

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report to Cabinet

16th June 2020

TITLE:	COVID-19 Pandemic – Response & Recovery
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Cllr Sybil Ralphs – Leader
CONTACT OFFICERS:	Andrew Stokes – Acting Chief Executive
WARDS INVOLVED:	Non-Specific

Appendices Attached:

None

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 Regular updates have been provided to councillors on the impact of COVID-19 and the Council's response. As the lockdown restrictions begin to be eased and there is the requirement for services to return to some form of normality it is an appropriate time to 'take stock'. The purpose of this report is to summarise the Council's response to COVID-19 and to set out the plans that are being put in place for recovery.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Notes the details of the response and recovery as outlined in the report; and
- Agree that the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Panels should begin to consider the recovery work streams plans at their next meetings.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Full major incident and business continuity structures have been put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Staffordshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) formed a Strategic Co-ordinating Groups (SCG) to respond to the emergency situation. The Council has been part of the response and have been members of the SCG and other tactical and associated sub groups.

- 3.2 Throughout the pandemic response period there have been daily updates from government and the Council has responded quickly in order to ensure that essential services have continued to be provided and people across the district have been supported to stay safe particularly the most vulnerable in communities. The Council has also provided support to businesses in an attempt to enable them to remain sustainable throughout the period.
- 3.3 Some elements of the COVID-19 response will need to be ongoing for a long period and will become the 'new normal'. The Council needs to start plan for this 'new normal' and embed it as 'business as usual' to ensure that the services that are being provided are sustainable.
- 3.4 The Council quickly put into action its plan to help delay the spread of the virus and manage the potential impacts of the effects of the virus on staff, services and members of the public. The measures reflected the advice provided by the government and Public Health England (PHE).
- 3.5 Critical services and those enabling services required to support them are clearly identified in the Council's existing business continuity plans. These services have been prioritised to support the pandemic response and with an emphasis on continuity should the Council have a reduction in its workforce or have to divert resources to respond to government guidance. The services have been monitored on a daily basis in terms of staff availability, levels of demand and any future vulnerability risks.
- 3.6 In addition the Council has had to fulfil a number of new functions during the response including:
- Supporting Staffordshire Police in their response to reported breaches of social distancing requirements;
 - Dealing with the distribution of business grants;
 - Supporting national and countywide systems that have been established to help vulnerable residents get access to food and medicine;
- 3.7 Ensuring good governance structures and decision-making processes has been at the centre of the Council's response. Changes to the arrangements for executive decision making were quickly agreed and implemented in the absence of the ability to hold committee meetings. Arrangements for the establishment of virtual meetings including the satisfaction of public access requirements have been developed and are being implemented.
- 3.8 The Council's Acting Chief Executive and Executive Directors have ensured strategic oversight of the operational running of the Council and have been supported by the wider management team attending regular meetings to make decisions, move forward actions and respond to government guidance.

- 3.9 Arrangements have been put in place to ensure that the Council's workforce can continue to deliver important services to residents. These arrangements include:
- Staff have been working from home where possible;
 - Staff required to attend work to perform critical functions are supported with the appropriate levels of PPE and have been given guidance on the necessary social distancing measures;
 - There has been a focus on the mental health and wellbeing and supporting staff; and
 - Temporary arrangements around working hours have been made to ensure flexibility in working arrangements.
- 3.10 Throughout the response the Council's Communications Team have worked closely with colleagues across the Council and a variety of organisations including Public Health England, the NHS, the emergency services, county and other borough and district councils to ensure that messaging is consistent and that information is shared with others in a managed way. An information hub has been created on the Council's website and is the primary source of information for local communities and stakeholders.
- 3.11 The Council has played an active part in supporting the plans that were developed to support identified vulnerable people with access to essentials, i.e. food and medicine. This has involved supporting voluntary organisations to deliver essential 'on the ground' support in the wide range of communities across the district. The demand for voluntary support services has increased during the pandemic and both the Council and the voluntary sector organisations are in regular contact to check on capacity.
- 3.12 The Council has diverted financial resources to provide support to parish/town councils and voluntary and community organisations involved in the effort in Staffordshire Moorlands to assist individuals and households impacted by coronavirus and the measures put in place to fight the spread of the virus. The Councillor Initiative Fund was opened early and a number of applications were processed that were targeted at assisting the community response effort.
- 3.13 There has been a significant impact on the services provided by the Council. A summary of these is detailed in section 13 of the report.
- 3.14 Whilst some elements of the COVID-19 response continue to be ongoing, a recovery response also needed to be considered and implemented. The LRF's Recovery Co-ordination Group has been established and is beginning to consider the threats and opportunities.
- 3.15 There is continuing uncertainty about the removal of the lockdown restrictions and the form that this may take i.e. some restrictions may remain in a more

limited format. However the Council needed to commence planning for recovery in order to effectively plan for a return to day-to-day business or the likely 'new normal'. Work commenced in the planning of the Council's planning for recovery in late April. The proposed responses have been categorised into five work streams:

- Reinstating services;
- Economic recovery;
- Community recovery;
- Financial recovery; and
- Taking advantage of the positive legacy.

3.16 The recovery is being led by the Executive Director (Place) who is representing the Council on the LRF recovery group. Each of the recovery streams are being led by a Head of Service. Throughout the process the Council will seek to engage local partners to assist with the recovery e.g. town and parish councils.

3.17 A number of changes have been made in the Council's management structure and reporting arrangements to ensure that there is sufficient capacity to deliver the recovery alongside the ongoing response.

3.18 The recovery work streams have commenced work and details of their focus and progress is detailed in the report as follows:

- Reinstating services – detailed in section 16.
- Economic recovery – detailed in section 17
- Community recovery – detailed in section 18
- Financial recovery – detailed in section 19
- Taking advantage of the positive legacy – detailed in section 20

3.19 The recovery process will need to be a significant focus for the Council in both the short and longer term. Cabinet will regularly need to consider both changes in and the implementation of policy to address the impact on residents and communities. Similarly the work programmes for the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Panels will need to reflect the recovery and involve the engagement of all councillors in this significant programme of work. It is therefore proposed that the individual scrutiny panels receive a report on each of the work streams that are relative to their area of business at the first cycle of meetings that follow the reintroduction of meetings.

4. How this Report Links to Corporate Priorities

4.1 The successful delivery of all corporate priorities is dependent upon the effective delivery of services in line with the targets established in the Council's performance framework.

4.2 With regard to the impact of COVID-19 on performance indicators, in a small number of cases the impact has been positive e.g. carbon emissions, social media activity. The overall position however can be summarised as follows:

- Negative impact - 61%
- No Impact - 28%
- Positive impact - 11%

4.3 There will also be disruption to the individual actions committed in each of the service plans to deliver the priority actions set out in the Corporate Plan.

