

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	12 November 2020
Title:	Recovery and Reset Programme
Report of:	Robert Cottrill, Chief Executive
Cabinet member:	Councillor James MacCleary, Leader of the Council, Chair of Cabinet and Cabinet member for regeneration and prosperity Councillor Zoe Nicholson, Deputy leader of the Council and Cabinet member for finance and assets
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of report:	To update on progress of the Recovery and Reset Programme and wider District wide recovery
Decision type:	Key
Officer recommendation(s):	Cabinet to; (1) note the progress made with the Recovery and Reset Programme, and (2) agree an allocation of £250k to be added to the capital programme to ensure immediate start of the Council's Recovery & Reset work.
Reasons for recommendations:	The Recovery and Reset Programme provides a structured and accountable approach for delivering the level of significant organisational change needed to respond to current and future challenges.
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 At the last meeting of Cabinet, the Recovery and Reset Programme was approved, and it was agreed, amongst other decisions, that;
- The Corporate Plan priorities for delivery in 2020/21 (set out in that report) would form the context for the Council's Recovery and Reset

- objectives,
- The Recovery and Reset Programme would consider the wider district and the outcome of the community wealth building programme as part of the overall Programme, and
- Further update reports on the progress of the Recovery and Reset Programme would be provided on a regular basis.

This report provides Cabinet with an update on progress, in the context of these decisions.

- 1.2 Cabinet will recall that the purpose of the programme is to tackle the financial, organisational and district-wide challenges we are facing. These challenges result from the Covid-19 pandemic, the resultant economic climate and the changing needs and demands of our residents, all of which need to be addressed in a sustainable way. The council faces a budget shortfall of around £12m over the next four years (Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) period). The Recovery and Reset Programme will deliver significant changes in the way the council operates which are needed to meet these challenges and to oversee the council's response to the Covid pandemic, helping to support a district-wide recovery.
- 1.3 As was explained in the previous report, there needs to be a fundamental reset of the council's plans, and budgets, to respond to this challenging situation and to ensure they are sustainable and resilient in the long term. This reset is being undertaken at pace. This report will update on progress and also request the allocation of resource to help move the programme forward quickly.
- 1.4 There will continue to be a clear focus on continuing to deliver the council's Corporate Plan priorities which are;
 - To deliver services right first time
 - To provide leadership to the district on tackling climate emergency
 - To create sustainable community wealth
 - To build homes that people can afford to live in.

Ensuring that we utilise the council's assets and its' resources to support our local economy and community in particular, is central to the way in which the council's Recovery and Reset plans are being shaped.

2 Community Wealth Building – in the district

- 2.1 The council hosted a recovery summit in July this year and a follow up event in October. These two events focused on how a community wealth building (CWB) approach can be applied to the recovery of the district following the Covid pandemic, and resultant economic challenges. Community wealth building uses the combined power of institutions, businesses and communities and aims to retain as much wealth as possible in the local economy,
 - Creating **opportunity** locally;
 - Creating new local **jobs**; and
 - New locally owned **enterprises**

There are five main elements to CWB, which are;

- Shared ownership of the economy between public, business and community sectors
- Making financial power work for local places
- Fair employment and just labour markets
- Progressive procurement of goods and services
- Socially productive use of land and property

2.2 Through these summit events it has been agreed that there will be a continued multi-agency focus on recovery planning, by the council along with its strategic partners, on;

- Targeting and addressing inequality in the district
- Widening the mutual interest in anchor institutions as a power for good via the East Sussex Recovery strategy work
- Digital inclusion
- How we re-use, re-think and re-purpose the assets we all use and own across the district
- Connecting the greening of our economy with creating employment opportunities

A third summit is planned for the New Year which will update on progress in these priority areas, and ensure a focus on this important recovery work is maintained in the district.

