

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 11 November 2021

Title: Recovery and Reset

Report of: Robert Cottrill, Chief Executive

Cabinet members: Councillor Zoe Nicholson, Leader of the Council, Chair of Cabinet and Cabinet member for finance and assets
Councillor James MacCleary, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet member for regeneration and prosperity

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

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Following the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 and the subsequent impact on the economy (both for the council and the district), the council created the Recovery and Reset (R&R) programme as a means of managing the priority activity to address the challenges of the new operational context in a sustainable way, and to respond to the changing needs and demands of the district's residents.
- 1.2 Over the last year, R&R activity has made sound progress in delivering the required changes in support of the council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the work to manage the significant budget shortfall over the next four years (Medium Term Financial Strategy [MTFS] period).

- 1.3 The R&R programme consists of four focus areas: best use of digital, reshaping delivery, best use of assets, and restart. This report provides an update on the R&R activity over the last period and the proposals set out have been developed within the context of the R&R programme.

2 Financial Context

- 2.1 When the R&R programme was established in the autumn of 2020, it was clear that significant savings would need to be delivered. The table below sets out the budget challenges which were reported in the updated MTFs presented to Cabinet in September. This shows that savings of £0.998m have already been identified for 2021/22 and £1.758m for 2022/23. This level of savings will also allow for additional contributions to balances each year.

	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	2024/25 £m
INITIAL FORECAST GAP	0.737	1.532	1.535	1.525
Less R&R Savings	(0.998)	(1.758)	(2.080)	(2.080)
Contribution to General Fund Balance	0.261	0.226	0.545	0.555
Net Balanced Position	-	-	-	-

- 2.2 The budget planning process for 2022/23 is well underway and an update position will be reported to Cabinet in December.

3 Recovery and Reset Progress

- 3.1 Good progress has been made in delivering the R&R plans which were agreed by Cabinet in the autumn of 2020.

We have identified and delivered, or projected delivery of, a range of savings against the R&R target, although further work is needed to ensure a balanced budget for 22/23 and beyond. This work will continue over the coming months as part of business and financial planning process progresses further, reporting to Cabinet in the new year.

Further detail on the R&R programme savings is set out in Appendix A.

- 3.2 A range of key outcomes and benefits have been delivered (in addition to those previously reported to Cabinet) by the R&R programme so far, including:
- The Digital Democracy project has launched the Modern.Gov system with members and officers for the electronic management of meeting agendas and papers.
 - The project to explore a new Revenues and Benefits system will be completing the procurement stage within the coming weeks. Details of the savings and efficiencies delivered through this project will be confirmed in the next update to Cabinet.
 - A project to explore options for the identification of a single system to manage Environmental Health and Licensing activity has commenced with the aim of delivering operational benefits, efficiencies and savings.

- Following the successful pilot to automate a number of processes, options to exploit technology further to support delivery of a number of transactional activities within Customer First are being finalised.
- Following consultation with staff, hybrid ways of working have been implemented across the council, including:
 - Creation of flexible working styles so that staff can work from the most appropriate location for their role and preferences, and in the best way to collaborate effectively with their colleagues.
 - Hybrid meeting technology has been purchased for installation in Southover House to enable seamless interaction between members/officers in the building and others who dial in remotely.
 - A staff social club – the Watercooler – has been developed by staff and implemented to support their informal interaction and connection when working in a hybrid way.
- Reshaping exercises have been completed in a number of service areas, delivering savings in-year and for future years. The level of savings will be confirmed following recruitment to a small, remaining number of roles.
- The Covid-19 community hub helpline continues to operate, but has experienced a very low level of activity in recent months.
- The council continues to focus on how it can support social and economic recovery going forward.

4 Community Wealth Building

- 4.1 The R&R management team continues to ensure that community wealth principles are applied across all aspects of the R&R programme.

5 Consultation

- 5.1 There are no proposals in this report which require formal consultation to be undertaken.

6 Corporate Plan and Council Policies

- 6.1 The proposals in this report support the council's long term strategic aims as set out in the Corporate Plan and associated policies.

7 Financial Appraisal

- 7.1 As set out in the report.

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 This report is for noting only, and there are no legal implications arising directly from it.

9 Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 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 R&R Member Board, along with mitigation plans to address them.

10 Equality Analysis

- 10.1 There are specific no proposals in this report which require an equality and fairness analysis to be undertaken. However, the Equalities Stakeholder Group for Lewes and Eastbourne is regularly updated on progress with the R&R programme and equality analyses are undertaken for all staff reshaping exercises.

11 Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 11.1 The proposals in this report do not adversely impact on the council's long-term carbon reduction aims, as set out in the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy.

12 Contribution to Community Wealth Building

- 12.1 See paragraph 4 above.

13 Appendices

- Appendix A – Recovery and Reset Programme Savings

14 Background Papers

None