

Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 21 October 2020

Impact of COVID-19 on SCC Communities, Economy and Organisation – October 2020 Update



Cllr Alan White, Leader of the Council said,

“Throughout this pandemic, the people of Staffordshire have pulled together to help keep people safe, protect the vulnerable and support one another.

With Covid-19 now tightening its grip once again and cases rising rapidly across Staffordshire we must redouble our efforts and remain resilient.

It is important that while focusing on the resurgence of Covid-19 that we don't lose sight of what we have achieved and what we want to achieve going forward.”

Report Summary:

This paper details the approach that Staffordshire County Council (SCC) will take to our planning and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. It identifies the high-level impacts of COVID-19 on our communities, the economy and organisation and includes the timescales for easing restrictions.

It also describes the learning that has been taken from the response phase, the high-level priorities for recovery across SCC and our progress against these.

We recognise that this will not be a traditional recovery and it will take an extended period of time therefore regular reports on progress will be brought to Cabinet for decisions and updates where appropriate.

Recommendations

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Note the impact of COVID-19 on Staffordshire since June 2020;
- b. Note and endorse the approach being taken to resetting the Corporate Strategy;
- c. Note the progress made towards the high-level priorities and plans from each recovery area;
- d. Endorse the approach to SCC management of the Recovery process moving forward.

Local Members Interest
N/A

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Recommendations of the Leader of the Council

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Report of the Director of Corporate Services

Reasons for Recommendations:

Background

1. On 17th June 2020 Cabinet endorsed the SCC approach to Recovery, to understanding the impact of COVID-19 on Staffordshire, and the high-level priorities and plans from each of the directorates and recovery areas (Impact of COVID-19 on SCC Communities, Economy and Organisation and Recovery Approaches).
2. The SCC Planning and Recovery Group (PRG) met weekly from mid-April 2020 and since the beginning of July is now meeting fortnightly. The PRG links into the multiagency Staffordshire Resilience Forum's Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG), which has been meeting every 2 weeks. The RCG co-ordinates multi-agency actions, and is jointly chaired by Chief Executive John Henderson, and Jon Rouse, City Director, Stoke-on-Trent City Council.
3. The prevalence of COVID-19 within our communities had decreased since early May 2020, however as the data within paragraphs 16 through to 19 evidences, the prevalence is now increasing. The central Incident Management Team (IMT) has been replaced by the Health Protection Board (HPB), required as part of the Local Outbreak Control Plan. The remit of the HPB includes overseeing surveillance and management of incidents and providing support to local IMTs addressing specific outbreaks within our communities.
4. A Member-led Local Outbreak Control Board ensures democratic oversight of Local Outbreak Control Plan development and the management of incidents overall and

individually and leads communication with the public about the overall management of incidents.

5. It is apparent that government restrictions may need to tighten and ease over the coming months, however, in line with current restrictions, progress has been made across SCC towards organisation and service recovery. This has been managed through existing governance structures and overseen by the PRG. We will continue to monitor any restrictions to ensure that our services remain open wherever possible, so that we can continue to support our residents, communities and businesses.

Approach taken to Recovery

6. As noted in the previous Cabinet paper, this is not recovery as we have previously known it. The COVID-19 pandemic remains the biggest, longest, deepest peacetime emergency we have faced.
7. The public health measures that we put in place to manage this (social distancing, infection prevention and control) will be with us for some time and “going back to normal” is not an option in the short or medium term
8. It is recognised that the virus may re-emerge as lockdown is eased and restrictions are lifted, possibly over a period of a year or more, and therefore there has been no straightforward handover from response to recovery.
9. The Local Outbreak Control Plan, which responds to a Test and Trace function is governed through the new Health Protection Board. This has been meeting since June 2020 and oversees a number of mini Incident Management Teams which will be based around local outbreaks. The SCC IMT will be stood back up if there is a second wave of COVID-19 and SCC business continuity plans need to be invoked, or if the number of outbreaks reaches levels where additional capacity to support their monitoring and management is required.
10. Work of the Cells responding to COVID-19 has focussed on recovery activity since the end of May, based on the emerging understanding of the impact that this emergency has had on our communities, economy and organisation; the timescales for easing of government restrictions; the decisions that we made during the emergency period and what these meant for SCC; and the threats and opportunities that these provided.
11. There has been a focus on managing organisational backlogs, understanding where demand might increase and developing plans to address this, stabilising provider markets, supporting the voluntary sector and understanding and addressing emerging vulnerabilities within our communities, alongside mitigating the extensive economic and business impact, with related human costs.
12. It was acknowledged in the June Cabinet Paper that some of the changes implemented during the pandemic had been positive; out of necessity we made a lot of progress in a short space of time and there are many aspects of this that we did not want to lose.

13. As an organisation we became a more flexible and dynamic workforce by successfully employing agile working practices and digital solutions. Our internal and external collaborations and relationships also improved. A culture of trust was created through staff empowerment, support for and by our communities was accelerated and we were able to share data and make intelligence-driven decisions.
14. Recovery has provided us with an opportunity to shape a different future, addressing our threats and building on the positive outcomes from this emergency.
15. We are resetting our five strategic priorities and four principles as we emerge from the emergency, developing a revised strategic plan and MTFs process to address the impacts of COVID-19 on our strategies (digital, people, communities and climate), transformation programmes and organisation, and the reshaped vision of the future. Our year of transition continues as we move towards a reshaped future, which will be informed by the Government Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper expected in the autumn.