4.4 It has been agreed to bring forward the annual review of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan to begin in July. The impact on service plan performance and priority actions will need to be understood in more detail to ensure that this review is effective.

5. Options and Analysis

5.1 There are no options to consider at this stage.

6. Implications

6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

Consideration has had to be given to potential increases in domestic abuse, neighbour disputes and noise nuisance as a result of residents spending more time at home. The Council is working with partner agencies such as the police, probation services and the County Council to provide support and reassurance where required is a priority.

The Council has been supporting agencies in ensuring compliance with social distancing regulations, including the monitoring of parks and open spaces.

6.2 Workforce

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted significantly on the working arrangements for the Council's employees.

The response to the pandemic has seen the following changes to working practices:

- Where possible staff are working from home;
- Front line staff are working safely with the appropriate PPE;
- Staff are being redeployed from time to time in order to support the

additional demand created by a number of new service functions e.g. small business grant processing; providing support for vulnerable people etc.

The Council has maintained a good dialogue with staff representatives and trade unions and they have been supportive of the Council's approach.

6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Equality and Diversity policies.

It is particularly important during the current crisis to ensure the safeguarding of our most vulnerable residents. It is also noted that the scope of vulnerabilities has widened from the usual cohort of individuals to include financial, health / clinical and the impact of isolation, especially for those with care and support needs. The Council cannot deliver such a comprehensive and flexible support package on its own.

A risk based approach has therefore been developed to balance the need to bolster the community and neighbourhood efforts and managing any risks to the individuals most at risk of their vulnerabilities being exploited. This approach is aligned to and supported by the County Council and the NHS response.

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) will need to be developed to identify specific implications for protected groups moving forward.

6.4 Financial Considerations

The crisis is having a significant financial impact on the Council's General Fund. The financial impact is arising from additional expenditure in dealing with the crisis both externally and organisationally, lost income and savings targets that will not be met within the same timeframe due to resources being diverted elsewhere.

Costs and reductions in income are being monitored and updated on an ongoing basis in line with a full financial risk assessment. Details of the potential impact have been presented in a separate report.

The financial impact on the Council's General Fund in 2020/21 is predicted to be up to £2.3m. This impact will be partially offset by emergency government funding of approximately £1m. With this government support, the financial effect on the current financial year will be able to be managed with the use of the authority's contingency reserves.

6.5 Legal

There have been a significant number of regulatory changes during the

response to the pandemic. These are highlighted throughout the report.

6.6 Climate Change

The COVID-19 response has resulted a number of positive benefits in respect of carbon reduction including:

- Reduced employee travel during lockdown;
- Reduced energy consumption in public buildings due to building closures and reduced use; and
- Improved air quality due to general reductions in travel.

It is important that these areas are reviewed in order to identify potential new ways of working as part of the recovery process that will have a positive legacy on the climate change challenge

Although there is a positive environmental impact on the district due to reduced emissions, there has been an increase in environmental crime which the Council is continuing to monitor and enforce if necessary.

6.7 External Consultation

The implementation of the Council's recovery plans will need to include extensive consultation with residents and communities

6.8 Risk Assessment

The pandemic has resulted in a number of specific risks that need to be assessed and managed these include:

- Inability to deliver critical services due to loss of staff
- Inability to maintain financial sustainability of the Council
- Failure to deliver health and safety responsibilities
- Safeguarding issues arise through the enhanced level of community support
- Staff are at increased risk of the disease in certain services
- Increased risk of fraud and cyber security breach
- Reduced burial capacity
- Lack of PPE for key workers
- Increase in community safety issues which are difficult to respond to due to capacity
- Economy is deflated post recovery leading to ongoing economic issues in town centre and wider economy

Risk assessments have been completed for all services and mitigation measures are being built in to the Council's recovery plans.

ANDREW P STOKES
Acting Chief Executive

Web Links and
Background Papers

Location

Contact details

Andrew P Stokes
Acting Chief Executive

7 Background and Introduction

- 7.1 The current coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, which began in December 2019, presents a significant global challenge. In early March, in response to the World Health Organisation's (WHO) declaration of a pandemic, the Council began to put in place governance arrangements to respond to the impact of COVID-19 on the organisation and its communities.
- 7.2 Since mid-March, full major incident and business continuity structures have been in place. As a 'Category 1' emergency responder the Council is a member of the Staffordshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF). The LRF is a multi-agency partnership made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency and others.
- 7.3 Staffordshire LRF formed a Strategic Co-ordinating Groups (SCG) to respond to the emergency situation. The Council has been part of the response and have been members of the SCG. Senior officers have attended SCG meetings and the Council has also been supporting the tactical response through Heads of Service' (and others) attendance at the Tactical Co-ordinating Group (TCG) meetings and associated sub groups – these have included arrangements covering the following elements of the response:
- Intelligence & communications
 - Mutual aid and resources
 - Health & social care
 - Vulnerability & voluntary sector
 - Mortality management
 - Safeguarding , vulnerability and partnership
 - Restoration
- 7.4 Throughout the pandemic response period there have been daily updates from government and the Council has responded quickly in order to ensure that essential services have continued to be provided and people across the district have been supported to stay safe particularly the most vulnerable in communities. The Council has also provided support to businesses in an attempt to enable them to remain sustainable throughout the period.
- 7.5 It is considered the LRF's response so far has been successful. All LRF organisations in the county are managing, there has been good inter-agency co-operation within the tactical groups, and communications have been consistent and generally positive.
- 7.6 The national modelling of the expected course of the epidemic is complex. The early 'worst case scenario' planning assumptions for the impact have not been borne out. On 16th April the government extended the 'lockdown' for a further

three weeks and set out 'five tests' that must be met it can be eased. This has been followed by further easing of the 'lockdown' since mid May but aspects may be in place for months.

- 7.7 This suggests that some elements of the COVID-19 response will need to be ongoing for a long period and will become the 'new normal'. The Council will need to start to think about how this 'new normal' is embedded as 'business as usual' to ensure that the services that are been provided are sustainable.
- 7.8 This suggests that response is going to be a 'long haul'. The experts are predicting that the virus is likely to become endemic (i.e. it will continue to circulate in the population) and it may only be halted by the development and introduction of vaccination – which may be some months off.
- 7.9 The LRF has begun gradually moving to a 'standing down' of the response with ongoing monitoring and triggers and contingency plans that allow it to be 'stood up' again rapidly if necessary in the event of an escalation. The LRF needs to ensure that there are proportionate and sustainable arrangements for ongoing strategic co-ordination of the response.
- 7.10 Regular updates have been provided to councillors on the impact of COVID-19 and the Council's response. As the lockdown restrictions begin to be eased and there is the requirement for services to return to some form of normality it is an appropriate time to 'take stock'. The purpose of this report is to summarise the Council's response to COVID-19 and to set out the plans that are being put in place for recovery.

