any discussion or vote;
- Must leave the meeting room until the matter has been dealt with (Standing Order 39);
- Give written notice of any unregistered interest to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting.

Non-pecuniary interests must be declared in accordance with the Code of Conduct. These should be declared at the commencement of the meeting.

### **(3) Chair's Announcements**

### **(4) Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

5 - 10

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2019.

## **2. Public Question Time**

Up to 30 minutes of the meeting is available for members of the public to ask questions on any matters relevant to the business of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Questioners may ask two questions and can speak for up to three minutes each. To be sure of receiving an answer to an appropriate question, please contact John Cole by two working days before the meeting.

## **3. Questions to the Portfolio Holders relevant to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Up to 30 minutes of the meeting is available for the Committee to put questions to the Leader and Portfolio Holders on any matters relevant to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **4. Work Programme**

11 - 12

To consider the Committee's proposed Work Programme and future areas of scrutiny activity.

## **5. COVID-19 Recovery**

13 - 32

Report attached, including the appended Cabinet Report 'COVID-19 Recovery and Reform' (11 June 2020).

## **6. Ombudsman Outcomes Update**

33 - 38

Report attached.

## **7. Impact of the Construction Phase of HS2 on Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service**

Verbal  
Report

Barnaby Briggs (Assistant Chief Fire Officer) to provide a verbal report on the impact of the construction phase of HS2 on the Fire & Rescue Service prior to a full report in September 2020.

## **8. Any Urgent Items**

At the discretion of the Chair, items may be raised which are considered urgent (please notify Democratic Services in advance of the meeting).

## **9. Reports Containing Confidential or Exempt Information**

To consider passing the following resolution: 'That members of the public be excluded from the meeting for the items mentioned below on the grounds that their presence would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1972'.

## **10. Estates Update Report**

39 - 44

Report attached.

**Monica Fogarty**  
Chief Executive  
Warwickshire County Council  
Shire Hall, Warwick

To download papers for this meeting scan here with your camera



## Disclaimers

### Webcasting and permission to be filmed

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### Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

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- Must leave the meeting room until the matter has been dealt with
- Give written notice of any unregistered interest to the Monitoring Officer within 28 days of the meeting

Non-pecuniary interests must still be declared in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

These should be declared at the commencement of the meeting

The public reports referred to are available on the Warwickshire Web

<https://democracy.warwickshire.gov.uk/uuCoverPage.aspx?bcr=1>

### Public Speaking

Any member of the public who is resident or working in Warwickshire, or who is in receipt of services from the Council, may speak at the meeting for up to three minutes on any matter within the remit of the Committee. This can be in the form of a statement or a question. If you wish to speak please notify Democratic Services in writing at least two working days before the meeting. You should give your name and address and the subject upon which you wish to speak. Full details of the public speaking scheme are set out in the Council's Standing Orders.

# Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 18 December 2019

## Minutes

### Attendance

#### Committee Members

Councillor Maggie O'Rourke  
Councillor Bill Oler  
Councillor David Reilly  
Councillor Parminder Singh Birdi  
Councillor John Cooke  
Councillor Judy Falp  
Councillor Peter Gilbert  
Councillor Andy Jenns  
Councillor Adrian Warwick  
Councillor Jerry Roodhouse

#### Officers

Helen Barnsley, Democratic Services Officer  
Rob Powell, Strategic Director for Resources  
Vanessa Belton, Performance and Improvement Business Partner  
Sarah Duxbury, Assistant Director - Governance & Policy  
Liz Firmstone, Service Manager (Transformation)  
Mandeep Kalsi, Performance Officer  
Mark Ryder, Strategic Director for Communities  
Steve Smith, Assistant Director - Commissioning Support Unit  
Kieran Amos, Chief Fire Officer  
Barnaby Briggs, Deputy Chief Fire Officer  
Ayub Khan, Service Manager (Universal Services)

### (1) Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Sarah Boad; replaced by Councillor Jerry Roodhouse.

Apologies were received from Councillor Peter Butlin - Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property

## **(2) Members' Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests**

None

## **(3) Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 26 September 2019**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2019 be approved as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

## **2. Public Question Time**

There were no public questions received or presented at the meeting.

## **3. Questions to the Portfolio Holders relevant to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

There were no questions for the Portfolio Holders received or presented at the meeting.

## **4. Work Programme 2018/19**

**Resolved:** That the Committee agrees the updated 2019-20 Work Programme, and that all outstanding actions be followed up, as set out in the report. The Committee notes the scheduled future meeting dates.

## **5. One Organisational Plan Progress Report**

**Resolved:** That the Committee notes the progress of the delivery of the One Organisational Plan 2020 for the period as contained in the report.

## **6. Warwickshire Fire & Rescue – HIMCFRS (verbal update)**

Barnaby Briggs, Deputy Chief Fire Officer gave a verbal update to the Committee in relation to the inspection of the fire service by HMICFRS. It was confirmed that the next round of inspections would be in a similar format to the first one held in 2019. It is anticipated this will take place in Spring 2020. The Committee noted that a request had been made that Warwickshire County Council's internal audit carry out a review on how Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service (WFRS) responded to the first inspection.

Kieran Amos, Chief Fire Officer confirmed that the HMICFRS is currently establishing a benchmark framework for their inspections and that all fire services are expecting to be inspected frequently over the next three to four years. After which, benchmarks will be agreed, and inspections should then be less often.

The Committee expressed concern about the increased burden that frequent inspections places on smaller services and asked that consideration be given as to whether these concerns could be raised at national level.

## **7. Warwickshire Fire and Rescue - IRMP Post Engagement and Consultation Report**

Barnaby Briggs, Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report to the Committee, noting that Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service would not be continuing the Memorandum of Understanding with West Midlands Fire Service, but the Dynamic Cover Programme will continue.

Following a discussion in relation to the responses to the public consultation it was confirmed that the process had included as much promotion as possible as part of a six-week communication, engagement and consultation process. The Committee agreed that Councillors are all responsible for sharing information with residents and that this should include information relating to public consultations. Councillor Dave Reilly suggested that in view of the low number of responses to the consultation, a review of the methodology used would be beneficial. Kieran Amos, Chief Fire Officer thanked the Committee for its feedback stating it would help shape future consultations. It was suggested that future surveys could be tested out on members first.

**Resolved:** That the Committee notes the outcomes of the six-week Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Action Plan 2019/20 communication, engagement and consultation process.

## **8. Warwickshire Fire & Rescue - Operational Benchmarking Performance Report of Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service 2018/19**

Barnaby Briggs, Deputy Chief Fire Officer presented the report to the Committee which highlights key performance areas for the fire service.