Understanding the Impact of COVID-19

16. Coronavirus COVID-19 continues to circulate around the world and in the UK. As of 6th October 2020, there have been over 35 million confirmed cases and more than 1,000,000 deaths globally, with over 530,000 confirmed cases and almost 42,000 deaths in the UK.
17. Whilst the UK has emerged from the 'lockdown' imposed at the end of March 2020, COVID-19 continues to circulate across the country. COVID-19 is likely to be with us for a prolonged period of time, as such it is essential that we limit the spread of the infection so that we can enable both our residents and economy to recover from the wide-ranging impacts of the pandemic
18. Staffordshire, as per the rest of the country, is seeing an increase in COVID-19 cases and incidents. We are continuing to respond well to an ever-changing situation. We are seeing an increase in incidents across all settings - adult care, education and early years, businesses and communities. In recent months, Staffordshire has dealt with a number of significant outbreaks, including at a pub in Stone, and elevated levels of infections in parts of Burton.
19. Staffordshire is currently recording rates of new cases generally below the national and regional figures. As at 3rd October 2020, Staffordshire recorded a 7-day rate per 100,000 population of 72.8, lower than the national (108.6) and regional (87.6) figures. We undertake daily surveillance at a District and local level, to help us to identify any localities and settings of concern and take appropriate action to mitigate against any further spread.
20. At the heart of all our recovery plans and activities is considering and understanding the impacts of COVID-19 on our residents and communities. In August 2020, we launched a COVID-19 Residents' Survey to understand how the pandemic has affected the people of Staffordshire and their views on priorities for recovery. Over 3,700 residents have responded to the survey, which has now closed. Results from the survey have informed the Community Impact Assessment attached to this

paper. They will also feed into our recovery plans into the business planning process for 2021/2022.

Learning that has been taken

21. The COVID-19 outbreak required a rapid response to an unprecedented situation, and this was not without challenges. An exercise has been completed to understand the lessons we have learnt as a council throughout this period – what has been done well, what we could have improved upon, and this has fed the recovery plans moving forward.
22. The final outcomes from this exercise have confirmed the initial principles which were agreed to underpin the recovery process, to ensure we move forward as an organisation towards a new normal, and meet the expectations of our communities, rather than simply revert to where we were. These principles are being applied when we reinstate services, build on those we have changed or develop new ones:
 - a. Continue to **trust, empower** and **support** our workforce to remain **ambitious** in recognition of the flexibility demonstrated
 - b. **Digital** working solutions – we retain and enhance digital solutions
 - c. **Collaboration** both internally and externally
 - d. Culture of **One Team** is embedded, making best use of **skills** and **resources**
 - e. **Community** Support continues and is enhanced
 - f. **Proactive** in managing demand and ensure collective responsibility for all vulnerability
 - g. **Intelligence led** enhanced by positive **data** sharing
 - h. Keep what is **best for the resident/citizen and business**
 - i. Ensures **financial sustainability**

Easing of Restrictions

23. Our recovery plans have been and will continue to be informed and driven by the national guidance and timescales on easing restrictions. The first detailed guidance was published on 11th May and was followed by a statement in the House of Commons. More guidance has been issued regularly, in line with the ascertained and predicted risk to public health.
24. At the time of the June Cabinet paper, alongside partners, we had addressed the safe reopening of our Household Waste and Recycling Centres, the car parks at our country parks, and some of our buildings, as well as supporting as appropriate the planning for the safe re-opening of schools to identified year groups. We continued to shield the most vulnerable.
25. Since then, in line with national easing of restrictions, a number of community assets and services have reopened and resumed across the SCC, although restrictions are still in place across several areas as per Government guidance.
26. Services across Libraries, Children's Centres, Archives and Heritage, Country Parks and Rights of Way, Trading Standards, Coroners, Highways, Transport, Waste Management and various training and education activities have now been

re-opened to varying degrees, operating under health and safety guidance from the Government.

27. Examples of progress with recovery include: the backlog of assessments created by the implementation of Care Act Easements, and the backlog of reviews that had built up during the pandemic response have now been cleared; our schools have reopened to all year groups; home to school transport plans, although challenging, have been implemented; support has been provided for local businesses and those affected by redundancy; registration services have recommenced; and shielding has ceased, although we continue to support/monitor the most vulnerable through Family Hubs, libraries and the SCC COVID-19 telephone number for appropriate signposting.
28. Much more detail around recovery led by individual directorates and recovery groups is provided in the rest of this paper.

Resetting the Corporate Strategy

29. In June, it was reaffirmed by Members that the core vision, priorities and principles set out in the Strategic Plan remain valid as we look to recover from COVID-19. As part of recovery, leads for the five priorities and four principles have been reassessing and resetting their plans to address the impacts of COVID-19 and take advantage of new opportunities.
30. SCC has a well-established approach to quarterly performance and financial reporting, which has continued throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, flexing to enable the organisation to understand progress against our response and recovery plans, as well as our Corporate Delivery Plan.
31. Business planning will commence in Autumn to ensure that SCC has in place a robust Corporate Delivery Plan for 2021/22, to deliver against its Strategic Plan, alongside ensuring that we continue to have a balanced Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
32. With SCC elections in May 2021, a full refresh of the Strategic Plan and Corporate Delivery Plan will be completed post-election. A signed-off new Strategic Plan and Corporate Delivery Plan 2022/23 will be in place by March 2022.