8 Managing the Impact on the Council's Services

- 8.1 The Council quickly put into action its plan to help delay the spread of the virus and manage the potential impacts of the effects of the virus on staff, services and members of the public. The measures reflected the advice provided by the government and Public Health England.
- 8.2 As part of its emergency planning framework the Council has well established Business Continuity Plans which have informed action plans within services. Government guidance has been evolving rapidly and the Council has had to respond quickly. The emphasis has been to maintain public safety, continuing to provide essential services, supporting communities and businesses, as well as protecting elected members, staff and contractors.
- 8.3 Critical services and those enabling services required to support them are clearly identified in the Council's existing business continuity plans. These services have been prioritised to support the pandemic response and with an emphasis on

continuity should the Council have a reduction in its workforce or have to divert resources to respond to government guidance.

- 8.4 The services have been monitored on a daily basis in terms of staff availability, levels of demand and any future vulnerability risks.
- 8.5 In addition there have been a number of additional functions that the Council has had to fulfil during the response including:
- The Environmental Health team has been supporting Derbyshire Police in their response to reported breaches of social distancing requirements;
 - The Finance team has been dealing with the distribution of business grants; and
 - The Communities Team are supporting national and countywide systems that have been established to help vulnerable residents get access to food and medicine.

9 Council Governance Arrangements & Decision Making

- 9.1 Ensuring good governance structures and decision-making processes has been at the centre of the Council's response.
- 9.2 In early April an approach to making decisions was agreed with the Council's group leaders. In light of the restrictions on holding the Council's usual meetings at that time it was agreed to just consider those urgent decisions which are necessary to protect the interests of the Council.
- 9.3 A work programme was developed for Cabinet decisions which contained details as to the reports which the relevant Portfolio Holders would consider during April and May. These decisions have been considered in accordance with the Protocol for Cabinet Delegated Decisions which provide every councillor the opportunity to comment on any proposed decision before it is made by the Portfolio Holder. In addition, work is continuing, where possible, on other items which form part of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels' existing work programmes and updates are being provided to members by way of Information Digests as these become available.
- 9.4 In early April the Council received the regulations which, amongst other matters, removed the requirement to have an annual meeting of the Council this year. This meant that the Council did not need to hold an Annual Council meeting in May, giving flexibility to simply keep the status quo until next year or review the situation as the national position changes. Despite the provisions in the regulations around remote meetings, it was extremely difficult at that stage to see how this could work with 56 members in attendance. It was therefore agreed following consultation with the Group Leaders, that the most appropriate way forward was to cancel the Annual Council meeting scheduled for 13th May and

confirm that all appointments made at the last Annual Council will remain in force but that as soon as the current situation permits a meeting will be convened at that time to make appointments for the remainder of the civic year.

- 9.5 The regulations also allow for meetings to be held remotely. For the purposes of any statutory requirement, members of the Council will be considered as attending a meeting if they can hear, and where practicable see, and be heard and, where practicable, be seen by other members and the public. This allows for meetings to be held by remote means including via telephone conferencing, video conferencing, live webchat and live streaming. Requirements for a meeting being “open to the public” are satisfied by a local authority holding the meeting remotely.
- 9.6 In order to establish effective virtual meeting capability a project group was established to undertake a detailed assessment of the options for holding virtual meetings. There were a number of significant issues to address before any formal virtual meetings could take place, including the following:
- What system platform to use;
 - Establishing a system for public access;
 - The constraints faced given the nature of planning application meetings i.e. the rights of applicants and objectors to make representations and speak at the meetings; the ability of ward members to speak at the meetings etc.
 - The ability of the members of any committee to access the meeting, taking into account the hardware and software that is available to them;
 - The training needs for participants including guidance around chairing a meeting in this way – it was important that we all members of any committee are considered, including those with limited IT skills;
 - The legal constraints i.e. whether having virtual meetings result in additional risks around appeals and/or legal challenge to the Council;
 - The requirements for site visits for meetings of the Planning Applications Committee; and
 - The security and integrity of any arrangements.
- 9.7 The Council is in the process of commencing meetings by remote attendance in accordance with the new legislation and will continue to do so until such time as social distancing requirements are relaxed. Microsoft Teams will be used for the meetings and the Council’s IT provider is in the process of loading the necessary software application on to councillors’ iPads. Remote Meetings Procedure Rules have been developed to accommodate any changes needed due to remote attendance. Where necessary, the Council may continue to defer agenda items or specific meetings should it remain preferable to undertake such meetings or decisions in person.

- 9.8 In the absence of formal meetings the Acting Chief Executive has been providing weekly updates to all councillors detailing the impact of COVID-19 and the Council's response.
- 9.9 The Council's Acting Chief Executive and Executive Directors have ensured strategic oversight of the operational running of the Council and have been supported by the wider management team attending regular meetings to make decisions, move forward actions and respond to Government guidance. Following the implementation of social distancing requirements, meetings are being undertaken by using teleconferencing or video conferencing facilities.

10 Workforce Arrangements

- 10.1 The Prime Minister's announcement in March outlining "lockdown measures" confirmed that the public should only attend work if they cannot work from home. As a consequence all of the Council's staff were instructed to work from home where possible. Those officers who are required to attend work to perform critical functions are supported with the appropriate levels of PPE and have been given guidance on the necessary social distancing measures.
- 10.2 The Council has also focussed on the mental health and wellbeing of its staff and is having regular remote team meetings and briefings. In addition, internal communications are sent out to all staff on a regular basis and the normal external support mechanisms are still available to staff.
- 10.3 Since late March, all of the Council buildings have been closed to members of the public except for urgent matters by appointment only.
- 10.4 Staff who are not undertaking critical services or responses to the pandemic have been supporting critical services and where necessary have been temporarily redeployed.
- 10.5 Temporary arrangements around working hours have been made to ensure flexibility in working arrangements to support those colleagues with caring responsibilities, especially those with children since the closure of the schools and other childcare facilities. Extended carry over of annual leave has been implemented and communicated to all staff.
- 10.6 The requirement for PPE is becoming increasingly prevalent. The Council is continually reviewing the guidance issued by the Government in terms of Health & Safety to ensure staff are adequately protected in the circumstances. The Council has reviewed and undertaken further risk assessments in the light of the emerging guidance to ensure that staff who are supporting the community through essential services have the correct PPE available to them.

