

Report

Report to:	Executive Committee
Date of Meeting:	24 June 2020
Report by:	Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

Subject:	COVID-19 – Recovery Planning
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1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update the Executive Committee on the Council Recovery Plan developed in relation to the following work streams
 - Council – organisational recovery
 - Support for business recovery
 - Health and Social Care Partnership – learning, influence on service wide re-design
 - Community and voluntary organisations – how to retain the contribution from these groups

2. Recommendation(s)

The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the current and planned activity in relation to the work streams above be noted;
- (2) that the Council Recovery Plan, attached as Appendix A, is approved;
- (3) that the establishment of the Recovery Board is approved; and
- (4) that elected member representatives to comprise the Recovery Board are nominated.

3. Background

- 3.1. Covid-19 is a coronavirus that has been circulating since an outbreak in China in December 2019, having since spread worldwide.
- 3.2. Guidance on social distancing for everyone in the UK and protecting older people and vulnerable adults was issued by the UK Government on 16 March 2020 for those at increased risk of Covid-19.
- 3.3. On 23 March 2020, the UK and Scottish Governments introduced stricter measures to slow the spread of Covid-19. People were asked to stay at home (only leaving home for certain, limited, reasons) and only travel if their journey was 'essential'. People were all reminded of the important role that social distancing played in mitigating the impact of the virus.
- 3.4. In response to this there has been a need to cease/reduce/amend some services and also transform the way in which these are being delivered so that physical distancing measures can be adhered to; account can be taken of higher than usual absence levels; services are allowed to concentrate resource on key essential

frontline services; and to allow the council to take on an extensive range of new services to support our communities in response to the pandemic including:

- ◆ Hub schools
- ◆ Shielding/Wellbeing contact centre and the welfare support requirements identified through this such as food, meals and pharmacy deliveries
- ◆ PPE Hub and distribution to the care sector

- 3.5. Details of service changes have been notified to Elected Members in a comprehensive series of Covid-19 briefings provided, which are then reflected on the Council's web page / social media to ensure that our communities are kept informed.
- 3.6. On 21 May 2020 the First Minister published a route map for lifting lockdown restrictions, and on 28 May confirmed that Scotland would move into the first of four phases of recovery. Among other measures, this phase permits more outdoor activities, including non-contact sports, allows people to travel further for recreation (advised as five miles), and permits some construction and other outdoor work. A further review is scheduled for 18 June 2020 which could see further restrictions lifted and the nation move into phase two of recovery.

4. Current Position

- 4.1. In anticipation of the nation's emergence from the current pandemic situation, all council Resources have been making plans for short- and long-term recovery. It is important to recognise that these plans are informed by and dependent on guidance issued by the Scottish Government. As such in developing these plans consideration requires to be given to staff and their wellbeing, appropriate use of assets and finances.
- 4.2. To assist with this forward planning a recovery working group, consisting of senior managers from all Council Resources, South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture and the Health & Social Care Partnership has been established and is considering the following work streams:
- ◆ Council – organisational recovery
 - ◆ Support for business recovery
 - ◆ Health and Social Care Partnership – learning, influence on service wide re-design
 - ◆ Community and voluntary organisations – how to retain the contribution from these groups
- 4.3. This has led to the development of the Council's Recovery Plan (appendix A) and which is based upon what is known at this point in time. The Plan will remain under constant review and be amended as a result of changing guidance as well as other factors including competing council priorities for resources (facilities/services/transport/PPE etc.) and also financial constraints.
- 4.4. This plan summarises how the council is working towards recovery including:
- ◆ The current position of each Resource in terms of service delivery
 - ◆ What is planned in the short-term (to end of September 2020)
 - ◆ What is being considered in the longer-term

The fundamental aim throughout this process is to deliver the right services in the right way, to the benefit of our residents, communities and businesses.