Kieran Amos, Chief Fire Officer confirmed that he had full confidence in the data included in the report and the level of interrogation and scrutiny the data had gone through before being presented in the report.

Following a question from Councillor Bill Olnier it was confirmed that in relation to identifying arson activity trends, work was ongoing and included close work with partners.

In relation to the performance target for response times, it was confirmed that the standard for Warwickshire is high but that due to geography it is extremely challenging for the fire service to reach this target. However, the Committee was asked to consider the standard of service on arrival at an incident which is also high.

Following a question from Councillor Dave Reilly, the discussion moved to how the fire service works with the Road Safety Partnership. It was noted by the Committee that the Fatal 4 presentations had been successful across the county and that there has been a reduction in road traffic collisions for the age group targeted. It was noted that it is too early to prove any connection at this point.

The Committee noted that extent of the motorway network across Warwickshire. It was informed that the Fire and Rescue Service is frequently required to attend incidence on it. Members requested that consideration be given to how the Fire Service could work with Highways England.

The Committee noted that the Road Safety Partnership recognises that the Fire and Rescue Service has a key role in the partnership's campaigns. The Committee expressed its support for reinstating the partnership and requested sight of the action plan for the partnership.

Councillor Andy Crump, Portfolio Holder for Fire & Rescue and Community Safety thanked the Chief and Deputy Fire Officers, on behalf of the Committee and the whole of Warwickshire County Council, for everything that they and the rest of the Fire and Rescue Service do.

**Resolved:** That the Committee notes the contents of the report.

## **9. Debt Management Process**

Liz Firmstone, Finance Service Manager (Transformation) presented the report to the Committee, detailing the overview of the debt management policy and process.

The following points were highlighted to the Committee –

- i) Warwickshire County Council raises approximately 95,000 invoices per year with 70% of invoices in relation to Adult Social Care.
- ii) The latest benchmarking performance shows that the Council is performing well compared to other local authorities.
- iii) In relation to Adult Social Care debt, the Council's performance is consistent with national performance; collecting around 93% in the first 12 months.
- iv) The new financial strategy will be rolled out in the new financial year.

In response to a question from Councillor Bill Olnier in relation to debt accumulated through s106 agreements, Mark Ryder, Strategic Director for Communities confirmed that most outstanding invoices were covered by bonds, but that negotiations were ongoing to collect the outstanding money. It was noted by the Committee that any debts relating to road adoptions were part of the planning process and not linked to this report. It was agreed that a report would be added to the work programme for the Committee in relation to the resources available for the road adoption process.

Councillor Judy Falp sought clarification in relation to point 3.4 of the report; school reserves. It was confirmed that there are financial reserves available for schools in financial difficulties – used to resolve cash flow problems. There are no general financial reserves available for schools.

In relation to point 3.5 of the report, the Committee agreed to raise the question of who takes responsibility for dialogue between the Council and the NHS in relation to financial services to the Adult Social Care & Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee. It was agreed that more detail is required; including information in relation to what are the debts in Adult Social Care and what are the challenges in recovering them.

Councillor Jerry Roodhouse questioned the debt in relation to Warwickshire County Council maintained schools; and how much 76%, as stated in point 3.4 of the report was in relation to



schools in financial difficulty. It was confirmed that Councillor Helen Adkins had requested a report on this issue at the full Council meeting on 17 December 2019.

The Committee expressed some concerns that WCC Legal Services may use debt collection agencies. It was confirmed that, at present, the Council does not use debt collection agencies, but this may be considered as part of the new strategy. The new strategy however will focus on how more payment channels can be made available to customers to improve debt collection.

**Resolved:** That the Committee notes current performance in relation to income management and debt recovery and the planned development of an income management strategy. The Committee also notes the developments that are underway to continue to improve the Council's collection of income and management of debt.

## **10. An update of the Museum and Archive Service**

Ayub Khan, Service Manager (Universal Services) presented an update on the performance of the Heritage and Culture Service following a request for information from the Committee.

The report provided an overview of the service, the delivery of savings targets and performance information. It was noted that although the service is provided by a small team, it is county wide.

Following a question from Councillor Bill Olnier, it was confirmed that the new strategy for the service includes working closely with partners in the district and borough councils. There is a new steering group with representatives from each of the districts and boroughs in Warwickshire and the group is working on joint projects.

The Committee noted the positive effect of digital preservation; allowing the service to preserve more records. Most records now created are done so in a digital format.

It was noted that the move to Hawkes Point will provide an opportunity for more objects to be presented to the public. Work is underway with the Library Service looking at how objects could be lent to schools from April 2020. This is particularly important with the Committee acknowledging the drop in engagement with young people and the need to promote all the assets available from the service. It was noted that the Royal Shakespeare Company held an event in relation to finding the best way to engage with young people across the county.

The following points were also highlighted to the Committee;

- i) Work is underway with Visit England to highlight tourism in the area and promote big events across the county.
- ii) The Canal and River Trust is keen to work with the service having seen the new strategy
- iii) All members are invited to the upcoming roadshows and be as involved as possible.

The Chair recommended that a report be presented to the Committee in twelve months' time to show the development and progress of the new strategy. It was agreed that this would be added to the work programme.

**Resolved:** That the Committee notes the contents of this report.

## **11. Urgent Matters**

None

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Chair

**Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Work Programme 2020/2021 – June 2020**

Item	Report detail	Date of next report
Public Question Time/Questions to the Portfolio Holders / Forward Plan	Report which includes Forward Plan decisions relevant to the remit of the Committee	* Standing item for every meeting
Council Plan	Council Plan 2020 – 2025 Progress Report	* Standing item for every meeting
Property Management	Property Disposals Update (Simon Lewis) (EXEMPT / RESTRICTED ITEM)	24 June 2020
Legal Services	Ombudsman Outcomes Update	24 June 2020
Resources Directorate	COVID-19 Recovery Paper	24 June 2020
Warwickshire Fire & Rescue	HS2; impact of the construction phase of HS2 on Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service (verbal update in anticipation of full report in Sept 2020)	24 June 2020
Warwickshire Fire & Rescue	HS2; impact of the construction phase of HS2 on Warwickshire Fire & Rescue Service	16 September 2020
Warwickshire Fire & Rescue	Integrated Risk Management Proposal Working Group (Kieran Amos)	16 September 2020
Kushal Birla/Ayub Khan	Heritage and Culture Update – strategy development and implementation	December 2020

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## **Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **Covid-19 Recovery**

**24 June 2020**

#### **Recommendations**

That the Committee:

1. Receives and comments on the County Council's approach to Covid-19 Recovery, as set out in the attached Cabinet report.
2. Comments on the specific issues relevant to the remit of this Committee that should be considered in the development of the Recovery Plan which is due to be submitted to Cabinet in September.

#### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This paper aims to provide an overview of the Council's approach to recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, as set out in the attached paper, considered by Cabinet on the 11 June.
- 1.2 Key to this work will be the development of a Recovery Plan that will be submitted to Cabinet for approval in September. This report seeks this Committee's comments on the approach to the development of the Recovery Plan as relevant to the remit of the Committee.
- 1.3 Following approval of the Recovery Plan, Overview and Scrutiny Committees will continue to have a role to play in recovery, particularly over the longer term as we move into the delivery phase. We will be building consideration of how we best achieve this into our review of scrutiny which we had planned pre-Covid and which we are preparing to restart in the coming weeks.

#### **2. Supporting Information**

- 2.1 For the past three months the Council has focused on responding to the Covid-19 crisis, working closely with key partners, locally, regionally and nationally.

2.2 Attention is now focused on developing a longer-term plan to support recovery from the crisis. Our Recovery approach includes the following key elements, with further details in the attached Cabinet report:

- Principles and objectives to guide recovery
- Efforts at local, county, sub/regional and national levels
- Phasing of efforts over:
  - Foundation: 0-3 months
  - Consolidation: 3-9 months
  - Acceleration: over 10 months
- Four themes of the recovery approach, focused on:
  - Place, Economy & Climate
  - Community and Voluntary Sector
  - Health, Wellbeing and Social Care
  - Organisation, including the reinstating of services
- Engaging Members, staff, partners, business and the public on our recovery planning.

2.3 We are now in the Foundation stage and focusing on:

- standing up and reinstating WCC services in line with the national guidance about Covid-secure spaces, including workplaces;
- seizing immediate opportunities to support communities/business;
- establishing recovery governance and approach; and
- engaging with the regional approach to setting recovery priorities including participating in the regional citizens' panel.

2.4 The key output from this phase will be a Recovery Plan that is presented to Cabinet for approval in September.

### **3. Focus of Response and Plans for Recovery**

3.1 During the pandemic, the Council has worked flexibly and adapted in many ways to ensure that the residents, communities and businesses continued to receive key services and were supported to cope with the effects of Covid-19.

3.2 Examples of the responsiveness and actions taken by services within the remit of this Committee, include:

#### **Supporting vulnerable residents in lockdown**

- Rapid setting up and coordination, with District and Borough Council partners, of Shielding Hubs to provide support to Tier 1 and 2 vulnerable people who are having to stay in isolation due to medical

conditions. This has included setting up a dedicated hotline number through the Customer Service Centre which has operated 7 days a week, a series of high-profile communications campaigns to raise awareness of the support on offer and coordination of support from public and VCS partners.

- Our support for vulnerable people through the Shielding Hubs has delivered: over 9000 food parcels; handled over 4700 in-coming calls and made over 6,500 calls through our dedicated Covid hotline. Fire & Rescue staff/Firefighters delivered approximately 150 food parcels for Ediblelinks and 50 prescription medicines each week.
- We are working with DEFRA to enable vulnerable people gain access to on-line delivery slots from specific supermarkets.
- Established a model for receiving and processing daily lists of residents that were classified as shielded from MHCLG. This involved receiving and analysing data on over 20,000 individuals in Warwickshire, keeping up-to date records of the list to identify who had registered to receive support, those individuals (over 8000) who had not responded to their national letter, sharing these with District/Boroughs and coordinating welfare calls to ensure that vulnerable people had not fallen through the net.
- Created a web-based dashboard that provided all partners with 'live' information on the number of people that are shielded, the food parcels being delivered and calls into the 0800 hotline. The data was disaggregated to District/Borough level to enable local planning.
- Introduced an e-voucher system for the WCC Welfare Scheme and revised the criteria to ensure the most vulnerable residents have food and gas/electric. Following school closures, we immediately mobilised the Welfare Scheme to provide Free School Meal support to eligible families. Over 7000 children were supported for six weeks and we continue to support children on Alternative Provision or those who are not on yet on a school roll with weekly support.

### **Keeping residents safe and informed**

- Providing a dedicated page on our website and running active campaigns, to help residents and businesses access information and advice on Covid-19.
- The creation and maintenance of a directory of local mutual aid groups, with improved usability, which allowed residents to search for local groups offering specific support. At its peak, the directory contained around 275 groups across the county. We are continuing work to identify where these groups are/were located, and more importantly where any gaps exist.

- Welfare calls, offering support and befriending service to 1000 elderly and vulnerable individuals identified through Mosaic data by Fire & Rescue.
- Fire & Rescue supporting hospital discharges through provision of transport, ensuring supplies of essentials and safe and well assessments of homes, thereby reducing pressure on the Ambulance service and hospitals.

### **Supporting our economy and vital sectors**

- Provision of legal advice on changes to urban realm to ensure that as lockdown and activity rules changed, people can move safely around the county on foot, by bike and by car.
- Implemented immediate payments for all suppliers to aid businesses' cash flow and the rapid payment of grants to all Warwickshire Care Homes to aid infection control.
- Fire & Rescue advice and assessments to help the re-purposing of buildings for healthcare use.

### **Adapting and accelerating for lockdown**

- Accelerated procedures through Your HR to enable speedier recruitment and decisions on HR issues.
- Advising on rapid legislative changes and their impacts upon communities, the council and service delivery, including urgent decision requirements and the implementation of rapid response activities.
- Bringing in of virtual committee and council meetings to ensure the democratic process could continue to operate and that transparent decision making was preserved.
- Rapid move to online provision of many services to ensure continued access by customers, such as the move to virtual school appeals process providing continued access to statutory entitlements of parents and children in Warwickshire.
- Speedy cultural adaptation by staff to working from home, using 'Teams', mobile and digital technology, streamlining decision-making, adopting new cross-council and cross-partner collaborations to help innovate service provision and ensure rapid responses during the pandemic and in the planning for recovery.



### **Maintaining WCC core services**

- Maintaining and accelerating the delivery of core services across the period including payrolls for WCC, schools, grants to care homes and a range of other customers.
- Rapid roll-out of mobile working equipment to enable staff to work from home, developing organisational guidance on flexible working, additional equipment purchase, absence and isolation, identification of and letters to keyworkers, antibody testing for staff and the reassignment of staff to priority service areas.
- Pay arrangements for different categories of works – especially those who work irregular patterns or have no set hours of attendance.
- Cross council work with the Coroner and Warwickshire Funeral Directors, involving WFRS, Public Health and Registration Services to share public health guidance, digitise registration arrangements and ensure a dignified and respectful approach to funerals across the county.
- Maintaining a continual focus on our approaches to staff Wellbeing, including measurement and reporting systems and regular video briefings for staff by senior managers which have been warmly welcomed by most staff.
- Fire & Rescue hook arm specialists supported waste removal at Warwickshire landfill site.

