

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.

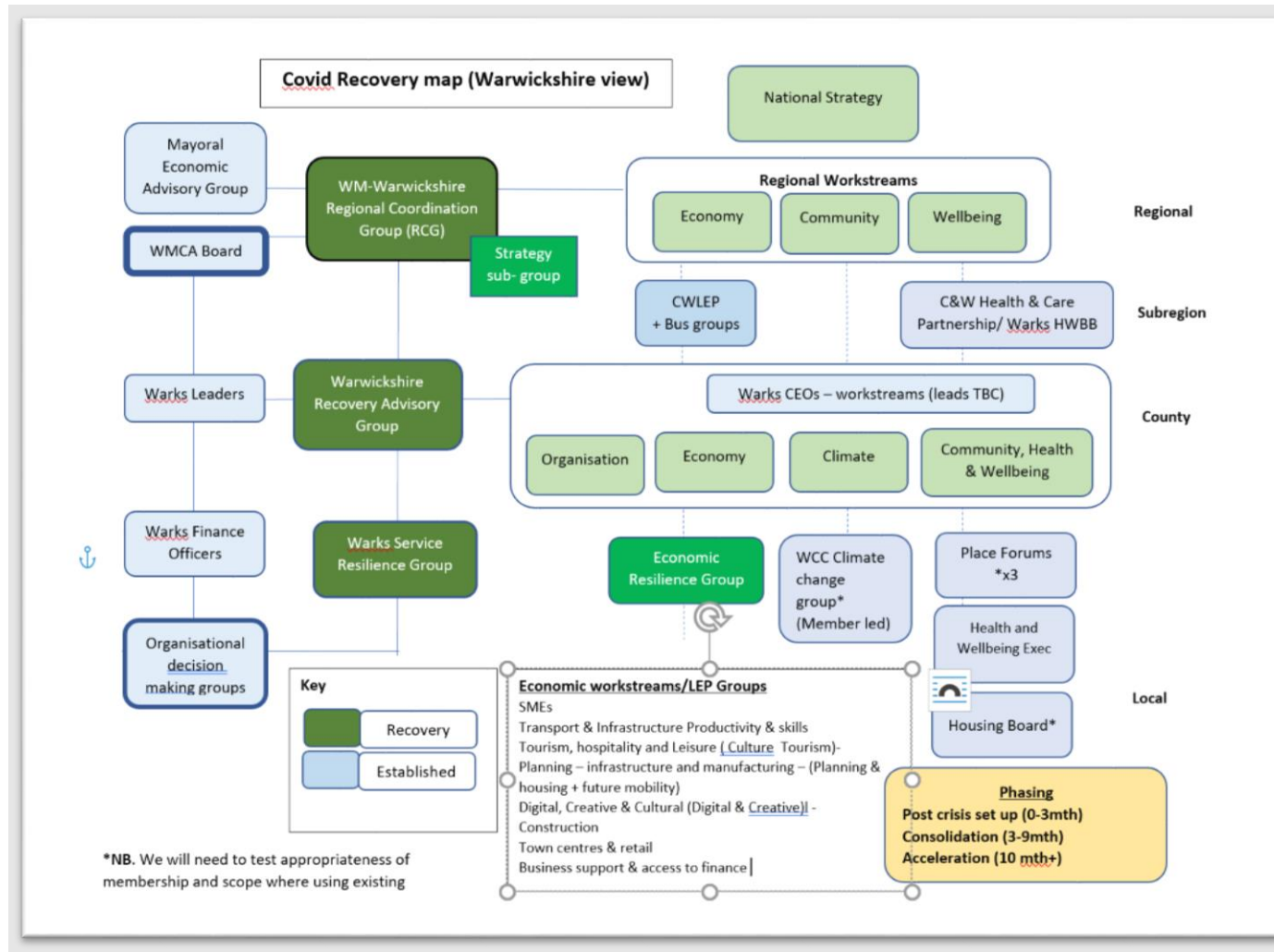
We are committed to working with our public, private and voluntary sector partners along with individual citizens to develop a stronger county after Covid-19, working at various levels:

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

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

Appendix D – Recovery timetable