Priorities for Recovery

33. As detailed in the June Cabinet paper (Impact of COVID-19 on SCC Communities, Economy and Organisation and Recovery Approaches), each directorate is leading recovery for its own area, and recovery which cuts across all the directorates is being led through recovery groups linked to the four principles – communities, digital, people and climate change. Any coordination of activity required is managed through the SCC Planning and Recovery Group.
34. Progress against the initial high level and immediate priorities for each directorate and corporate principles group is described below, along with progress against

plans which have emerged during the last three months, and the Community Impact Assessment.

Health and Social Care

35. The immediate and high-level priorities for Health and Care along with high level timescales and associated risks are detailed below.
36. Good progress has been made against all of the Health and Care recovery priorities:
 - a. **Effective COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control** including ongoing management of incidents as well as preparation for winter and any potential further wave of COVID-19. Additional capacity is being recruited.
 - b. **Expanding the Supportive Communities programme;** embracing the transformational opportunities offered by the surge in volunteering during the pandemic. A refreshed implementation plan will be brought forward for endorsement in October.
 - c. **Improving health and mitigating the impact of the lockdown;** including tackling obesity and mental ill health, especially in vulnerable adults. SCC's Public Health and Prevention Strategy has been refreshed and we have agreed a £750,000 investment programme funded by the uplift in the Public Health Grant including more campaigns, a workplace health programme, an improved digital offer and community grants fund.
37. Adult Social Care & Safeguarding:
 - a. **Recover operations.** We have now cleared the backlog of assessments created by the implementation of Care Act Easements, a small number are ongoing and are being treated as 'business as usual'. We have also developed a plan to ensure that we are prepared in case of an increase in requests for assessments due to the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable adults and their carers.
 - b. **Increase flexible and mobile working.** We have implemented video and telephone social care assessments and reviews to enable staff to work flexibly, whilst also supporting staff to complete assessments face to face safely where this is required.
 - c. **Harness the improved ways of working** that have been evident during the pandemic response, including an expanded role for First Contact in completing assessments quickly and effectively.
38. Care Commissioning:
 - a. **Recover operations.** We have arranged care placements and packages as our colleagues in adult social work have dealt with their backlog of assessments. We are liaising with the local Clinical Commissioning Groups to plan for transitioning from the temporary arrangements put in place during the NHS's pause in carrying out Continuing Healthcare and related assessments. We have continued to support care providers with any specific quality challenges, these have now reduced significantly during recovery.

- b. **Improve urgent care.** We are continuing to support the NHS to minimise unnecessary emergency admissions to hospital and facilitate timely discharge. We will draw on volunteering and community capacity as well as assistive technology to support people who need care.
 - c. **Ensure care market resilience.** We continue to provide advice to care providers about infection prevention and control, PPE, social distancing and 'shielding', and 'test and trace', developing these arrangements as part of our COVID-19 Local Outbreak Control Plan. We continue to promote the value of the care workforce alongside the NHS – for example, extending the same online resources for supporting their mental wellbeing that are made available to NHS colleagues.
 - d. **Review the care market.** We continue to monitor the care market to identify trends and we have begun a review of future market capacity requirements in the context of the impact of COVID-19 on the care sector, especially care homes. We continue to trial alternatives to building based day services and replacement care where appropriate to ensure support in the context of enhanced requirements for hygiene and social distancing.
39. In-house learning disability provider services:
- a. We are **developing new ways of providing support** in the context of enhanced requirements for hygiene and social distancing, including the use of remote electronic interactions.
40. Finally, there is a need to acknowledge the impact the recent months have had on our workforce and those working in the wider care sector and ensure that moving forward we can provide effective support through what has been, and may continue to be, a challenging period.

Families and Communities

41. The immediate and high-level priorities for Families and Communities were identified as:
- a. Understand where demand will hit as lockdown eases
 - b. Managing the increased demand in mental health and Domestic Violence
 - c. Assessing impact of the return to school guidance on the Local Authorities
 - d. Assessing families with multiple indicators not yet on our vulnerable list to proactively address potential needs
 - e. Working with schools to proactively target families they have identified as vulnerable
 - f. Stabilising and mobilising the workforce to address newly identified as vulnerable
 - g. Understanding and addressing immediate provider failure
42. Demand for services and referrals initially reduced by 30-40% during lockdown; although rates of referrals vary throughout the year, on average 148 referrals are received each week. There is no certainty for predicting an increase in demand, however different models produced by the Department for Education (DfE), suggest an increase of an additional 55 referrals each week is likely during September, as

children return to school. Therefore, within Staffordshire our referrals could increase to approximately 200 per week.

43. The most significant barrier to recovery for Children's Social Care has been the closure of the Courts and the subsequent limited court capacity. The impact of this has been experienced throughout the whole system, including children and their families.
44. As a consequence of this, the planned reduction of children in our care has not occurred as courts have prioritised new safeguarding applications and have not been able to schedule discharge applications, Adoptions, Special Guardianship Orders or Final Hearings. Court cases have remained active for longer, creating additional demand for updated assessments and the required statutory social work activities (statutory visits, reviews, health assessments, personal education plans etc).
45. There are 36 discharge applications on-going, 8 adoption orders delayed (where children have been placed with adopters for over 10 weeks , therefore eligible to apply for the adoption order) and 20 children who are the subject of placement orders where the plan is for adoption (where we are either seeking families or where they have been placed but not been in placement for over 10 weeks).
46. The court closures have also significantly impacted on the Youth Offending Service; the inability of the courts to hear scheduled cases has resulted in an increase of children open to the service requiring interventions and children have remained on remand for longer than would be usual (and therefore in the care of the Local Authority). Alongside the emotional distress and hardship for the young people involved, this may lead to financial pressures.
47. Staffordshire schools responded positively to the required wider opening from June 2020. By the end of June all schools had welcomed children back and the attendance of prioritised year groups was amongst the highest across the West Midlands and indeed the country. By July nearly 60% of the pupils in the prioritised year groups were attending schools each week. This placed Staffordshire schools in a strong position for full opening in September and during week 1 of the return to school 92% of children were in attendance.
48. Throughout this period Schools provided a weekly return indicating those vulnerable children and families that they had been unable to contact. This was followed up by the social worker contacting the family to ensure that the family was 'safe'.
49. The recovery has been delivered through four sub-groups:
 - a. Children's Social Care
 - b. Education & Skills
 - c. Workforce
 - d. Market Recovery