### **Supporting resetting and recovery**

- Coordinating work across the Council on standing services back again through a phased and prioritised approach. This includes undertaking risk assessments, preparing settings by defining procedures for control access, creating social distance plans, reducing touch points, specifying cleaning regimes, preparing the workforce and digitising what we cannot stand up.
- Supporting work on planning for recovery and leading on the organisation and community-voluntary community sector themes. This will include a consideration of the lessons learnt from our response phase and the implications for the future role of the council as we move into recovery.
- Working with/across our Directorates, with Members and partners to plan for recovery and reform. This includes establishing time-limited Member Working Groups to provide advice and support to Cabinet in the development of our Covid-19 Recovery Plan.

- Instigated regular financial monitoring of Covid-19 impact to support organisational decisions around response, recovery and financial planning.

- 3.3 As we emerge from the immediate response phase and move into the planning for recovery, there will be a role for the Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider aspects of recovery as are relevant to its remit. Of relevance to this Committee will be the work on organisational recovery and the future role of the Council. This will include the lessons learnt from our response to Covid, how well we adapted service provisions, decision making and our working culture, the use of data for improved planning, the further use of technology, staff engagement to aide innovation, the implications for our People and Property strategies and learning from other councils.
- 3.4 It is intended that there will be further opportunities for input from Committee Members as we move into the delivery phase from October onwards and further reports will be brought to the Committee for consideration.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Work on the change portfolio/Recovery planning will be funded through the Organisational Change fund; the investment funds created in the MTFS are available to support one-off investments which will support recovery effort. The refresh of the rolling five-year MTFS from 2021-22 onwards will be the key mechanism for incorporating longer-term financial impacts of Covid-19.

#### **5. Environmental Implications**

- 5.1 There are no direct environmental implications of the proposed recovery approach. Climate change is one of four recovery themes proposed and being considered through the 'Place, Economy and Climate'.

### **Appendices**

1. Appendix 1 - Cabinet Report, 11 June 2020, Covid-19 Recovery and Reform.

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Contact Information</b>
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## Background Papers

None

The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): None

Other members: None

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## **Cabinet**

**11 June 2020**

### **Covid-19 Recovery and Reform**

#### **Recommendations**

That Cabinet:

- 1) approves the proposed recovery objectives and principles as set out in paragraph 2.2 of this report;
- 2) approves the revised Council Change Portfolio as set out in paragraph 2.6 of this report;
- 3) supports the approach to partnership working at regional, sub-regional and county level, and approves the joint recovery statement (Appendix A);
- 4) authorises the Chief Executive to commence the activity required to develop a recovery plan for presentation to Cabinet in September, with associated delivery plans; and
- 5) approves the establishment of four time-limited cross-party Member working groups aligned to the four recovery themes set out in paragraph 2.6.3 and chaired by the relevant Portfolio Holder, with nominations for membership to be sought from Group Leaders.

#### **1.0 Background and context**

- 1.1 The Covid-19 Pandemic is a global public health emergency which also creates unprecedented impacts on our communities and economy, both short- and long-term. As well as the significant challenges ahead, there are also opportunities from the lessons of the immediate response phase which are expected to change aspects of our way of life in the longer-term.
- 1.2 For the past three months the Council has focused on responding to the crisis, working closely with key partners, locally, regionally and nationally, including:
  - providing public health advice and guidance;
  - support to care providers;
  - ensuring effective delivery of adult and children's social care and public health services, supporting NHS capacity;
  - funding continuity of early years provision through a series of hubs;
  - establishing and operating the County's shielding Hubs and support to vulnerable residents including a dedicated, 7 day Covid-19 contact centre;
  - providing business support and advice;

- coordinating provision of PPE equipment;
- mortuary management;
- providing education and school planning and support;
- the Council's c4,500 staff moving to almost exclusive home working; and
- reassigning WCC staff to areas of need.

- 1.3 Whilst significant aspects of the response effort will continue, potentially into the medium-term, over the last month there has been a concerted focus on longer-term recovery from the crisis.
- 1.4 This paper provides Cabinet with an overview of the proposed approach to planning recovery and longer-term reform and seeks approval for the initial three month 'foundation' stage of recovery activity. Today's agenda also includes complementary reports setting out proposed strategic approaches to recovery in terms of place shaping and economic recovery.

## 2.0 Recovery framework

- 2.1 In line with our overall vision to ***make Warwickshire the best it can be, sustainable now and for future generations***, our proposed approach to recovery focuses on supporting delivery of Council Plan objectives.
- 2.2 The following principles and objectives have been developed with our partners to guide our approach to recovery:

### **WCC Recovery Principles:**

1. positive – seek out the opportunities;
2. pace – move with speed and capitalise on existing momentum;
3. innovative – consider new ideas and thinking;
4. flexible – be responsive and flexible to changing conditions; and
5. embed – use existing structures where possible.

### **WCC Recovery Objectives:**

1. to understand the short, medium and long-term impact of Covid-19 recovery for our communities, businesses and staff.
2. to coordinate the recovery protocol in line with the West Midlands and Warwickshire LRF procedures;
3. to inform future direction of the Organisation in terms of recovery and reform, ensuring the Council and wider county have the best opportunity to 'bounce forwards';
4. to align recovery activity with review and update of the Council Plan, MTFS, Change Portfolio, supporting strategies, risk and performance framework;
5. to co-ordinate effort and resource across all service areas and ensure a 'one Council' approach; and
6. to manage key stakeholder and partner relationships relevant to recovery, including line of sight on regional, sub-regional and national developments around recovery and reform and supporting translation of this for Warwickshire.

2.3 There are three key aspects of focus which will drive our recovery work:

- spatial levels;
- phasing; and
- change portfolio themes.