4.5. *Council – organisational recovery*

- 4.5.1. Council Services have been reviewing current service provision. The purpose of this is to determine which services they wish to reset to pre-Covid-19 levels i.e. to return to full service delivery along the same lines. This will be because, in those areas, the need for service has not changed, and neither has the best means of delivery.
- 4.5.2. In some cases though, the changes in service delivery due to Covid-19, and the many altered arrangements that have had to be made, provide an opportunity to review all areas with the aim of ensuring that, as we move through the recovery phases, we are re-introducing the right services in the right way and within available budget
- 4.5.3. Since the Covid-19 restrictions have been brought in we have been using different methods to deliver some services, making use of available technology, and many of these methods have proven to be effective and have been beneficial to the council, our residents and our communities.
- 4.5.4. We currently have a significant number of council employees working in an agile manner through remote means and, if we can continue to build upon this going forward, this way of working has the potential to reduce the council's property and fleet needs, reduce lost time through absence, travel and the costs associated with these, and also increasing productivity.
- 4.5.5. Services that have currently been stopped or reduced will be fully assessed to consider whether or not they remain a priority for the council or our customers, prior to stepping any of them back up. Given the pressures on the Council's resources, it is acknowledged that not all pre COVID services will be able to be delivered or at the same levels. Members will need to exercise community leadership and support public understanding on this point.

4.6. *Support for business recovery*

- 4.6.1. Businesses across all sectors have been adversely affected by the measures put in place to control the spread of Covid19. The short/medium/long term outlook will be influenced greatly by the health response and the lifting/relaxation of restrictions.
- 4.6.2. Both the UK and Scottish Government are providing short term, but significant support to businesses which will help them absorb some of the initial impact of the economic downturn.
- 4.6.3. The Council has played a key part in this initial response through the administering financial support through the three phases of the Business Support Grants, the Newly Self Employed Hardship Fund and support for B&B's.
- 4.6.4. With our Community Planning Partners we are also progressing the gathering of data to help develop an evidence base of what support and intervention levers are needed. These will be considered in light of both financial and officer resources available and a structured range of support activities put in place.
- 4.6.5. The local authority economic support will require to be developed alongside the ongoing UK and Scottish Government efforts to sustain businesses and employment. This will be shaped by the roles of national governments, the national enterprise agencies (Scottish Enterprise) and the Glasgow City Region recovery plan and how this would be delivered at a Lanarkshire level. It is essential that these plans and interventions include private sector input to reflect the needs of business sector and market.

4.6.6. Following on from the above, officers are engaging with North Lanarkshire Council, Scottish Enterprise and opening a dialogue with representatives of the Lanarkshire Business Community to explore the options to establish a Business Economic Forum to support business recovery and that this is undertaken in a strategic and co-ordinated manner.

4.6.7. The employability team has been working with Business Support and national bodies to ensure that advice is up to date and that this is reflected on our website. The team has handled a number of calls from individuals who have recently become unemployed, furloughed and at risk of redundancy, self-employed but business may not reopen, facing hardship, employers who are looking for advice in relation to employees. In the same way as business support, the delivery of employability programmes will require to take account of any new national interventions, reflect the need of businesses and at the same time tailored around the support the individual needs to assist them into employment.

4.7. *Health & Social Care – learning, influence on service wide re-design*

4.7.1. In what is a global health emergency of unprecedented nature some non-Covid related hospital admissions have fallen. This can be partly attributed to changes in population behaviour as well as through a planned reduction in services.

4.7.2. A reduction in the demand for acute services and in particular hospital admissions is likely to also lead to a reduction in demand for “support” services including adaptations or Care at Home packages.

4.7.3. It is important therefore that we take the opportunity to work with Health & Social Care partners to influence the way in which the general public access health services going forward so that these are dealt with through the most efficient and effective delivery and treatment methods. Avoidance of hospital admissions undoubtedly leads to improved outcomes and progress in this area needs to be sustained.

4.7.4. There is a recognition though that going forward there is likely to be an emergence of individuals with irreparable damage to their health and requiring higher levels of care as well as a significant increase in mental health and alcohol related conditions and again a partnership approach will be essential to meet service demands effectively.

