

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	10 February 2021
Title:	Recovery and Reset
Report of:	Robert Cottrill, Chief Executive
Cabinet member:	Councillor David Tutt, Leader of the Council
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of report:	To update on progress of the Recovery and Reset Programme
Decision type:	Non key
Officer recommendation(s):	To note the progress made with the Recovery and Reset Programme.
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.
Contact Officer(s):	Name: Jo Harper Post title: Head of Business Planning and Performance E-mail: jo.harper@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk Telephone number: 01273 085049

1 Introduction

- 1.1 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 significant budget shortfall over the next four years (Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) period). The Recovery and Reset Programme (R&R) will deliver 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.
- 1.2 As previously reported, 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 in the next section of the report.
- 1.3 The updated MTFS now includes targets for the levels of savings to be achieved through R&R – £850k for 2021/22 and £2.5m for each year thereafter. Each

pillar will contribute to the achievement of these savings targets, except for the restart pillar, whose aims are more focused on recovery. The indicative savings identified so far for each pillar are as follows;

	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000
Reshaping Delivery				
Reshaping exercises	570	570	570	570
Contract changes	0	660	660	660
Digital Transformation				
Projects enabling reshaping efficiencies	0	0	0	0
Assets				
Income increases and disposals	1,523	1,838	1,838	1,838
Total indicative savings	2,093	3,068	3,068	3,068

2 Best use of Digital

- 2.1 This pillar has been focused on the urgent changes that need to be made to enable staff to work as effectively as possible during the pandemic restrictions. One significant improvement that will be implemented is a system for staff working at home to take payments from customers in a secure and compliant way.
- 2.2 Using delegated authority agreed by Cabinet at its meeting in September 2020, the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader) authorised expenditure of £62,500 (split between LDC and EBC) from the R&R capital allocation. These funds have been used to set up new system for taking customers' payments over the phone securely. This was needed for customer advisors working from home, to ensure security was not compromised. As well as enabling payments to be taken securely, the new system has the benefits of;
- Enabling recurring payments to be set up (making it less likely for customers to miss future payments)
 - Storing bank details so that future calls can be quicker (80% shorter) and easier for customers
 - Enabling customers to schedule a payment for a future date convenient for them (eg after payday)
- 2.3 The pillar will also be leading on the development of the Digital Strategy for the council. The strategy will set out the digital ambitions over the coming years as a result of the new context within which the council is now operating and a roadmap for delivering upon these aspirations. This exercise will articulate how the council intends to exploit current and new technologies over the medium-term to deliver corporate priorities.

3 Reshaping delivery

- 3.1 The priority focus for this pillar over recent months has been the planning and preparation for the consultation with staff on the reshaping of the Service Delivery department. This exercise will focus on the delivery of the corporate

priorities while meeting the savings requirements. The consultation launched in January 2021 and the new shape of the department will come into effect over the coming months.

- 3.2 The next focus for the pillar is to set out a programme of further reshaping exercises. Further detail will be shared with Cabinet in future updates.

4 Best use of Assets

- 4.1 Following the successful move of all staff from 1 Grove Road to the Town Hall and other places of work (including home), the building is ready for occupation by other tenants. At the time of writing this report, Council officers are in active discussions with potential tenants (public sector partners) and are hopeful that the building will be occupied within the next few weeks. This will relieve the council of the financial pressures brought about by running 1 Grove Road and generate savings.
- 4.2 The council is also looking at other ways of managing its assets, including disposals, and full consideration is being given to market conditions as well as the needs of Eastbourne and its residents. Currently, no disposals have been confirmed.

5 Restart

- 5.1 The restart pillar continues to focus on ensuring the council is playing its part in supporting local communities through the pandemic, whilst also planning for a sustainable recovery.
- 5.2 Community support has continued through the council's Community Hub helpline, which has seen an increase in calls since the lockdown started in January 2021. The line continues to offer advice, guidance and signposting to the vulnerable and isolated. Priority supermarket delivery slots can also still be provided to those in need.
- 5.3 Alongside coordinating the council's response to the pandemic at the current time, the Restart Group is working with statutory, voluntary and private sector partners to assess the borough's needs in relation to recovery. There is a particular focus on economic recovery, tourism and welfare support for the most vulnerable.

6 Recovery and Reset Member Board

- 6.1 As the Recovery and Reset work is being undertaken in conjunction with Lewes District Council, a joint Member Board has been established to oversee aspects of the work which affect both councils. This Board met for the first time on 4 December 2020 and then subsequently on 29 January 2021. Detailed updates are being provided on the progress of each of the pillars, where they have a bearing on both authorities.

7 Corporate plan and council policies

- 7.1 R&R 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 R&R's 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 As set out in section 1.3, the updated MTFS now includes R&R targets of £850k for 2021/22 and £2.5m for each year thereafter. The indicative savings already identified exceed these targets and will need to be developed into specific savings proposals prior to being presented to Full Council on 24 February as part of setting the 2021/22 budget.

9 Legal implications

- 9.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report but as and when specific proposals under R&R come forward, Legal Services will advise on the legal aspects. These are likely to centre on procurement and capital disposal issues. Any developments in, for example, public procurement and state subsidy rules stemming from the European Union (Future Relationship) Act 2020 and the UK-EU Trade and Co-operation Agreement, will be taken into account.

Lawyer consulted 15.01.21 (legal ref 009851-EBC-OD)

10 Risk management implications

- 10.1 The risks within R&R are regularly assessed and managed as part of the R&R 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 is being undertaken for each pillar 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 R&R 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 Appendices

None

14 Background papers

None