

# Chichester District Council

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee 26 January 2021

### Covid 19 – Progress Covid 19 Recovery Action Plans

#### 1. Contacts

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#### 2. Executive Summary

This Report provides an update on the latest financial position and sets out progress on the Covid 19 Recovery Action Plans

#### 3. Recommendations

##### 3.1 The Committee is invited to note the actions achieved to date as set out in the report and appendices, and make any comments to Cabinet.

#### 4. Background

##### 4.1 In June 2020 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended to Cabinet that it should support the four thematic recovery plans:

- Community and Housing;
- Economic;
- Planning, Health and Environmental Protection; and
- Organisational.

It also endorsed the Future Services Framework and the governance arrangements, and it requested that progress on these be reported to the Committee every 3 months. Cabinet subsequently approved these plans at its meeting in July 2020.

##### 4.2 As part of the approved Governance arrangements four recovery groups have been established to have oversight of the delivery of the recovery action plans:

- Housing and Community Recovery Group
- Economic Recovery Group
- Planning, Health and Environmental Protection Recovery Group
- Organisational Recovery Group

##### 4.3 It was agreed that progress on the action plans would be reported to OSC on a quarterly basis and the first review was undertaken at the meeting of 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020. This report, and appendices, represents the second quarterly review of progress with some key issues set out below:

## **Housing and Communities (Appendix 1)**

### **Key Achievements:**

- Review of the Council's Allocation scheme underway
- Continuation of the 'Everyone In' approach in line with the Ministerial advice to all Housing Authorities and "Next steps" funding secured towards housing rough sleepers
- Diverted Giving campaign which aims to discourage residents from giving money directly to rough sleepers on the street and instead to channel support to charities
- Commuted sums allocated to assist StonePillow's purchase of a property as move-on accommodation for rough sleepers
- Homelessness Prevention Fund revised and adopted
- Community recovery grants: At the time of writing 52 Small Grants (approx. £39k approved) and 20 Large applications (approx. £60k approved) received, all applications continue to be determined within suggested timeframe
- Following Full Council decision the budget for Community and Economic Recovery Grants has been merged to support the greater number of applications from businesses
- Parish Council COVID 19 networking group set up supported by CDC and WSCC
- Many Parish Councils better engaged with mutual aid groups and supporting them more formally
- To date in excess of £39m in Business Rate grants paid out to support businesses as a result of the Covid pandemic.
- £286k paid out in the first 6 months of this financial year through Hardship Fund payments to support individuals with their Council Tax who have been financially affected due to Covid-19
- £43k paid out in Test and Trace Support Scheme payments from 12 October 2020
- £215k paid out in Discretionary Housing Payments

### **New Work**

- Wet led pubs scheme
- Additional grant schemes for tier restrictions & the latest Lockdown

## **Economic (Appendix 2)**

### **Key Achievements**

- St James Industrial Estate planning application has been approved and the grant funding from Coast to Capital (C2C) of £1,183,017 has been formally approved by the C2C Board. Tender returns have been received and are being evaluated to bring back to Cabinet and Full Council in March.
- The occupancy levels at the Enterprise Centre are currently the highest they have achieved with 100% of the workshops occupied and 85% of the office space let. The operator is receiving enquiries from a number of London based firms regarding relocation.
- The joint marketing for the Ravenna Point industrial units has now ceased as all of the units are currently let or under offer.

- The Economic Development team have launched some new training for the retail sector and are inviting independent retailers to apply via the E-BIZ newsletter.
- The Inward Investment Strategy has been completed and the service is discussing plans with a number of large organisations.
- The Refresh of the Retail Strategy for the Local Plan has been completed and presented to DPIP and the Economic Recovery Group.

### **Changes to key Milestones**

- Due to Lockdown Three , Visit Chichester have further delayed the launch of their new website to link with the launch of their new brand, The Great Sussex Way, target date was September 2020 the target end date is now March 2021.
- The Novium Museum is closed due to lockdown Three and the staff have either been redeployed or furloughed. The current task and finish group meeting has been postponed until the end of February. November 2020 OSC and December 2020 Cabinet have agreed that no discretionary service will go through a service reviewed in the first 12 months. The target end date has been adjusted to December 2021.