3. Community Wealth Building – within the council

3.1 In its Corporate Plan, the council has made a commitment to community wealth building in its own work. As well as working with partners to do this, as outlined above, the council is also looking to see what actions it can take directly which will contribute to achieving these objectives. To this end the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) were commissioned to undertake a study and consequently offer recommendations to the council. That study is now almost complete and a report setting out its recommendations for Cabinet's consideration will be presented in December 2020.

3.2 The Recovery and Reset Programme will be the main vehicle the council will use to ensure that CWB principles are embedded within its work. In each of the sections below, further details are provided as to how this is starting to be considered.

3.4 Further to this, in order to ensure a CWB approach is taken to procurement activity within the programme in particular, an officer has been seconded to advise and lead on strategic procurement issues, both for the programme, and more widely across the council.

4 Progress with Recovery and Reset

4.1 The Council's recovery and reset programme has started well. Key staff are in

place to progress each area and programme management arrangements have been established. The Joint Member Board which was agreed at September's Cabinet meeting will meet for the first time shortly. Sitting on the Board from LDC will be; the Leader, Deputy Leader and an opposition representative. Similar representation has been agreed from Eastbourne Borough Council.

4.2 An early priority has been to communicate the programme to staff and to explain its purpose, why it is needed and how it will affect them. Given that most staff are working remotely it has been vital to ensure clear communications have been provided. This has been achieved through written briefings, video presentations and the council's intranet. A Managers' Reference Group and Staff Experience Group have been set up to enable a continuing dialogue with staff throughout the programme.

4.3 Members will recall that the programme has four pillars; best use of digital, reshaping delivery, best use of assets, and restart. The progress that has been made in each of these areas is set out below;

4.4 Reshaping Delivery

This pillar is focused on changing the way we deliver services, responding to our changing customer needs and adapting to the challenges created by the Covid pandemic. As future service options are explored, consideration will be given to procurement options which would further community wealth building objectives, such as in-sourcing, use of local SMEs and adding social value.

- Cutting across the Digital and Reshaping Delivery pillars is our Workplace 2021 programme. With most staff working from home, options to support customer interactions (including opportunities to work collaboratively with partners) are currently under consideration, and are likely to include video interfaces, particularly in the short term.
- The reshaping of Customer First will be the next area of focus in this workstream. It is expected that this work will be completed by the end of the financial year. Opportunities for reshaping other service areas (in line with delivery of the Corporate Plan priorities) will also be considered beyond this.

4.5 Best Use of Digital

This part of the programme brings together work that was already in train with new projects to increase our automation and self-service options and to deliver a step change in how the council makes use of technology to respond effectively to the challenges faced and the changing demands of customers. The pillar will also be used to explore further and to implement approaches for supporting and progressing digital inclusion across the district. Recent key successes include;

- The housing Cx system will achieve full implementation, with the delivery of on-line housing applications by the end of November 2020.
- Our document retention and disposal programme is ensuring that we are

only retaining essential documents, which has significantly reduced our physical and digital storage requirements.

4.6 Best Use of Assets

Under this pillar, the councils approach to its assets and commercial investments will be reviewed to ensure that we use these to deliver economic wellbeing in our community. Alongside this we will be using our capital programme to enable the implementation of our key priorities to support our local economy and community. These reviews will be legally and financially complicated, large pieces of work which will follow already established governance procedures agreed with elected members, such as the Strategic Property Board. Central to the work of this pillar will be the principles and recommendations provided to embed community wealth building.

4.7 Restart

The Restart pillar has continued the work started as the council came out of lockdown, looking to aid the recovery of the district through economic development work, supporting tourism and working with other agencies to ensure the welfare of local people experiencing hardship due to Covid-19. Progressing the CWB agenda will be central to this work. So far there has been a focus on;

- Ensuring the council is ready to respond through the Community Hub partnership, should a second lockdown be required locally. Trained staff are ready for deployment to the Hub helpline, if required.
- Securing further funding from Government to continue to support those experiencing homelessness in the district, following the 'all in' requirement at the start of lockdown in March.
- Ensuring the Centre for Local Economic Strategies' CWB recommendations, once adopted, are implemented within the programme, in line with corporate plan priorities, and that the Recovery and Reset Board is led by these principles and recommendations as well as the Corporate Plan priorities.
- Following the second Lewes district Recovery Summit, to ensure that work is progressed in line with priorities, as set out in para 2.2 of this report.
- Working with both Team East Sussex and the Greater Brighton Economic Board to ensure CWB principles are built into, and progressed within, multiagency Recovery Plans.
- Ensuring that the council's own emergency planning, business continuity and health and safety plans are sufficient to support its operations through further phases of the pandemic.