50. Each of the sub-groups has several workstreams and activities to achieve recovery, and good progress has been made against these. Families and Communities has continued to collate comprehensive data and performance information which identifies the impact of COVID-19. This information is reviewed regularly to understand the changing impact on capacity and demand across the Children's system; it is also routinely shared with DfE.
51. We continue to work with our partners to identify those children, families and care leavers who are at greatest risk of their needs escalating. People living with domestic abuse, poor mental health, vulnerable children and families with multiple 'risk factors' are being prioritised through the provision of appropriate support and direct work.
52. A number of preventative measures have been taken to ensure that there is adequate support available for children and young people experiencing poor emotional and mental health:
 - a. A Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent e-newsletter (Kind Minds) has been developed to share information regarding services, training and resources to support children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing. This newsletter has been distributed to educational establishments (schools, FE colleges, alternative education providers etc.) for the start of the 2020-21 academic year and will be produced every half-term and coordinated for Staffordshire by SCC.
 - b. An additional £100,000 has been obtained from the Public Health Ring Fenced Grant to increase the capacity of the children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing service, commissioned by SCC, to deal with additional demand.
 - c. Partners are developing an interactive digital pathway of support & services for children & young people's mental health. Partners are also starting to meet to discuss the possibility of creating a webpage for children & young people, parents & carers, and professionals as a 'one stop shop' for accessing information, advice and guidance regarding mental health services, support, resources and self-help tools. Both developments are aimed at simplifying what is currently a complex system of information, services and support for children & young people, families and professionals.
 - d. Partners are working together across Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent to identify and train 'local experts' to adapt the national training for educational establishments as part of the DfE / DHSC 'Wellbeing for Education Return' project.
53. We continue to work with the Staffordshire Commissioners Office and Stoke on Trent City Council to monitor the support in place for domestic abuse. At the end of quarter one performance remained comparable with last year, however we continue to monitor this through the existing governance structures to ensure that any increases are noted, and we respond appropriately.

54. As part of the response and recovery Family Hubs have been created which are virtual support bases where families with children and young people aged 0-19 can access a broad and integrated range of early help to overcome difficulties. They have connected families to a range of community support to help them manage through the difficult situation we have faced. In addition, these virtual family hubs have supported with:
- a. The targeted delivery of over 4000 survival kits to families most in need to ensure families had the information, advice and guidance and access to support if they reached crisis point as well as some practical help with activities to support their child's development and emotional wellbeing.
 - b. The delivery of the food and emergency supplies for individuals and families in Staffordshire. This provided people with £14,000 worth of support to buy food and emergency supplies.
 - c. The distribution of free food hampers and cooking equipment provided by business to support families most in need.
 - d. The establishment of a YouTube channel to provide recipes and ideas for families to cook together to ensure families are able to enjoy mealtimes together.
55. We are also offering support to prevent provider failure to ensure that there is the capacity to meet demand as lockdown eases. We are continuing to develop our workforce offer of training and support to staff and managers and developing virtual direct working tools for our practitioners.
56. We have engaged with our workforce throughout, seeking their experiences, views and support required; this has included surveys, risk assessments and buddying systems in teams. This has informed how we have supported staff in their working arrangements.
57. There are several risks and vulnerabilities that have been identified and are the primary focus of our current recovery work, these include:
- a. The closure of the family courts and subsequent limited opening has resulted in significant delays in progressing children's care planning, care exit and adoptions, which has led to an overall and continuing increase in the numbers of children in the care system. This has also impacted on private law applications not being heard and resulted in increased requests from the courts for Local Authority assessments in private law cases.
 - b. The delays in the courts has impacted on the youth justice courts and resulted in some young people remaining in custody on remand for longer.
 - c. There has been a significant reduction in venue capacity to support face to face direct family time between children and their parents- hampering reunification plans and reducing the capacity to undertake direct work and assessments.
 - d. There have been multiple changes to the government guidance to schools, the ability to provide all children with a full-time education- including those who require transport, and those children with a disability remains to be tested in September.
 - e. There is a limited care market for children with a disability, this market has become more fragile with COVID-19.

- f. Local Housing providers have had to balance the needs of those fleeing domestic abuse and the homeless, therefore there has been a delay in the allocation of properties to children leaving care at 18 causing delay to their independence.
 - g. There may be risks linked to local lockdowns that impact on the functionality of whole teams who may have to self-isolate due to being identified at risk via the track and trace arrangements or through school 'bubbles' being sent home. Business Continuity Plans will be implemented and reviewed in these circumstances, we will use our staff resource flexibly to ensure that we maintain a safe service and fulfil our statutory responsibilities.
58. These risks are being monitored closely through the relevant workstreams, Business Continuity Plans have been reviewed and updated to respond to these risks. We are working with our partners in the courts, schools, housing providers and commissioned providers to mitigate the impact of these risk where possible.

Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

59. The initial focus in Economy, Infrastructure & Skills (E,I&S) to COVID-19 was to maintain service delivery and put in place support where required. Some service areas experienced early demand pressures as part of the initial easing of lockdown such as the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs), however due to careful planning the re-opening of the sites was successful with most waste streams being collected from day one and visitor numbers matching year on year comparisons, despite the social distancing measures on site.
60. Business Continuity Plans throughout the directorate held during the outbreak including the delivery of highways services. A national highway sector resilience study focused on Staffordshire's success during lockdown and identified the following critical success factors: political support (e.g. assigning key worker status), the flexible delivery model through the Infrastructure +contract and committed team and supply-chain partners.
61. Demand for some services reduced during the outbreak, such as land enquiries and highways developer agreements, but these are now experiencing increases as lockdown is eased. These may be further amplified by recent changes to legislation and a relaxation of planning measures in town centres. In other services, COVID-19 has exacerbated pre-existing service pressures, such as the flood risk management programme, where access to sites has not been possible.
62. Planning for the full re-opening of education provision from September has been challenging and complex for service areas which support this, notably home to school transport, active travel planning and school crossing patrols. Transport plans are in place for the September re-start for all eligible pupils based on revised guidance for social distancing and increased hygiene. The team has worked with operators to increase network capacity for non-eligible pupils using part of the additional £0.66m allocated by the government. Travel to School Action Plans have been developed for each school site to help manage congestion and safety as well as increase active travel.

63. All local colleges, training providers and universities now have plans in place for September based around splitting cohorts, bubbles and a blended learning offer. Where learners do not have access to IT equipment, they are being referred to a voluntary organisation that provides laptops. This reflects the pragmatic approach taken across the directorate to work with our partner organisations to support the easing of lockdown by putting in place support where required, including via the Economic Recovery & Renewal Cell that is leading the local economic response to COVID-19.
64. Whilst work is on-going to assess the financial impact of COVID-19 within EI&S, the longer-term impact for learners, service users, residents, transport operators, town centres, developers and local businesses is not expected to become clear until the autumn.

Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation

65. Local economic recovery in response to COVID-19 was taken forward by a separate cell under the incident management process. An action plan brings together national and local initiatives and schemes to mitigate against the impact of COVID-19 and to re-start, recover, renew and transform the local economy.
66. Funding of £0.5m was agreed by Cabinet to support for local businesses to respond and re-open, in particular the funding provided an Emergency Grant for micro-businesses which had not been able to access Government support, this helped safeguard 226 local businesses during lockdown with a total grant of £0.21m. The funding also helped micro-businesses with a one-off PPE Start Back Packs for those businesses re-opening after lockdown that have close contact with their customers. In total 1,700 PPE packs were provided to local businesses to help them re-start with confidence. The real success of this scheme was also sign-posting businesses to known, trusted sources for PPE.
67. The Staffordshire Start Up Scheme was developed following experience from previous recessions where data demonstrates that during these periods of economic uncertainty more new businesses are started (following the 2008 recession there was a 55% increase in business start-ups between 2010 and 2016). The purpose of the scheme is to provide a free training course to individuals who want to start their own business and are at risk of redundancy.
68. In addition, a Redundancy & Recruitment Triage Service and a County Wide Redundancy Task Group has been put in place to support businesses and individuals affected by large-scale redundancies. At this stage the number of contacts for both schemes is low demonstrating the ongoing positive impact of the Government's interventions (e.g. furlough), but these are expected to increase from September as the national interventions are gradually removed.

Corporate Services

69. As reported previously, there are three groups within Corporate Services which focus upon the priority areas for recovery: Governance, Property, and Legal. The

corporate functions, Digital and People, are captured as separate workstreams within the recovery structure.

70. **Governance:** Virtual meetings to support SCC's democratic process began with lockdown, and the virtual meetings have been a success. There has been a good level of Member engagement and they have ensured the continued and smooth running of SCC. The constitution was amended to reflect the use of virtual meetings; the facilities within County Buildings in Stafford, which hosts the majority of our member meetings, and have been improved to ensure that they are compliant with social distancing rules. As we complete this phase of our recovery, we are now able to resume with some face to face meetings.
71. Where it is possible to do so, physical meetings will resume but only where appropriate. For the time being, as COVID-19 driven limitations in numbers within the building remain, all public meetings will continue to be webcast rather than open for public attendance.
72. In addition to this, a wider review of Governance remains underway with a view to ensuring that we have the most efficient and effective arrangements in place to support our wider service delivery as the "new normal" continues to evolve.
73. **Legal Services:** COVID-19 has delivered new challenges that have required involvement from Legal Services. During the response the service provided active support to the Incident Management Team, including support to the volunteer cell along with arrangements to deliver robust "local lockdown
74. In addition, the usual business of supporting the most vulnerable children and adults has continued as have other legal proceedings. Much of this has moved to virtual hearings rather than attendance at court, which has delivered some improvements in respect of process, however, it has impacted adversely on the hours required from team members to complete matters.
75. It has been possible to continue to offer a full service using a blend of digital platforms and physical attendance throughout the pandemic.
76. Work is however now required to restart and address the backlog in Adult Social Care (ASC) proceedings in Court of Protection. ASC cases have progressed by telephone wherever possible, but cases have been subject to frequent adjournments whilst the Court of Protection considers how to proceed final hearings where attendance is required.
77. A further priority area for Staffordshire has been the progression of care proceedings work which supports the transformation programme to reduce the numbers of children in our care. Since April 2020 legal colleagues been active participants and contributors to the Court Recovery Group set up by the local Designated Family Judge. The work done in the Court Recovery Group has ultimately enabled the progression of a model of split listing, which means that hearings that would have taken up two separate days are condensed into one day.