11 Communications

- 11.1 Throughout the response the Council's Communications Team have worked closely with colleagues across the Council and a variety of organisations including Public Health England, the NHS, the emergency services, County and other borough and district councils to ensure that messaging is consistent and that information is shared with other in a managed way. The team has also been working closely with the Staffordshire Local Resilience Forum (LRF) and are supporting the key messages.
- 11.2 An information hub has been created on the Council's website and is the primary source of information for local communities and stakeholders:
- <https://www.staffsmoorlands.gov.uk/Coronavirus>
- 11.3 Through the digital and social media channels the focus has been on making sure people are aware of the Council's key messages on the services delivered by the Council and to sharing national messaging and key updates from partners as appropriate.
- 11.4 The Communications team have also developed and implemented a positive news campaign highlighting the work the Council is doing to support communities and businesses through the Coronavirus emergency whilst maintaining 'business as usual' in far from usual circumstances.

12. Community Support

- 12.1 Early in the national response, plans were developed to support identified vulnerable people with access to essentials, i.e. food and medicine. Staffordshire County Council also needed to be involved with supporting vulnerable people locally. They established local arrangements to support individuals with food supplies. The Council has been supporting this process by linking with voluntary sector organisations to identify existing local community support groups and initiatives that could be "plugged in" to this process.
- 12.2 The approach to providing support is focussed on two main groups:
- The *Shielded Patients* list: those with a condition that makes them extremely vulnerable and who have been advised not to leave their home and to minimise all non-essential contact. This group have primarily been identified through medical records.
 - Other *Vulnerable Individuals*: these do not fit within the above group but nevertheless are at greater need of support. They have been identified

through a combination of researching information held by public bodies, self-referrals and referrals from organisations and others.

- 12.3 The arrangements that were put in place locally involved Staffordshire County Council (SCC) provided the back up to the NHS scheme for 'shielded people' (approximately 20,000 people in Staffordshire could register for support).
- 12.4 With regard to vulnerable people receiving support (regulated and others in receipt of non regulated services). These were people known to Staffordshire County Council (130,000 were identified across the county) – with some overlap with NHS list.. Staffordshire County Council established, coordinated and operated a Staffordshire Moorlands Food distribution hub based at Leek High School. Staffordshire County Council staffed the hub and arranged for distribution of food to their identified vulnerable group (ensuring that anyone delivering food was DBS checked). The District Council offered support and has remained on stand-by to provide staff to support this County Council role should they experience staff/vehicle shortages.
- 12.5 Support Staffordshire worked closely with the local community and voluntary sector, the County Council and the District Council to agree a system of establishing lead organisations in the district to whom the County Council and District Council can refer requests for assistance with shopping for food and household essentials. In Staffordshire Moorlands there are three lead organisations – Biddulph Youth Action Zone, Hargeate Community Centre and Homelink.
- 12.6 In addition to the three lead organisations there are another twenty locally based community groups that have been established or have geared up with volunteers to help local people. These groups have been identified as a result of information provided to SMDC Officers by Councillors and Parish Councils.
- 12.7 The Council shared this information with Support Staffordshire which has compiled a list with details of the organisations that they have contacted. Support Staffordshire undertook basic 'verification checks' of each group to ensure they are genuine and as far as possible operating safe practices. This information is kept up to date and shared with the Council and the three lead organisations. The three lead organisations will work with these community groups where requests for help are from their particular community.
- 12.8 Examples of the type of work that has been undertaken by the three lead organisations and other community groups includes:
 - Low level safeguarding (safe and well checks)
 - Food, toiletries / household supplies running out
 - Paying bills / accessing cash / accruing debts
 - Medication running out (non-prescription)

- Small scale DIY tasks / installation of key safes
- Feeling lonely / isolated / anxious
- Pets need exercising
- Reading postal deliveries - Sensory impaired
- Low level carer support

12.9 In addition to the above resources there are foodbanks (who have seen increased demand) and other voluntary support groups. Support Staffordshire are in touch with these groups and are regularly reviewing with the Council to identify emerging issues – ability to source food, to meet demand, numbers of volunteers etc. The Council has been in close contact with Support Staffordshire to identify issues and seek solutions to problems/challenges.

12.10 In addition, the Council diverted the Fund originally established to support community events commemorating the 75th anniversary of VE Day to instead provide support to parish/town councils and voluntary and community organisations involved in the effort in Staffordshire Moorlands to assist individuals and households impacted by coronavirus and the measures put in place to fight the spread of the virus. The Councillor Initiative Fund was opened early and a number of applications were processed that were targeted at assisting the community response effort.

12.11 A large number of councillors also supported the community response process to ensure that vulnerable residents received the necessary support.

13 Impact on Council Services

13.1 There has been a significant impact on the services provided by the Council. A summary of these is detailed below.

Customer Services

13.2 At the introduction of the ‘lockdown’ arrangements the Council offices in Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle were closed to the public - appointments by telephone have been offered if required. The call centre has however remained fully operational with the staff answering calls initially dispersed across the available sites. The Council worked quickly on this with support from our ICT service provider and since early May customer services staff have been able to handle calls from home.

13.3 As expected there has been a huge shift in the way in which residents have contacted the Council. The closure of the offices has seen access being diverted to the on-line and telephone access channels.

- 13.4 The Council's call volumes have remained similar to normal during the response period although there has been a shift in types of call. Separate dedicated call numbers were set up to deal with the new functions such as supporting businesses and vulnerable people.
- 13.5 There has been an increase in the number of service requests that are being accessed through the Council's website.

Council Tax Collection and Housing Benefits

- 13.6 The Council's efforts during the response have been focused on those residents facing increased hardship from the fast changing circumstances.
- 13.7 Newly eligible residents have been encouraged to claim council tax support from the Council's Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS), which supports households of working age with low income with reductions in council tax liability, and housing benefits.
- 13.8 The Council has received additional funding of approximately £517,000 as part of the national £500m Hardship Fund which is being targeted at those in need. As a requirement by Government, the first call of this funding was used to provide every household, where there is a working age person in receipt of council tax support through the LCTRS, up to an additional £150 towards their outstanding council tax liability (should there be any liability remaining). An exercise to rebill eligible tax payers has been completed. The remaining funding is being used to cover new LCTRS claimants and Council Tax Hardship Relief applications.
- 13.9 The Council has offered flexible payment plans for council tax and recovery action has also been temporarily suspended in recognition of the current situation.
- 13.10 There is as expected an increase in the number of council tax support and housing benefit claims. Following the completion of the review of the April instalment payments, the Council contacted approximately 1,400 council taxpayers who have not paid and have made no previous contact. There has been a response from a steady number of these who are being directing onto extended payment plans.