4.8. *Community & Voluntary Organisations – how to retain the contribution from these groups*

4.8.1. Community & Voluntary Organisations and volunteers have undertaken a lead role in helping to support local residents, particularly the vulnerable, during this time supported by the Council.

4.8.2. Many strong relationships have been developed through this work and it is vital that this partnership approach to supporting and developing communities is retained not only to help with dealing with issues arising through Covid-19 but also beyond this. It is expected that this will influence future Commissioning Strategies – in particular in Health and Social Care.

5. **Monitoring & Review**

5.1. All service changes have been communicated to Elected Members through a series of briefings. As we continue through the various phases of recovery and services are re-introduced this will continue to be the case.

- 5.2. The Recovery Plan will be the subject of ongoing monitoring and review by the council's Recovery Working Group as well as through a Recovery Board which is being proposed for formation.
- 5.3. The Recovery Board would consist of a group of Elected Members, reflecting the political composition of the Council, and the Corporate Management Team. 11 members (4 SNP, 3 Labour, 2 Conservatives, 1 Liberal Democrat and 1 Independent, chaired by the Leader with each party also nominating a substitute member).
- 5.4. The Recovery Board will be responsible for ongoing monitoring and scrutiny of the Recovery Plan as it continues to develop and be delivered and to ensure that this continues to meet our objectives and deliver the right services in the right way, to the benefit of our residents, communities and businesses, while working within the finances available. The terms of Reference for the Recovery Board will be developed and agreed at its first meeting.
- 5.5. Updates on the Recovery Plan will be provided to the Executive Committee, and in addition any proposed changes to council policy will continue to be reported to the appropriate Resource committee for consideration.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1. Consultation and communication with Trades Unions continues to take place with regards to working arrangements and this will now also focus on the proposed actions to support the recovery planning process.
- 6.2. An IT/Wellbeing survey has been issued to employees on 8 June 2020 to assess their experience of the working arrangements put in place to meet the current service demands. The results from the survey will be used to develop and shape our forward working arrangements and influence any proposed HR policy changes.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. An exercise is underway to determine the financial impact of the Recovery plan, including additional staffing, PPE, and other costs, such as property, or transport and fleet. This will influence how we re-introduce services.
- 7.2. There will be additional cost burden to the Council on top of the immediate response to the pandemic. As we work to put in place safe ways of reinstating services, this will require as yet, unbudgeted expenditure.
- 7.3. In a separate paper to this Committee on Revenue Budget Monitoring for the period 1 April to 22 May, the extent of the financial burden that the Council is facing is provided. This paper details the additional costs that the Council is already facing due to the pandemic, and the significant levels of income that are no longer being recovered, including a reduction in the levels of council tax collected.
- 7.4. Taking into account the funding that has been provided, the financial impact, for the first 6 months of the year, may be that the Council faces a £21.3m budget gap. While the exercise on costing recovery plans is ongoing, the position presented does not yet include any further costs that the recovery plans may indicate. This financial position will be a consideration when considering re-introducing services.

8. General/Other Implications for the Council

- 8.1. This is a dynamic situation and the Council and partners will continue to monitor and adapt our services and plans based around the current Scottish Government Guidance.

9. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 9.1. Any issues in relation to climate change, sustainability and environment will be assessed as the Recovery Plan is further developed.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1. An Equalities Impact Assessment is underway to determine the impacts that the recovery plan will have on people within the community and consultation has commenced.
- 10.2. The conclusion of the initial equality impact assessment suggests that there may be potential impacts for some parts of the community covered by equalities legislation namely older people, children and people with disabilities, and people from Black and Minority ethnic backgrounds.
- 10.3. Work will continue to support and meet the needs of our communities and service users and mitigating actions will be outlined in individual assessments that will protect the most vulnerable in our communities.
- 10.4. The impacts of the recovery plan, including the socio-economic impacts, will be considered through ongoing monitoring and review, and reported by the Recovery Working Group.

Daniel Lowe

Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)

11 June 2020

Link(s) to Council Values/Ambitions/Objectives

- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
- ◆ Focussed on people and their needs

Previous References

- ◆ None

List of Background Papers

- ◆ None

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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