## 2.4 Spatial levels

2.4.1 Recovery will require coherent effort at various spatial levels:

- **National** – The pandemic is a national crisis. We continue to work closely with central government, the Local Government Association and other national bodies to remain in step with national policy and guidance.
- **Regional/Sub-regional** – Our recovery approach is aligned to the West Midlands-Warwickshire regional approach. The Chief Executive represents Warwickshire on the Regional Coordination Group.
- **County** – Locally, we have worked with colleagues from the District and Borough Councils, Police, Coventry and Warwickshire LEP and Growth Hub, and NHS partners to coordinate effort in both response and recovery phases. The Warwickshire Recovery Advisory Group, comprising Council Leaders and Chief Executives and key partners, has recently been established to co-ordinate recovery activity across the county.
- **Locally** – Voluntary and community sector groups, businesses, and town and parish councils are involved in the Covid-19 response. Elected Members will play a key role in mobilising this effort, working alongside the district and borough councils leading local place-shaping activity.

2.4.2 Regional governance arrangements are set out in Appendix B.

## 2.5 Phasing

2.5.1 Reflecting the scale of the challenge, our approach to recovery will need to be phased. Short-term reinstatement of services is connected to the longer-term 'reform' or 'reset' process, so our approach will involve different phases:

- **Foundations (0-3 months):**
  - standing up and reinstating WCC services in line with the national guidance about Covid-secure workplaces;
  - seizing immediate opportunities to support communities/business;
  - establishing recovery governance and approach; and
  - engaging with regional approach to setting recovery priorities including participating in the regional citizens' panel.
- **Consolidate (3-9 months):**
  - detailed regional impact assessment;
  - establish recovery programme at regional, county level; and
  - initiate priority change programmes/projects.

- **Accelerate (>10 months):**
  - longer term recovery for the Council, communities and economy;
  - delivery of key programmes to address future challenges; and
  - refreshing the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Council Plan for 2021/22 onwards.

## **2.6 Change Portfolio Themes**

2.6.1 The Council Plan, MTFS and Change Portfolio have been reviewed in the context of recovery. The Council Plan outcomes and objectives remain relevant to recovery, and it is proposed to update its foreword only at this time to reflect the changed context. To support delivery of the Council Plan objectives, a short recovery plan, covering 2020-21 and 2021-22, will be produced for Cabinet in September.

2.6.2 Based on current forecast financial Covid impacts, our intention is to manage in-year financial pressures during 2020-21 without re-setting the annual budget. The focus will be on the rolling refresh of the five-year MTFS from 2021-22 onwards for consideration at February's Council meeting.

2.6.3 Our assessment of the previous change portfolio suggests four themes should shape the future Council Change Portfolio to drive recovery (see Appendix C for indicative areas of focus):

- Place, Economy and Climate (including skills and education);
- Community and Voluntary sector;
- Health Wellbeing and Social Care; and
- Organisation (including the reinstatement of services).

2.6.2 These themes reflect both regional and county recovery activity. We will also consider how existing programmes and projects fit within the change portfolio. The themes will be shaped into detailed programmes during the Foundation phase of recovery. Immediate actions will also be progressed as proposed in separate reports on place shaping priorities and our support to business.

2.6.3 Given our accelerated progress in developing the Council's Change Programme, there is no longer a requirement for a Change Programme Director. Instead, we will engage a strategic partner to support the strategic development of the final change portfolio, bring in best practice from elsewhere and provide assurance that the change portfolio is fully aligned to the Council's ambitions; the challenges recovery will present; and opportunities to build on the previous transformation programme.



## **2.7 Approach to reinstating Council services and settings**

2.7.1 The National Recovery Strategy was published in May 2020, accompanied by a range of guidance, *“Working Safely during Coronavirus”*. Officers are applying this advice to consider how to stand services back up.

2.7.2 Many services have continued to operate within the physical and technical constraints of central government and Public Health guidelines throughout lockdown. Reinstatement will require a "new normal" operating environment for at least 12 months, based on impact and risk assessment, physical adaptations and staff engagement. Changes will be implemented in 2 phases:

- 3 month "foundation" phase - re-introduction of priority services; and
- 6-9 months in the “consolidation” phase to implement redesigned services based on service impact and risk assessments.

2.7.3 This process has been informed by learning from the response phase, particularly the results of a staff check-in survey on well-being and new ways of working, and analysis of the financial impact of Covid.

## **3.0 Timescale and next steps**

3.1 In the three-month foundation phase, we will engage Members, staff, partners, business and the public on our recovery plan and change portfolio, including a citizen’s panel convened by the West Midlands Combined Authority, and further staff engagement through a second check-in survey focusing on recovery.

3.2 Engagement with Members to help shape the approach to recovery will take place via four, time-limited cross-party Member working groups aligned to the four recovery themes set out in Section 2.6.3 and chaired by the relevant Portfolio Holder. It is intended that these working groups should have maximum flexibility in the way that they operate. They are not intended to operate as formal committees and the access to information framework will not be applicable. Officers will develop proposals for these working groups, including terms of reference, and nominations for membership will be sought from Group Leaders. Overview and Scrutiny Committees will also play a role in considering aspects of the Council’s approach to recovery, as relevant to their remit, as our plans develop and are implemented. The next steps are highlighted in the timeline in Appendix D.

## **4.0 Financial Implications**

4.1 Work on the Change Portfolio will be funded through the Transformation reserve; the investment funds created in the MTFS are available to support one-off investments which will support recovery effort. The refresh of the rolling five-year MTFS from 2021-22 onwards will be the key mechanism for incorporating longer-term financial impacts of Covid.

## 5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct environmental implications of the proposed recovery approach. Climate change is one of four recovery themes proposed - 'Place, Economy and Climate' – as part of the refreshed change portfolio.

Background papers	Name	Contact Information
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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication: Cllrs Seccombe, Butlin, Kaur, Chattaway, Roodhouse and Chilvers

Local Member(s): None

Other members: None

## **Appendix A - Warwickshire Councils' joint statement of intent on Covid recovery**

The global Covid-19 pandemic has had profound impacts on all aspects of life: healthcare, the economy, our communities, our way of life and individuals' well-being.

The pandemic has shown our communities and local public services at their best: innovating to work in new ways; making better use of data and digital service delivery; collaborating more strongly; and unleashing the creativity, passion and common purpose of our people.

The pandemic has created immediate issues and risks which need careful management, but we have an opportunity to build back stronger and better. Recovery must support long-term action to address climate change, while ensuring a growing and sustainable economy can fund investment in public services and a more sustainable future.

As we begin our recovery from the pandemic, we will not return to how things were; together, we commit to ensure Warwickshire emerges stronger and to protect future generations by applying positive lessons from the pandemic.