Business Support Arrangements

- 13.11 The Council has stepped up its support to local businesses. The Regeneration team has reached out to many of the small businesses that operate in the area. The team has helped to signpost these to the support that has been made available both nationally and regionally.
- 13.12 The Council has been supporting the efforts locally with the implementation of the following support incentives:

- The extension of a number of additional business rates reliefs;
- The implementation of the Small Business and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Schemes – which has involved dealing with claims from some 2,000 local businesses and the payment of some £22.7m in grants;
- The implementation of a Local Discretionary Business Grant scheme which will involve distributing a further £1m of financial support to eligible businesses.

13.13 The Council has been engaging with its commercial tenants on one to one basis to provide support based on the individual circumstances of the businesses.

Homelessness

13.14 The Homelessness service has continued to function as normal. Following the lockdown arrangements on 23rd March, the Council was given a clear directive from MHCLG to get “Everyone In”. There was an initial ‘spike’ in requests after some hotels and B&Bs decided to close following Government guidance. However with support from the LRF the Council has continued to fulfil its obligations.

Car Parking, Markets and Public Conveniences

13.15 Public toilets across the district and the indoor and outdoor markets in Leek and Cheadle have remained closed during the lockdown period.

13.16 The arrangements in the Council’s car parks have been maintained strictly in line with the British Parking Association guidance. The Council has recognised the national permit scheme for health and care workers and have also extended it locally by giving permits to other workers e.g. staff working in chemists.

13.17 The Council continued to operate charging on the car parks with the early decision making being made in conjunction with key local resilience forum partners. The police in particular were keen for us to keep the charging in place to discourage social gathering. The Council also closed off access to its country park car parks in response to their specific request.

Environmental Health, Licensing and Enforcement

13.18 Environment Health services have continued to operate within the restrictions on compliance visits and have included the new requirements under the emergency legislation in particular around enforced closures.

13.19 The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020 gave the Council the power to use enforcement powers to ensure that the restrictions on businesses are upheld. The Council’s Licensing, Environmental

Health and Regulatory Teams have been leading on this work and providing encouragement, guidance and support to ensure that businesses are aware of their obligations. Multi-agency working has been prevalent which has helped to support a consistent approach throughout the district.

- 13.20 Due to the initial closure of household waste and recycling centres, the Council has seen an increase in fly-tipping. Proactive communication has been issued to residents through social media to advise and encourage residents on the proper disposal of waste during this period.

Leisure Centres

- 13.21 The Council's leisure centres were closed in late March.
- 13.22 Support was requested by the Council's leisure provider Parkwood under the provisions of government guidance issued under Procurement Policy Note 02/02 which set out specific requirements for local authorities providing reliefs to suppliers during the pandemic. This support was agreed by Cabinet following consideration of a specific report in April.

Waste and Recycling, Street Cleansing, Parks & Grounds Maintenance

- 13.23 The Council's trading company Alliance Environmental Services (AES) continued to provide an excellent service by continuing with household waste and recycling collections at the kerbside. AES have continued to ensure that the workforce is working safely in line with Government guidance. Whilst there were concerns around social distancing these have been mitigated wherever possible, ensuring that only two waste collectors travel in the cab together, and the third crew member follows separately to the destination.
- 13.24 AES's grounds maintenance operatives have been trained on waste management procedures to provide additional capacity when needed, however AES has been able to utilise agency resource as the first option to enable the high priority grass cutting to be maintained.
- 13.25 With regard to grounds maintenance and grass cutting, AES has been able to continue to operate as normal and has been maintaining all sites to the normal standards. This includes grass cutting and burials. The majority of the seasonal employees have been trained to work in waste if required as this is continued to be the Council's highest priority. In terms of future planning if staff numbers start to decrease or burial numbers start to increase AES will begin to reduce grounds maintenance services in the following areas:
- Small pockets of open space that are not generally used for exercise
 - Closed Cemeteries

13.26 If numbers continue to fall then the following areas would be the priorities:

- Main Parks
- Open Cemeteries

13.27 Playgrounds were closed, but parks have remained open subject to residents using social distancing measures

Planning Applications

13.28 Planning application processing has continued operate as normal other than the restrictions on site visits and the committee decision making processes. This is beginning to return to normal following implementation of the new virtual arrangements.

13.29 The Planning Applications committee arrangements presented a number of additional complications to resolve before virtual meetings could be introduced due to the requirement for public participation arrangements. The Council has closely followed Planning Advisory Service (PAS) guidance which has continued to be updated.

Elections

13.30 Regulations were issued to postpone the Police and Crime Commissioner election until 6th May 2021 and local by-elections and other polls, either scheduled or which would otherwise arise before that date. The Council took the necessary steps to stand down the preparations that had already been made.

14 Recovery from COVID-19

14.1 Whilst some elements of the COVID-19 response continue to be ongoing, a recovery response also needed to be considered and implemented. The economic and social impact of COVID-19 will be profound. The worst case scenario suggests a global depression with all of the associated social implications.

14.2 A LRF's Recovery Co-ordination Group has been established and is beginning to consider the threats and opportunities. The Staffordshire LRF has accepted that it needs to be clear where it will add value in the recovery phase and be careful not to duplicate what individual organisations should rightly be expected to pick up.

14.3 There is continuing uncertainty about the removal of the lockdown restrictions and the form that this may take i.e. some restrictions may remain in a more limited format. However the Council needed to commence planning for recovery

in order to effectively plan for a return to day-to-day business or the likely 'new normal'.

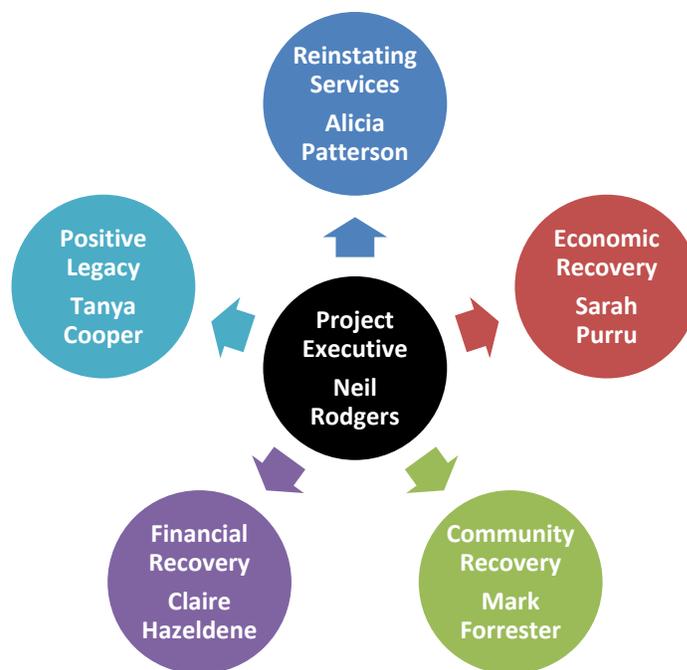
- 14.4 Whatever the form and timescales for a return to 'business as usual', it will be certain that the challenges that will need be faced to provide effective services to residents and to deliver the ambitions of the Council will be very different.
- 14.5 As with recovery from any emergency, the Council will need to take an active part in the LRF discussions. Arguably as a district council there will be a need to play a more active part in this element of the incident planning to ensure that impact on the local communities is properly understood and adequately responded to.