78. Telephone hearings in care proceedings cases have been taking place since the early days of the pandemic which has enabled the progression of matters where possible, when attendance of parties was not required.
79. There was a delay in the restart of attended hearings, due to the need for Her Majesty's Court and Tribunal Services (HMCTS) risk assessments on court buildings, but attended hearings commenced from the 1st June 2020. The split listing model, innovated in Stafford and Stoke Courts, has meant that in comparison with other Local Authorities nationally we do not have a significant backlog of cases of care proceedings waiting in Court, although there is a backlog in adoption cases, and for other children waiting to be discharged from care. The system does place pressure on legal colleagues regarding preparation for and conducting these condensed hearings.
80. It has been noted that cases are taking longer to conclude. Data is not yet available but this is likely to be due to a combination of factors including more frequent adjournments caused by the changes required in the system and as a result of the delay in the completion of social work assessments (due to the impact of COVID-19). The number of care proceedings cases being issued however, has not significantly decreased.
81. **Property:** Progress by the Property group includes a successful bid for funding from Get Building Fund through the Stoke and Staffordshire LEP, for the development of the Shire Hall in Stafford. A business case will be submitted later in the year.
82. **Registration Services:** SCC's Registration Services significantly amended their processes and methods of engagement as part of the response to COVID-19. Following the introduction of the National Lockdown, the Registration Service could only provide the critical function of death registration until restrictions began to ease in mid-June.
83. The lockdown period therefore produced a backlog of approximately 900 births to be registered, and affected approximately 1000 wedding ceremonies, most of which were re-arranged for next year. Approximately 1000 more deaths were registered during this period than in the previous year, a rise of 40%, and at the height of the pandemic, registration staff were registering more than three times the typical number of deaths, with no other work or registrations completed.
84. There has been significant change to the operation of the service, most notably the registering of deaths by telephone and electronic transfer of documentation between GP's and hospitals, registrars and funeral directors to speed up the process from death to funeral. This is likely to remain the case in the short-medium term. To simplify the process for registering deaths during this period, registration staff have managed the booking of death registrations which has also eased demand in the Contact Centre.
85. Since mid-June, registration staff have successfully addressed the backlog of birth registrations by adapting the normal service provision and have so far managed to accommodate around 1000 marriage ceremony moves to ensure the public could

marry at a convenient date once restrictions were eased. This will result in a large increase in ceremony numbers in 2021, requiring an increase in casual staff numbers to facilitate.

86. Face to face appointments are now available across the county for births and marriage preliminaries, and death registrations continue by phone.
87. Staffordshire was one of the earliest Local Authorities to resume Citizenship services. By early adoption of single person face to face citizenship ceremonies and 'virtual' citizenship ceremonies, we have enabled approximately 50 citizens to gain citizenship within weeks of the easing of lockdown. Ceremonies have now recommenced successfully following government guidelines.
88. **Customer Services:** Customer Services are playing a crucial role through supporting the ongoing response required to the COVID-19 outbreak. The flexible nature of the resource has enabled the team to respond quickly to demand. Four new members of staff are being recruited to support Local Contact Tracing, from October.
89. To date the Local Outbreak control has been supported by making over 1,500 phone calls to potential contacts of positive COVID-19 cases, contributing to the successful control of a number of outbreaks.
90. The Customer Service team is working to streamline other processes and call types, working with service areas directly, to release as much resource as possible. This resource is also being used to support Local Outbreak control and other parts of SCC who are working hard to support the public.
91. The **Policy and Insight Team** continue to direct significant analytical capacity and capability to support Local Outbreak Control. The team is managing, processing and analysing a wide-variety of different data on a daily basis, to enable Staffordshire to identify and respond quickly to rising COVID-19 cases and outbreaks. This includes working in partnership with the Customer Services Team to triangulate and summarise findings from local contact tracing.
92. The team has developed and is maintaining, a suite of interactive dashboards that bring together all the key datasets related to COVID-19 and which are updated daily. These dashboards are shared across the Local Resilience Forum to enable evidence-based decision making across Staffordshire. The Team is also providing regular situational reports for a wide variety of different outbreaks and incidents.

Communities

93. In the previous Planning and Recovery report to Cabinet in June 2020, the following priorities were set out for the Communities recovery workstream. Below is an update against each of these priorities.
 - a. Agree scope of Communities Recovery Group and any required sub-groups.
 - b. Plan for the re-opening of Staffordshire County Council run community services.

- c. Identify learning from what we have done differently and how this can be sustained.

94. Agree Scope of Communities Recovery Group and any required sub-groups:

- a. As part of the SCC approach to recovery from COVID-19, a Communities Recovery Group was established in May 2020.
- b. The scope of the Communities Recovery group was agreed at the 2 June meeting of the Communities Leadership Group (formerly known as the People Helping People programme board). As a result, the following two sub-groups have since been established to cover this scope, which report into the Communities Recovery Group:
- c. **Culture, Rural and Safer Communities sub-group** – focusing on the re-opening of community assets including Libraries, Children's Centres, Archives & Heritage, Countryside Estate (including Country Parks and Rights of Way) and Trading Standards.
- d. **Do-It Implementation / Volunteering sub-group** – focusing on establishing the Do-It Staffordshire platform for community volunteering and Do-It ICount. The aim of this work is to sustain the momentum of the iCount volunteering campaigns and mobilise staff more effectively in the event of a second wave or local lockdown.