Recovery will neither be a straightforward nor a linear process; we may move back into a 'response' mode if there are further peaks in the virus. We know the economic impacts will be profound and long-term. We will help individuals rebuild, and reinforce confident, resilient and sustainable communities. We will focus our joint work around the following objectives:

1. to drive economic recovery, business growth and regeneration, supporting sectors with the highest growth potential and also those most negatively impacted such as tourism; working with the education and training sectors, we will build skills to get people into work, training or new careers;
2. to recover in a way which helps address the climate change emergency, and sets Warwickshire up for a more sustainable, low carbon future;
3. to improve health, well-being and care in Warwickshire, supporting those most vulnerable and ensuring long-term improvement in population health;
4. to harness, and build upon our thriving voluntary and community sectors as a central part of making Warwickshire a great place to live;
5. to restore services and school provision safely, protecting staff, service users and the public; and
6. to ensure our organisations and services are strong, sustainable and fit for the future.

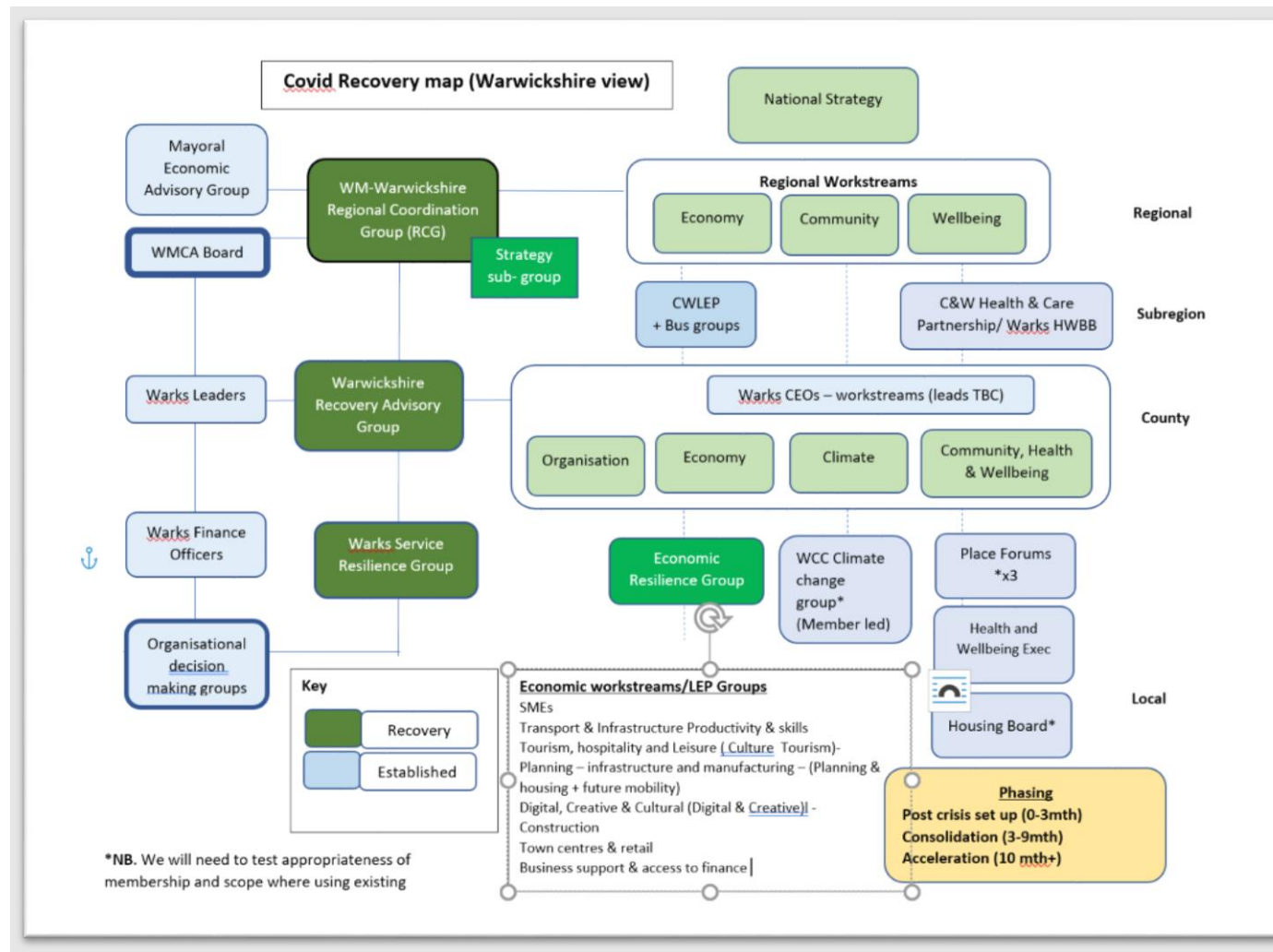
We are committed to working with our public, private and voluntary sector partners along with individual citizens to develop a stronger county after Covid-19, working at various levels:

- we will be engaged at national level in shaping the UK's recovery;
- our work will be part of regional efforts across the West Midlands and Warwickshire, and will align our work to the Combined Authority's recovery principles;
- sub-regionally, we will work with our partners in the natural economic geography of Coventry and Warwickshire;
- we will address strategic issues across the County through close collaboration between the County, District and Borough Councils, our NHS and Police partners, businesses and the voluntary and community sector; and
- our district, borough, town and parish councils will play a critical role shaping local places, high streets, public spaces and business estates.

Our joint work on recovery will be:

- flexible, dynamic and responsive as circumstances evolve;
- positive and innovative;
- rooted in our communities, engaging with them to develop our thinking;
- aligned with existing structures wherever possible, enhancing the strong relationships that characterise Warwickshire;
- collaborative, co-ordinated, and enabling progress at pace; and
- maximising our collective skills and resources.