15 The Council's Planning for the Recovery

- 15.1 Work commenced in the planning of the Council's planning for recovery in late April. Before commencing the more formal planning and in particular establishing what the Council needed to focus on, it was essential that the scope of the work that needs to be undertaken was understood fully.
- 15.2 In order to shape the Councils' proposed response the Council's Directors and Heads of Service identified the key areas for the response in late April. The proposed responses have been categorised into five work streams. Some of the key issues that the Councils should consider were identified in the initial analysis. It was accepted that there will be other issues to take into account which will emerge as the detailed planning continues in these work streams. The work streams are:
 - Reinstating services;
 - Economic recovery;
 - Community recovery;
 - Financial recovery; and
 - Taking advantage of the positive Legacy.
- 15.3 In terms of the organisation of the Councils' recovery planning, it was essential that an effective project structure was established. It is also essential that all Heads of Service are engaged in the process and their time needs to be allocated to this task.
- 15.4 There are a number of principles that needed to frame the recovery:
 - The recovery will be led by an executive director;
 - The executive director lead will represent the Council on the LRF recovery group and will be supported by the Councils' lead on emergency planning the Corporate Health & Safety Officer;
 - Each of the recovery streams will be led by a Head of Service;

- All Heads of Service will be engaged in the response;
- Documentation and progress reporting will be consistent across the work streams;
- The work stream leads will be supported by other Heads of Service as required;
- The OD & Transformation team will support the work streams with loggist and communications support; and
- The Councils will seek to engage local partners to assist with the recovery e.g. town and parish councils.

15.5 A summary of the agreed project executive and work stream leads is set out below:



15.6 There are a number of further areas that have needed to be considered:

- Management capacity to deliver the response alongside the ongoing response;
- Contributing to the ongoing LRF demands;
- Organisation and coordination of the Council's overall approach;
- Ensuring that all services are considered in the 'Restating Services' work stream;
- Involvement / engagement with elected members to obtain their input.

- 15.7 In order to deal with the management resource issues and to provide the capacity for the ongoing response and recovery a number of changes have been made in the Council's management arrangements. These changes have been made to harness the strengths of the previous arrangements and provide for improvement. The changes have been focussed on the following principles:
- Inclusive management decision making;
 - Providing for increased collaboration between services;
 - Strengthening communication processes;
 - Improving corporate and financial planning; and
 - Strengthening management /elected member relationships.
- 15.8 The principal change that has been implemented is to replace the current Alliance Management Team (AMT) / Directors Management Team (DMT) arrangements with two management groups:
- Alliance Leadership Team (ALT); and
 - Alliance Management Team (AMT).
- 15.9 These two groups will share the responsibility for the delivery of the Councils' priorities and the management of the services and workforce. They are made up in the following way:
- ALT will focus on strategic issues and will comprise the Acting Chief Executive and Executive Directors;
 - AMT will focus on tactical issues and will comprise the Acting Chief Executive, Executive Directors and Heads of Service.
- 15.10 In order to create the required additional capacity to deliver the ongoing response and recovery, the following changes in the make up of the management structure have been made:
- The creation of an Acting Executive Director (Finance & Customer Services) post;
 - The creation of two additional acting Heads of Service roles – Head of Finance and Head of Revenues and Benefits
- 15.10 In order to ensure that capacity is directed to services appropriately there has been a transfer of the management responsibility for a number of service functions between Heads of Service. Additional supervisory capacity has also been created in the Housing Benefits team.
- 15.11 In order to create additional leadership capacity the management reporting arrangements have been adjusted to reduce the services under the direct control of the Acting Chief Executive.

16 Reinstating Services

16.1 The key issues that were initially identified for this work stream are set out below:

- Re-establishing a baseline of current service provision;
- Planning for re-providing services that have been stopped during the lockdown;
- Planning for a relaxed but continuing lockdown;
- Dealing with backlogs of work e.g. food safety inspections; housing repairs;
- Planning for increased service demands e.g. housing benefits;
- Planning for new service demands;
- Restarting projects after the enforced delays; and
- Returning displaced homelessness clients

16.2 This work has involved all Heads of Service and has been structured by them all identifying the following:

- Detail of the service activity or projects that have been affected as a result of COVID-19
- The impact on the service/project e.g. full service suspension, delay in delivery
- The risks to the Council should the service/project not return to normal promptly
- Any anticipated backlog of work as a result of returning to normal e.g. applications to process, visits to make
- Provisions that are in place to deal with expected increase in demand or backlog when services can restart
- Additional resources or work arounds that will be required to deal with a return to normality, the increased demand or backlog during recovery

16.3 Heads of Service have also completed risk assessments for the return of services. The Council is going to confirm our commitment to working safely in a statement outlining the five steps that have been undertaken to ensure safer working, which will be promoted and displayed in Council buildings. The steps are:

- We have carried out *COVID-19 risk assessments* and shared the results with the people who work here.
- We have *cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures* in line with guidance.
- We have taken all reasonable steps to *help people work from home*.
- We have taken all reasonable steps to *maintain a 2m distance* in the workplace.

