

## Public Service Reform Board

<b>Date</b>	4 March 2021
<b>Report title</b>	Community Recovery
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<b>Report has been considered by</b>	

### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

### Public Service Reform Board is recommended to:

- Note progress since publishing the *Levelling-up the West Midlands: Our roadmap to community recovery and prospectus for government*.

#### 1. Context

At its meeting in November, the Recovery Forum approved the roadmap and next steps. Progress on the roadmap is driven by the Recovery Coordination Group (RCG). The PSR Board received a copy of the roadmap in December 2020.

#### 2. Community recovery progress to date

There have been three key areas of progress since publication of the Roadmap;

- Each of the Local Authorities have agreed to lead a specific focused piece of work
- One area for future collaboration has been prioritised and progressed

- A Community Recovery Innovation Challenge launched on 10<sup>th</sup> February

### 3. Community recovery priority themes

Each of the six priority areas identified by the Citizens' Panel and taken forward into the Roadmap are being led by a local authority 'sponsor' as well as one of the cross-cutting principles (Extra help to the most affected) as follows;

Local Authority	Area
Birmingham	Extra Help to the Most Affected
Coventry	Local Businesses and High Streets
Dudley	Living Safely with Coronavirus
Sandwell	Accessing Healthcare and Improving Physical Health
Solihull	Jobs and Training
Walsall	Mental Health Support and Awareness
Wolverhampton	Education and Young People

Each of the priority areas are at different stages of development in progressing their focused activity. Examples of activity include:

- In the Extra Help to the Most Affected theme, work has been commissioned with the ODA to carry out data analysis identifying the number and location of households at risk of eviction through debt or arrears;
- In the Living Safely with Coronavirus theme, the universities of Wolverhampton and Coventry, together with BVSC have produced a report about the role of the voluntary and community sector during lockdown. This was presented at two workshops and recommendations are being taken forward in partnership with Dudley Council.
- We are working with colleagues at Walsall Council to reconvene the Mental Health Commission with a view to exploring the role of regional co-ordination regarding the mental health challenges arising out of the pandemic.

### 4. Digital Inclusion

The main priority for collaborative development identified through the community recovery roadmap was digital inclusion. This work is being taken forward through a Coalition on Digital Inclusion co-chaired by officers from Birmingham and Wolverhampton councils. It has also secured a secondee from the Good Things Foundation.

It's emerging priority areas for work include:

- Nurturing the grassroots ecosystems to support digital skills, confidence and motivation;
- The provision of devices and affordable data;
- Supporting the role of the voluntary and community sector in tackling digital exclusion;

- Identifying resources and lobbying government.

## 5. Community Recovery Innovation Challenge

On 10<sup>th</sup> February we launched a Community Recovery Innovation Competition targeting grassroots organisations and SMEs who have an idea or innovation to improve the lives of our citizens or communities. This could be an existing project to scale up or take to the next stage or a new innovation. Entries are encouraged to address one of twelve key areas including people-powered health and homelessness or debt issues.

The top 20 ideas will receive a £500 cash prize and an invitation to a business development masterclass delivered by Power to Change, the top 3 ideas will receive support, investment and coaching to the value of £15,000 each. The challenge closes on 21<sup>st</sup> March, more details can be [found here](#).

## 6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The financial implications of the community recovery innovation challenge are budgeted for in the 2020/21 budget. The *Community Recovery Roadmap and Prospectus to Government* includes over over £2bn of asks to Government. Any new or extended activity generated by successful Comprehensive Spending Review asks will require officer time to develop and implement.

## 7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

## 8. Equalities Implications

- 8.1 The prospectus draws upon current and existing partner research – such as the State of the Region Health report – to ensure that the people who have borne the heaviest burden during the pandemic are prioritised for focus as part of community recovery. Local authority, public health and wider partners are working to ensure that the insight coming into this work reflects that.

## 9. Inclusive Growth Implications

- 9.1 There is a risk to inclusive growth if the people identified as part of 8.1 are not prioritised in the wider WMCA 'Recharge' document. As such, this community recovery-focused work is a vital 'bridge' between planned investments and those people, ensuring that everyone is benefiting from wider investments into the region.

## 10. Geographical Area of Report's Implications

- 10.1 This work is relevant across the WMCA 3-LEP region, but focuses specifically on the seven metropolitan authorities.



**West Midlands  
Combined Authority**

**11. Other Implications**

None.

**12. Schedule of Background Papers**

Community recovery report to December Board

<https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s5008/Report.pdf>

**13. Appendices**