## Appendix B - Map of Regional, County and local Recovery groups

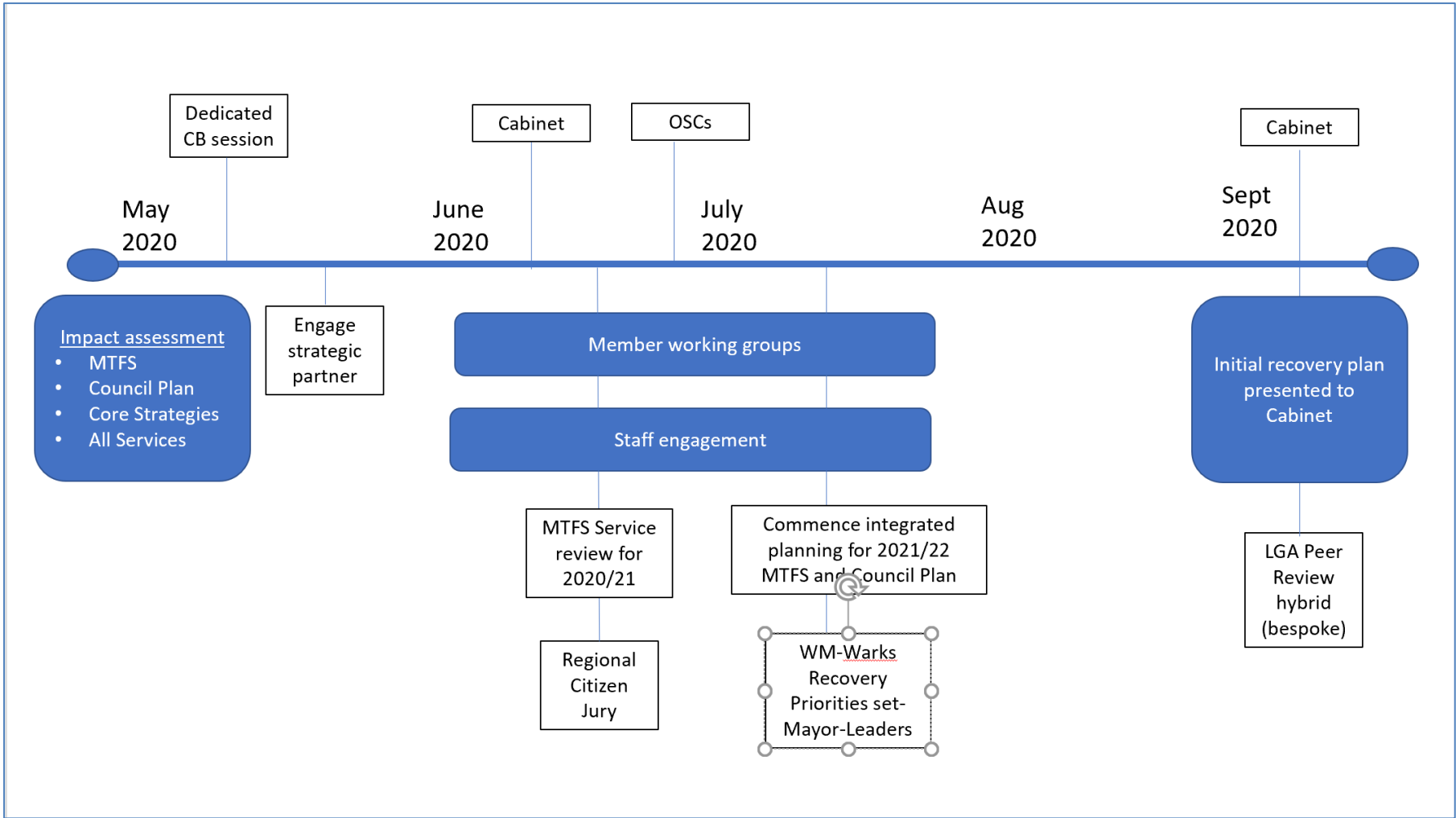


## Appendix C - Key change portfolio themes

Programmes	Key considerations for Recovery (informed by desktop policy & impact assessment)	Related core strategies	Change portfolio elements
<b>Place, Economy, and Climate</b>	<p><b>Economy (see separate paper on today's agenda)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural economy</li> <li>• Key sectors e.g. Tourism, automotive</li> <li>• Access to funding for businesses</li> <li>• Employment rates</li> <li>• Skills requirements and access to training, re-skilling</li> </ul> <p><b>Place shaping (see separate paper on today's agenda)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact for Town centres and high streets</li> <li>• Cultural sector impact including City of Culture</li> <li>• Reduced income for Universities</li> <li>• Use of public transport -accessibility</li> </ul> <p><b>Climate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing the Climate Change action group's plans</li> <li>• Bouncing back greener</li> <li>• Reduced car journeys/re-designation of road space</li> <li>• Improving air quality</li> </ul>	<p>Economic growth</p> <p>Property</p> <p>Commercial</p> <p>Local Transport Plan</p> <p>Place plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Climate change</li> <li>• Place shaping</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Business and economic recovery</li> </ul>
<b>Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future role of the Voluntary sector /volunteer networks</li> <li>• Capturing Community action</li> <li>• Digitising volunteering and support for the vulnerable</li> <li>• New vulnerability, inequality and differential impacts of Covid</li> <li>• Financial vulnerability/increased unemployment</li> <li>• Impact of reduced/home school access</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary &amp; Community Sector Strategy</li> <li>• Education Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary &amp; community</li> <li>• Education Strategy</li> <li>• Fire Transformation</li> </ul>

<b>Heath &amp; Wellbeing and Social Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> <li>• Delayed access to health care for non-Covid conditions</li> <li>• Delayed demand surge</li> <li>• Market sustainability for care homes</li> <li>• Assurance of social care providers</li> <li>• Increase in domestic abuse</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Well-Being Strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adults</li> <li>• Children's Transformation Programme</li> <li>• Warwickshire Cares Better Together</li> </ul>
<b>Organisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff wellbeing – DSE and mental health</li> <li>• Remote working</li> <li>• Importance of Data and digital</li> <li>• Financial impact – council tax/business rate income base</li> <li>• Investment base</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Plan</li> <li>• MTFS</li> <li>• Our People</li> <li>• Digital and Technology</li> <li>• Property</li> <li>• Data</li> <li>• Customer Experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service redesigns</li> <li>• Data &amp; Digital</li> <li>• Commercial strategy implementation</li> <li>• How We Work (including innovation strategy)</li> <li>• Customer Experience</li> <li>• Devolution</li> <li>• Marketing and Communications</li> </ul>

Appendix D – Recovery timetable



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## **Resources and Fire & Rescue Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

### **Ombudsman Outcomes Update**

**24 June 2020**

#### **1. Recommendation**

That the Committee considers and comments upon the performance in relation to the outcomes of Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman complaints during 2019/20 and Information Commissioner complaints.

#### **2. Executive Summary**

1. The report is brought to the Committee to consider the end year performance as part of our performance reporting arrangements. This report precedes the annual letter from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) which is generally received in the summer and presented to Cabinet in the early autumn.
2. There were 7 adverse decisions in the financial year 2019/20. 6 were upheld complaints by the LGSCO and 1 was a partially upheld complaint by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). There were no successful Judicial Reviews against the Council
3. For the equivalent period last year there had been 16 adverse findings made against the Council by these bodies. This represents an overall reduction in adverse findings of circa 56%.
4. Of the 6 LGSCO upheld complaints, 2 related to deferred entries to school and 1 concerned a parking fine. The remaining 3 upheld complaints were in respect of adult social care and related to care packages (including the fees charged). In respect of the education complaints, the Council agreed to apologise for its error and review the decisions. It also agreed to review its processes for considering applications for deferred entry to school.
5. In respect of the upheld adult social care complaints, in one case the Council agreed to make a payment of £1,000.00 to the complainant and make decisions in respect of where the complainant lived involving the complainant and his advocate and support him to move. The Council also agreed to train Social Care and staff on the Mental Capacity Act. In the second case, the Council agreed to pay the complainants £250 and refund them for the 19 days of respite that was not available to their daughter. In the third case, the

LGSCO decided that the Council had already remedied the fault when it waived the care fees.