95. Plan for the re-opening of SCC run community services:

Libraries:

- a. We have taken a phased approach to the recovery of Staffordshire's Library services. We reopened the 16 libraries directly managed by SCC and 1 Community Managed Library (CML) over a four-week period during July.
- b. We continue to work with our CML organisations to support volunteers to re-open the CMLs safely. 19 CMLs have now reopened and we have detailed plans and support in place to reopen the 8 remaining CMLs by the end of September. There will however be a requirement to support the recruitment of additional volunteers to ensure capacity across the CML network.
- c. A partial mobile library service began on the 17 August. Limited browsing will be re-introduced from 21 September and there are plans to gradually reinstate the service to more remote communities.
- d. Browsing was successfully re-introduced at the 16 county managed libraries at the beginning of September
- e. Alongside Recovery, Libraries continue to enhance the online offer and have updated their Business Continuity Plans.

Children's Centres:

- a. Since June 2020, Children's Centres have recommenced Childcare with adherence to the appropriate Government Guidance.
- b. During August 2020, Children Centres began a staggered reintroduction of Family Time for children in our care. This is a priority for the Centres as we seek to meet the needs of our children and their families whilst also responding to the requirements of the Courts.
- c. During September 2020, Children Centres will begin to reintroduce priority health appointments.
- d. Government guidance does not currently allow for the Children's Centre core offer relating to Early Years to reassume. Considering this, the Early Years Coordination Service continues to facilitate a virtual offer which is supported by a broader Family Hub Offer.
- e. The Service is reviewing the government guidance as it becomes available in order to continue to reopen Children's Centres.

Archives and Heritage:

- a. All Archives and Heritage sites received COVID-19 secure certificates by the end of June. This enabled staff to return to offices where their job role required it.
- b. The Staffordshire Record Office reopened on the 14 July with full opening hours reinstated from 11 August. The William Salt Library remains closed to the public; however, collections are available via the Record Office.
- c. A third of our volunteers were able to work remotely (45 people). This is likely to continue for some volunteers. The service is now looking at bringing volunteers back to onsite but needs to understand the implications of the new 'rule of six'.
- d. Despite the restrictions, the service continues to maintain higher levels of online engagement through our eNewsletter, social media, and project blogs.

Country Parks and Rights of Way:

- a. All of Staffordshire's countryside sites are now fully open. This includes car parks, toilets, parking machines, visitor centres at Cannock Chase and Chasewater. The Cafes are also open for take away services at Cannock Chase and Chasewater and trading concessions are now back in place.
- b. Volunteers are assisting wherever safe to do so on sites. As a result of emergency funding of £218,000 via the COVID-19 grant, additional staff cover and marshals are in place to manage the increased visitor numbers at Chasewater and Cannock Chase, plus additional Rights of Way officers have been appointed until 31st March to address the significant rise in reported issues on public rights of way with increased use of the network.

- c. The conference facilities at the Chasewater Innovation Centre were scheduled to reopen on 1st October in line with Government guidance. However the conference facilities will now not reopen on 1st October following the Government's announcement on 22nd September 2020
- d. Finally, we are awaiting changes in Government guidance to restore volunteering on our Rights of Way network. This cannot be achieved safely within the current guidance. The service depends heavily on volunteers, so this is a significant constraint to delivery.

Trading Standards and Coroners:

- a. Services have continued throughout lockdown with the majority of staff working from home and Coroners staff attending SP1. COVID-19 secure risk assessments have now been agreed which permit officers to visit trade premises.
 - b. Coroners inquests are being completed with limited attendees and remote access.
 - c. Trading Standards are dealing with the majority of issues by telephone and email, and COVID-19 compliant investigative and inspection processes are in place.
 - d. Trading Standards are working with Public Health and The Sports Grounds Safety Authority (SGSA) to ensure that if spectators are allowed into sports grounds this is carried out in a COVID-19 secure manner
 - e. Trading Standards are also leading on the enforcement and prevention activities in relation to the COVID-19 Local Outbreak Plan.
96. Identify learning from what we have done differently and how this can be sustained:
- a. The learning from the community response to the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a set of recommendations and strategic policy questions for the organisation regarding its community offer. These have been compiled into a report which have been shared for discussion with the Communities Leadership Group and directorate SLTs.
 - b. The recommendations of this report will be used to inform the 2020/21 Communities Delivery Plan, and the Digital work programme. These recommendations focus on recovering community assets, VCSE sustainability, community engagement, digital, data, culture, volunteering, #DoingOurBit, Members, Governance, and COVID-19 recognition / memorials.
 - c. The learning from the Volunteering Cell and the iCare and iCount campaigns has been captured by the Do-It Implementation / Volunteering sub-group. This learning has been included in the Communities Recovery Group recommendations report detailed above.

- d. One of these recommendations has been the implementation of the Do-It Staffordshire platform. Do-It Staffordshire is a county-wide digital volunteering platform connected to the national Do-It website. The purpose of Do-It Staffordshire is to connect volunteers with community and mutual aid groups in need of support and enable those who were inspired to volunteer during the COVID-19 response to continue.
- e. Alongside the parent site there will be two further 'eco-systems', Do-It ICount, and Do-It Support Staffordshire. The linked Do-It ICount platform will also be used by staff to respond to crises and peaks in demand in the short term or for a second wave/local lockdown. Do-It Support Staffordshire offers an enhanced service to organisations looking for volunteers, in line with our VCSE contract.
- f. The first phase of the Do-It Staffordshire platform has been built and launched with community and mutual aid groups. The platform has been launched to the public and our own workforce during August to promote volunteering and social action alongside #DoingOurBit. The launch of the Do-It ICount platform will also align to work taking place to review our approach and policies on volunteering internally.