- Where people cannot be 2m apart, we have done everything practical to *manage transmission risk*.
- 16.4 Services will be reintroduced gradually in line with national guidance and this process has already commenced.
- 16.5 A number of Heads of Service have been focussing early efforts to plan for the re-opening of town centres on 15th June. This work has included:
- The development of re-opening plans for each of our towns including Leek, Biddulph and Cheadle - this has involved input from the county council with their highways responsibilities
 - Planning for the re-opening of public conveniences and markets
 - Developing measures to ensure that our car parks operate safely
 - Discussions with the town councils to include their input
 - Discussions with other stakeholders
- 16.6 The Council's communications effort has been stepped up to make residents and potential visitors aware of the situation. The Council has attempted to where possible to have details of the shops and businesses that are open and details of opening times. The communications messages continue to stress the national narrative about the requirements of social distancing in line with national messaging.
- 16.8 Managers have been working very closely with Parkwood Leisure with regards to the re-opening / recovery plans for the leisure centres. The government have intimated to Active (the organisation that represents the leisure industry nationally) that leisure centres - gyms (not pools) should prepare to re-open on the 4th July. Parkwood expects to receive confirmation of this around 15th June.
- 16.9 The Council has been supported in discussions with Parkwood by leisure consultants FMG which has been paid for by Sport England and the plan emerging is for a phased approach. This will almost certainly have a cost and also could impact on staffing arrangements at the facilities. There will be a need to further report to councillors on the detail of these implications.

17 Economic Recovery

- 17.1 This stream of work is involving working closely with regional and sub-regional partners and agencies in order that efforts can be effectively co-ordinated hence reducing duplication of effort.
- 17.2 The key issues that have been identified in the early work are set out below:

- Developing an evidenced based understanding of the impact on our local economy and businesses
- Understanding and planning of our role in providing business support
- Co-ordination of response arrangements with Counties / Regions / LEPs etc.
- Developing and implementing projects locally to aid economic recovery

17.3 The early work suggested that locally the focus should consider recovery from impacts in the following areas of activity.

Housing Delivery

- 17.4 Whilst the current situation continues developers, lenders and investors are going to have to make decisions around the risks the outbreak poses to future investments, including losses from breaks in the global supply chain, low consumer confidence and lower housing demand. Home purchases will be among the first decisions to be put on hold in the event of both social and economic uncertainty and the reaction of the construction industry to this (at least in the short term) is likely to be to reduce the amount of new build meaning some schemes will be mothballed. Until the situation improves, public and private sector confidence to begin major new projects will remain scarce and land values may suffer. This, along with predicted increases in material costs, may add to issues of development viability. These issues may bring challenges to the Council delivering its housing growth targets.
- 17.5 However, while the immediate feeling might be one of uncertainty, there was a huge amount of investment in the sector prior to the outbreak. The imbalance between the supply and demand in the UK's housing stock will remain and, in the longer term, housing, construction and infrastructure development will remain high on the political agenda. Registered Housing Partners working as Homes England preferred partners may help drive up delivery of affordable homes as they have the funding to invest and can assist private developers by purchasing units prior to completion and providing developers with early access to much needed capital. There is an opportunity for the Council to build on the positive relationships with registered providers in the area to maximise investment in the district.
- 17.6 The increase in people being able to work from home may also lead to rural areas becoming more desirable places to live. Demand for homes in areas that promote health and wellbeing could increase the popularity of Staffordshire Moorlands towns as desirable places to live even further, offering green, sustainable, walkable places with local shops and amenities.

Employment and Business Growth

- 17.7 As one of the major centres for manufacturing in the UK the West Midlands is more vulnerable than others to a significant fall in demand for products in this sector. This is further exacerbated by low working from home figures. Staffordshire Moorlands has a number of manufacturing businesses many of whom are key employers in the district. Thankfully, recent liaison with our key employers shows that the majority of manufacturers in Staffordshire Moorlands are continuing to operate during the crisis (albeit at a reduced capacity).
- 17.8 Unemployment is expected to grow nationally from 4% to around 9% as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. As above, this is a key concern for the district's key businesses. SSLEP Growth Hubs and Chambers of Commerce are considering how to respond to this. Partners anticipate a focus shift from support for long term unemployed to assisting with getting skilled unemployed back to work. Local authorities have been asked to assist with signposting to local provision.
- 17.9 It is yet to be seen what the impact of increased home working will have on the demand for office space. For some businesses, social distancing requirements may lead to an increased requirement whilst others may continue adopt more flexible work patterns, encouraging work from home arrangements, leading to existing provision becoming redundant. Whilst there may be reduced confidence in business growth in the short term, it is important to understand the revised growth plans of the area's key employers and reinforce the 'open for business' message.

Tourism

- 17.10 Tourism became the industry that was hit first and hardest by COVID-19 with cancellations beginning to be felt in January. Staffordshire Moorlands has 321 accommodation providers and direct tourism expenditure is worth £234 million per annum. Given the seasonal nature of tourism, the timing of easing of restrictions will be critical to the survival of some businesses. Disruption hit tourism businesses at their lowest cash point in the year as many rely on reserves built up during the lean winter months to get through until the next visitor season. Tourism businesses now urgently need to capture business during the peak summer season. If businesses cannot reopen safely and economically until the autumn, they may not be able to reopen until 2021. In a recent survey of 142 tourism businesses by Visit Peak District 21% of businesses were fearful they will cease trading this year and 27% expected to make redundancies. 35% want the furlough scheme to be extended saying that without continued furloughing to reflect seasonality there will be many job losses.
- 17.11 Research shows that people's willingness to return to attractions and tourist destinations is tempered with concern about the ability to manage crowds and nervousness about a second wave of infection. This is acknowledged by

businesses who want more guidance of what is safe and what do they need to do. Visit England and Visit Britain are working with a number of industry bodies to develop a 'stay safe' charter mark for businesses to build consumer confidence. In the Staffordshire Moorlands, Alton Towers (Merlin Entertainment) have developed health and safety guidance to demonstrate how safety measures could be implemented at their attraction, should they be permitted to reopen. This has been shared with Destination Staffordshire who has in turn shared it with their members as an example of best practice.

- 17.12 Visit Britain/Visit England data suggests few people cancelling overseas holidays currently intend to replace them with a British one, so they need to be persuaded to consider a domestic trip. Visit Britain /Visit England are currently developing domestic campaigns in partnership with DMO's. Initial campaigns are likely to promote outdoor visits and Visit Peak District is planning a Peak District promotion to complement this. Visit Britain & Visit England suggests VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives) category of trips will be first to recover as people see the loved ones they have been separated from, with people rural and coastal destinations being the most popular, given that social distancing is easier outside, with stronger demand for self-catering accommodation and people preferring to travel in their own car rather than on public transport. There is also expected to be an increased focus on the micro domestic market – connecting local people with what is on their doorstep. Staffordshire Moorlands is well positioned to take advantage of both of these markets and need to work with DMO's to promote local attractions to visitors and residents in promotion.
- 17.13 Tourism relies on a wide range of products to make a destination appealing and businesses are keen to see other sectors open in parallel. If self-catering cottages can operate but there are no restaurants to eat in locally or attractions to visit, then a domestic trip will be less appealing and that visitor spend is less likely. If usual cafes and tea rooms near outdoor spaces cannot open, additional support may be required to help accommodate temporary structures to accommodate health screening, additional toilet facilities, social distancing routing and wider paths or gateways. In addition, permissions and licences often limit the season for sites like holiday parks and campsites (42.8% of holiday parks can open for less than 8 months a year), while there are other limits on holiday lets. These limits mean they will be unable to pick up expected demand for domestic holidays later this year and early next; they may not be allowed to open over Christmas and New Year or for February half-term holidays

Town Centres

- 17.14 After lockdown it is anticipated that the UK's town and city centres will undergo a period of change, during which many businesses are not expected to survive. The implementation of strict public health measures means that the majority of service-based and non-food retail, hospitality and leisure business premises remain closed to reduce social contact. This disruption has already triggered the first wave of store closures, impacting first on the most vulnerable businesses,

whose position was fragile even before COVID-19. Some towns will be more resilient than others and it is unlikely that businesses that do not have, at least, some online presence and way to communicate with customers can survive.