6. There was one partially upheld ICO/Information Tribunal decision in the financial year 2019/20 compared to 3 in the previous financial year (2018/19). This related to a large request for information in relation to an Education matter. This complaint was only partially upheld because although statutory timescales were missed for responding to the request, the data was provided. In respect of this complaint no remedial action was required by the Council although we continue to make every effort to respond to requests within the statutory timeframes.
7. Complaints by their nature are case and fact specific. However, this reduction in upheld ICO complaints is positive and supports the case for continuing to focus on information management within the organisation and a drive to improve compliance which has been facilitated by new training materials currently being rolled out across the organisation.
8. In addition it is also useful to note that in the financial year 2019/20 we had 43 referrals (for the purposes of this report we consider a referral to be a referral by a complainant to LGSCO, ICO and Information Tribunal and for Judicial Review (the serving of a letter before action). This compares to 55 in the previous financial year (2018/19).
9. In order to ensure that we can continue this level of improvement moving forward significant work has been undertaken to review policies and procedures in respect of customer complaints, and a revised complaints policy has recently been approved by Cabinet. The focus of this work will be on resolving complaints at the earliest stage possible, minimising the number of matters referred to the various external bodies and thus the risk of an adverse decision.
10. Additional work has also been undertaken between legal and customer services to promote LGSCO guidance and lessons learned from cases nationally with Assistant Directors and relevant staff. In this way, we can ensure a measure of learning across the authority, which will ensure colleagues have the tools and experience necessary to deal with matters as and when they arise. Additional support and training around complaints was also offered to members as part of a Member Development session organised by Democratic Services. That session focused in particular on the role of members in complaint scenarios and gave guidance on how members can support constituents without conflicts arising. A representative of the Ombudsman attended that session and was particularly complimentary about the approach and attitude of both members and officers to complaints and complaints learning.

### **Impact of COVID-19**

11. The Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) has now restarted some existing investigations with councils who have indicated they

have capacity to work with them, which includes WCC. Their existing casework with care providers remains suspended.

12. As a result of Covid-19 and pressures on authorities and care providers, the Ombudsman suspended all casework activity that demanded information from, or action by, those organisations in March to allow the sector to concentrate on their response to the crisis.
13. Currently, new complaints continue to be suspended and the LGSCO has said that they will only take on new complaints once they are confident that both they and those they investigate have the resources to handle them. The LGSCO helpline is open daily on a trial basis but only for general advice about the complaints process and whether the LGSCO is the right organisation to help. In May, the LGSCO issued further guidance for Local Authorities on dealing with complaints during the pandemic. This advice can be summarised as:
  - Although complaint handling capacity will probably be reduced for a time, it is important authorities can still deal effectively with the most serious and high-risk issues that are brought to them.
  - Inform – be realistic with complainants about timescale for responses and keep them updated.
  - Consider – try to avoid blanket delays – consider each claim on its merits and if you need to prioritise complaint responses consider what the impact of the delay will be on complainant.
  - Explain – Delays and deviations from process are considered understandable at this time but make sure you can explain the reason for any delay/deviation to the complainant. Document your reasons.
  - Plan for a return to normal in complaint handling, making sure the crisis does not turn into longer term erosion of the organisation's capacity to listen to concerns.
14. We are starting to consider whether re-starting of activity by the LGSCO will place greater demand on particular service areas and those supporting them (such as customer complaints and legal) so that we can plan appropriately for this area of work starting to increase back to pre-Covid levels.

### **Future direction**

15. Prior to Covid, the LGSCO has been clear that he wants to change the conversation from numbers of complaints to the outcomes that are achieved through complaints, in particular how improvements to local authority's processes can be made following complaints. This is reflected in the data the LGSCO now collects and publishes on local authorities. An interactive map detailing the data on all local authorities in England is available on the LGSCO's website.
16. The Council also now monitors the percentage of remedies that are put in place as agreed with the LGSCO following an adverse decision and in the financial year 2019/20 implemented 100% of the remedies agreed with the

LGSCO to the satisfaction of the LGSCO. In the previous financial year (2018/19) in 100% of cases the LGSCO was satisfied that the Council had successfully implemented the LGSCO recommendations which compared to an average of 99% in similar authorities.

17. The LGSCO has also started reporting how many complaints local authorities have satisfactorily remedied prior to the LGSCO becoming involved to give local authorities credit for when they have put things right. In the previous financial year (2018/19), the LGSCO found that in 15% of upheld cases the Council had provided a satisfactory remedy before the complaint reached the Ombudsman. This compared to an average of 9% in similar authorities.
18. In relation to information request complaints, if an individual who requests information is unhappy with the information provided, they can refer the matter to the ICO. In the last financial year 2019/20 the Council was aware of 3 new investigations commenced by the ICO in this period. Out of these complaints 1 was not upheld by the ICO and we are still waiting for a decision from the ICO on the other 2. In the same period the ICO partially upheld one complaint (received in the previous financial year 2018/19) and did not uphold 3 complaints (2 received in the previous financial year 2018/19 and the one received in 2019/20 referred to above). In the financial year 2020/21 to the date of writing the Council has not been advised of any new complaints being investigated and is just waiting for decisions from the ICO on the 2 complaints submitted in the previous financial year (2019/20). Thereafter the right of redress is to the Information Tribunal. Very few matters reach the Tribunal stage. In the last 2 years 1 Council matter has been decided by the Tribunal and the complainant's argument was upheld.
19. As part of the ongoing review of effective working within the Council we will shortly be commencing a process review looking at how information requests are undertaken and whether improvements can be made to further drive down delay and improve customer satisfaction.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 None – update report.
- 3.2 The financial position in respect of individual adverse decisions is covered in the annual report to Cabinet.

### **4. Environmental Implications**

- 4.1 None

### **5. Supporting Information**

- 5.1 None

## 6. Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

6.1 None

## Appendices

1. None

## Background Papers

1. None

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Councillor Kam Kaur

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