5 Programme Governance and Delivery

- 5.1 The cross party Recovery and Reset Board which was agreed at Cabinet in September is due to meet for the first time shortly. Other relevant officer boards and steering groups are also in place for each of the pillars and are meeting regularly to plan and progress the work. Regular oversight of the programme is also being undertaken by CMT.
- 5.2 As has been previously stressed, this is a large programme which will require a significant level of organisational change to deliver. As such, there is a need for dedicated, time-limited resource to support the work. To maintain pace, Cabinet is requested to agree £250,000 to be allocated from the capital programme to enable investment in IT systems and for extra resources needed for early stages of delivery. A request has also been made to Eastbourne Borough Council for the same level of contribution.
- 5.3 In addition to this initial request, it is expected that there will be further capital requirements for investment in aspects of the programme in due course. Cabinets' agreement to this additional expenditure will be sought as part of the forthcoming annual budget setting process.

6 The Financial Challenge

- 6.1 As was noted above, it is currently estimated that a cumulative budget shortfall of around £12m is expected in meeting the cost of the council's services over the 4 year MTFS period. A number of scenarios are currently being modelled which will be reviewed as part of the Recovery and Reset timeline and delivery plans.

7 Corporate plan and council policies

- 7.1 The Programme has been developed being mindful of the priorities set out in the council's Corporate Plan for 2020-2024. Although it is set out within the Programme purpose to have a 'continued focus on the Corporate Plan priorities', Cabinet should note that the level of financial pressure on the council may mean that a further review of Corporate Plan priorities may be required, to ensure that the level of ambition articulated remains realistic.

8 Financial appraisal

- 8.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy was presented to Cabinet in September and provided an initial update on the Council's current financial position and potential future outlook. This demonstrated the need for the Recovery and Reset Programme in order to address the significant financial challenges being faced which are set out in this report.

9 Legal implications

- 9.1 The Council's Financial Procedure Rules permit Cabinet to approve capital projects up to a cumulative value of £500,000 (for General Fund purposes) in any one financial year. The allocation of £250,000 to the capital programme, as

recommended by this report, is within that limit since no other allocation has been made during 202/21. Accordingly, Cabinet has authority to approve the allocation.

At the point where the cumulative value of the proposed capital programme in any financial year would exceed £500,000, expenditure may not proceed without full Council approval.

Lawyer consulted 14.10.20 Legal ref: 009602-JOINT-OD

10 Risk management implications

- 10.1 The risks within this programme will be regularly assessed and managed as part of the programme and project management activities. The identification and management of any significant risks in relation to the programme will be reported to CMT and the Joint Member Board, along with mitigation plans to address them.

11 Equality analysis

- 11.1 An equality analysis will be undertaken for each Pillar of the programme and the outcomes, including any action plans required, will be reported to and monitored by, CMT.

12 Environmental sustainability implications

- 12.1 A number of the projects within the programme have sustainability implications. These implications will be considered as the detailed project plans are established for each project, being mindful of the council's stated objective, as set out in the Corporate Plan, of achieving net carbon zero by 2030.

13 Background papers

Cabinet report - Council's Response to Covid-19 (7 May)

Cabinet report - Initial Financial Assessment of Covid-19 (7 May)

Cabinet report - Financial Assessment of Covid-19 Update (11 June)

Cabinet report - Recovery Planning (9 July)

Cabinet report – Recovery and Reset (24 September)