- 17.15 However, small towns may recover faster than large cities. Footfall in large cities has fallen by 80% during the crisis as people stay at home and increasingly shop locally. The decline of large retailers seen before the COVID-19 crisis is likely to continue whilst towns with a greater number of independent traders are likely to be more resilient. This is good news for towns in Staffordshire Moorlands, which have a high number of independent traders. Recovery will depend on building more local capacity for action, making the most of increased support for local suppliers and businesses, and developing effective mechanisms for coordinating this.

Markets

- 17.16 Markets have a key role to play in the recovery of town centres. Markets are vital business and social assets within communities and provide low level entry costs for those starting a business. The National Association of British Markets (NABMA) have developed a plan of support they believe is needed to support, sustain and relaunch the markets industry and are lobbying Government to establish a start back grant scheme to help fund publicity and promotion campaigns to bring back shoppers back to markets, investment in changing infrastructure, costs associated introducing and managing social distancing, training and business support. NABMA is also lobbying Government for additional support to local authority operators who have received no financial support and are also voluntarily absorbing substantial additional costs to assist their traders.
- 17.17 A recent NABMA survey suggests traders immediate asks are for marketing and promotion (including the use of social media) along with start up business advice and training for existing traders to present a modern market environment, complementing the town centre offer. Whilst large footfall generating events will be one of the last things to come back on stream, the Council needs to develop marketing and event plans for the Staffordshire Moorlands markets to give confidence and encouragement to customers to return. In the longer term, cancelled or postponed events need to be reconsidered to boost town centre activity. Planned investment in the Leek Market Hall will help reassure traders and customers that markets remain a priority for delivery and help shape a market.

18 Community Recovery

- 18.1 The key issues that have been identified for this work stream are set out below:

- Developing an evidenced based understanding of the impact on our local communities i.e. understanding the current position and issues
 - Understanding and planning for the impact on the support services that we currently provide
 - Providing support and coordination to the local voluntary sector, community groups and other partners
 - Developing community cohesion in respect of the response
- 18.2 The initial focus for this stream is to ascertain the impact on our communities. This is a complex piece of work as the impact is wide-ranging and often specific to individual communities or cohorts of residents. The impact on local authorities will continue to grow particularly as the economic impact of COVID-19 is realised.
- 18.3 The COVID-19 outbreak has affected all segments of the population and is particularly detrimental to members of those social groups in the most vulnerable situations including people living in poverty situations, older persons, persons with disabilities and young people.
- 18.4 Early evidence indicates that that the health and economic impacts of the virus are being borne disproportionately by poor people. For example, homeless people or displaced persons also stand to suffer disproportionately both from the pandemic and its aftermath due to limited movement and fewer employment opportunities. If not properly addressed through policy the social crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic may also increase inequality, exclusion, and discrimination.
- 18.5 Some of the specific issues for the Council going forward will involve the local response to the following issues:
- Reflecting the additional demands in the Council's service delivery;
 - Supporting partners and voluntary groups to continue to deliver essential support;
 - Identifying and supporting isolated and vulnerable people; and
 - Ensuring the development of an effective equality impact assessment to ensure that the disproportionate impact is mitigated.

19 Financial Recovery

- 19.1 The development of the recovery response in this stream has been underpinned by the assessment of the overall financial impact of COVID-19. The key priorities that have been identified as:
- Developing revised financial plans take account of the financial impact and plan for the ongoing implications;

- Accounting for the significant treasury impact e.g. on reserves and ongoing cash flow;
- Identifying and planning for the additional costs of new service demands; and
- Providing for the additional costs arising from recovery.

19.2 The recent Cabinet Report identified the immediate financial consequences of COVID-19. There will however be a significant impact on both the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and Treasury Management Strategy. These will need to be comprehensively reviewed.

19.3 It has been agreed to bring forward the commencement of the planned review of these from November to July in order to allow more time to effectively plan the longer term response. This stream of work is focussed on ensuring that this is undertaken effectively.

20 Taking Advantage of the Positive Legacy

20.1 The purpose of this stream of work is to ensure that where there has been a positive impact on the Council's service delivery this is reflected in the proposals for recovery. For example the pandemic has prompted a wave of critical reflection with issues of sustainability and longer term consumer behaviour being considered in greater depth. This may result in a step forward in the following areas:

- Green Infrastructure delivery
- Digital infrastructure
- Transport e.g. Increase in walking and cycling to work

20.2 Other key opportunities that have been identified for this work stream are:

- Realising future benefits from the remote / home working arrangements that have worked effectively
- Realising the benefits from the additional 'channel shift' – access to services
- Reassessing priorities in light of the new demands for services
- Using new business contact understanding to realise local procurement ambitions
- Opportunity to remove unnecessary bureaucratic governance arrangements
- Continue the enhanced communication dialogue with partners

21 Further Development of the Council's Recovery Process

21.1 The recovery process will need to be a significant focus for the Council in both the short and longer term. A large amount of decision-making will consequently

flow from this. Cabinet will regularly need to consider both changes in and the implementation of policy to address the impact on residents and communities.

22.2 Similarly the work programmes for the Council's will need to reflect the recovery and involve the engagement of all councillors in this significant programme of work. As a starting point it is proposed that the Overview & Scrutiny Panels receive a report on each of the work streams that are relative to their area of business at the first cycle of meetings that follow the reintroduction of meetings.

22.3 The consideration of each of the recovery work streams is proposed as follows:

Overview & Scrutiny Panel	Recovery Work Stream
Resources	Financial Recovery Positive Legacy
Service Delivery	Reinstatement of Services Economic Recovery
Community	Community Recovery

22.4 Consideration of climate change issues within the Positive Legacy and any other work streams will also be made by the Climate Change working group.