### **Planning, Health and Environmental Protection (Appendix 3)**

#### **Key Achievements**

- Continued support to the Covid response at a local level to ensure that businesses are operating safely, in accordance with government guidance and legislation. This involves the Health Protection Team who remain heavily involved in a range of Covid related activities, together with the Covid Information Recovery Officers and Covid Ambassadors providing support and advice to local businesses and the general public, including during lockdown.
- The Climate Change Action Plan and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) are at an advanced stage, with the former having been approved by Cabinet at its January 2021 meeting. Officers are currently considering the representations to the LCWIP following public consultation, prior to it being reported to Cabinet for final approval.
- An Interim Policy Statement for Housing Delivery has been prepared to support appropriate development in the interim period before the Local Plan Review is completed.
- A review of the Council's Pre Application Advice Scheme has been completed and the revised scheme implemented.
- The Compulsory Purchase Order for the Tangmere strategic development site has now been made by the Council. A CPO Inquiry will be held in due course.
- The associated Tangmere outline planning application has been submitted by the Council's development partner, Countryside Properties and is under active consideration by the Council.
- The evidence base for the Local Plan review is being progressed and reviewed, including in relation to retail, employment and horticultural

development to ensure future planning policies are capable of supporting economic and high street recovery. ]

### **Changes to key Milestones**

- Milestones relating to the Air Quality Action Plan and Environmental Health Service Review have been adjusted to reflect more realistic timescales for the scope of work to be undertaken.

### **Organisational (Appendix 4)**

#### **Key Achievements**

- The initial phase of the Efficiency review has been completed, with the outcome having been reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 November and subsequently Cabinet. Over £2m of savings and additional income have been identified, with the first year (almost £1m) due to be delivered in time for the 2021-22 budget. This should be sufficient to address the forecast budget deficit, and so Council are being asked on 19 January to defer the priority setting process for discretionary services for 12 months.
- Priority areas for channel shift have been agreed, and work is progressing to identify detailed targets for different contact streams and services.
- With the latest lockdown, including school closures, services have been reassessed to evaluate the impact on service delivery and welfare of staff.
- A further round of redeployment of staff has been completed to help support the latest business grants roll out.
- A staff welfare survey has been completed. At the time of drafting this report we are waiting on the results. A verbal update will be provided at the meeting.
- On-going ICT and HR support continues to help support our workforce continue working from home where possible. For those staff who are unable to work from home East Pallant House remains available and is COVID compliant.
- Further improvements to the VPN have been implemented to support staff.
- The review of our procurement processes has been completed, and further revised following D20 (Brexit). These are due to go before Council on 19 January for adoption, having already been reviewed by Corporate Governance & Audit Committee.

#### **Changes to key Milestones**

- Milestones for East Pallant House had already been pushed back due to restrictions, and the fact that this particular work stream is not urgent and is not included in the efficiency savings plan. The current lockdown and the roll out of the vaccination programme means the social distancing measures will still be required at EPH for the foreseeable future. This will therefore need to be kept under review and may need to be revised again in the future.
- Consideration of centralisation of administrative functions to be revisited after efficiency review actions completed.
- Detailed savings for channel shift will need to be amended once the action plan has been completed.
- Website Enhancements – investigation of online booking system. At the last meeting of the Organisational Recovery group it was agreed that the

investigation of the online booking system would be completed by March 2021.

## **5. Outcomes to be Achieved**

- 5.1 A short term focussed recovery action plan, with targeted interventions, that is agile and helps supports communities, businesses and the Council's services recover from the impact of C19.
- 5.2 Return the Council's finances to having a balanced budget over the medium term.

## **6. Proposal**

- 6.1 That the Committee discuss the progress to date on the recovery plans, as set out in appendices 1-4, and make any comments on progress to Cabinet.

## **7. Alternatives Considered**

- 7.1 This is a progress report so not relevant for this report.

## **8. Resource and Legal Implications**

- 8.1 As reported to OSC on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

## **9. Consultation**

- 9.1 Recovery Groups, Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

## **10. Community Impact and Corporate Risks**

- 10.1 The future remains very uncertain and this uncertainty has increased in recent weeks as Covid 19 cases continue to increase and we have entered a further period of lockdown. The Council recently has acquired a number of new responsibilities where officers have had to react quickly to ensure that they are in place by the required timescales. It is important that the Council continues to remains flexible to adapt to these very challenging time. The Chief Executive leads an Emergency Management Team, which continues to plan for Covid and other winter pressures to ensure resources are reallocated as and when required so that key services are delivered to the community.

## **11. Other Implications**

There is likely to be a number of implications arising from the proposed actions in the Recovery Plan. Each action will be assessed individually and where necessary mitigations will be put in place.

## **12. Appendices**

**Appendix 1 Housing and Communities Recovery Action Plan**

**Appendix 2 Economic Recovery Action Plan**

**Appendix 3 Planning, Health and Environmental Protection Action Recovery Plan**

**Appendix 4 Organisational Recovery Action Plan**

### **13. Background Papers**

None