Digital

- 97. Digital and SMART working have been central to the response and recovery phase and is one of the recovery priorities set out at paragraph 22. Based upon the draft strategy and programme that was developed in March 2020, an initial reassessment of the projects and concepts was completed informed by the immediate learning from the response phase and this was considered by Cabinet in August 2020.
- 98. Cabinet agreed that Members would work with Directors to test the projects, business as usual and concepts against a set of priorities identified by Cabinet and bring back a refreshed strategy and programme in November. Work is now underway to deliver this through the Digital Leadership Group.
- 99. There will be a renewed focus on improving the customer experience, communication, digital inclusion, digital economy and the next phase of SMART working enabled by the next phase of Microsoft Office 365 and Teams rollout.

People

- 100. The priorities within the People Strategy have been revised in light of the COVID-19 response and recovery and work has begun on delivering key priorities, which has resulted in a number of key deliverables being achieved since July 2020.
- 101. Since July the team has successfully updated approaches to managing capability, one to ones and appraisals as well as launching the new iLearn system, and the development of an implementation plan for a new Learning Management System (LMS). All these have been refined to support a more agile workforce and ensure the workforce is supported despite changes in working practices.

102. The People function has successfully supported the lifting lockdown arrangements ensuring that buildings are compliant with health protection regulations and an assessment of desk demand has been undertaken to help identify the capacity required in key buildings.
103. In addition to supporting teams to return to the office where necessary, the People function has also supported home working arrangements including a refinement of the SMART Working vision based on recent experiences and the acceleration of the organisation in relation to use of remote tools and approaches. The support for home working has included the purchasing and distribution of equipment to assist people to work from home safely and comfortably.
104. In July 2020, SLT agreed that a further review of working arrangements would take place in September 2020. This review has now taken place and from 7 September 2020, staff have been given the flexibility to return to the office, in line with current COVID-Secure risk assessments. This will give staff and managers flexibility to come into physical office space in a way that has not been an option available to them since March 2020.
105. There have and continue to be a number of discussions about how best to use the working space we have, more creatively, and that is part of the SMART working project. In the interim, it is proposed that we will leave it to teams and service areas to use the space available as appropriate and as creatively as required for what they need to achieve, including meetings.
106. There will be communications around this including the use of 'case studies'/examples of where this is happening, to 'encourage' people to use the workspace available and reassure people that this can be done safely.
107. The Health & Safety team have been providing considerable support to the management of COVID-19 outbreaks at education and early years settings. This included working with the settings to provide guidance on re-opening ahead of the new term and the management of incidents within these settings. The return of children to school has led to an increase in incidents and outbreaks and the team are working tirelessly to ensure these settings can stay open and safe. This includes contact tracing, arranging testing as well as implementing procedures to ensure incidents are managed in a safe and effective manner.
108. In addition, the Health & Safety Team continue to support the entire organisation with COVID-19 secure arrangements and continue to manage and co-ordinate the PPE advice and Emergency PPE support.

Climate Change

109. As SCC leads the way in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic there is a need to ensure that any recovery activity is linked to the refreshed climate change strategy work with the aim of achieving carbon zero by 2050.
110. A council-wide audit of carbon output, finalised in May 2020, provides a new 2018/19 baseline of our annual carbon output per tonne for the organisation.

Knowing the emissions of the organisation, should enable us to target where we need to direct effort, which will be reflected in a 5-year action plan to deliver carbon reductions. This is underpinned by quantifiable benefits and impacts set against the four key climate change themes: improved air quality; organisational Carbon reduction; protecting the natural environment; minimising waste; and a fifth cross-cutting theme, to deliver behaviour change.

111. Work is on-going with the Climate Change Working Group (an all-party member group) to prioritise actions that deliver the greatest carbon reduction, which will form a 12-month action plan. This is likely to focus on areas that SCC has sufficient influence and control over to ensure achievement of benefits in the timescales or those that have the greatest impact. SCC approved funding activity, over a five-year period, supports carbon reduction activity in February 2020.
112. An initial action necessitated by COVID-19 will be drawing up proposals for home-based working for staff and members following the move to SMART Working. Whilst this has delivered benefits through reduced mileage, it is likely to be offset (in the colder months) by increased heating in homes that may not be as energy efficient as SCC's offices, in particular, SP1. This will require engaging with wider service areas (e.g. OD as part of work to lift lockdown in SP1) to ensure that recovery plans either reduce carbon output or as a minimum have a neutral impact.
113. There are also opportunities for us to further the carbon neutral agenda by maximising recent national funding opportunities to support recovery. The Emergency Travel Fund Allocation which will enable infrastructure works will increase cycling and walking, and work is also being progressed by the economic recovery and renewal cell to encourage start-ups in clean, high value and transformational businesses.

Finances - Impact on MTFS

2020/21 and the immediate response

114. SCC received an additional emergency general grant from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) totalling £43m to respond directly to the crisis, with a further £9.9m from Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to be used to support the care sector and a further £3.6m to respond to the requirement for local test & trace arrangements. Grants have also been received to support families struggling to afford food and other essentials with food vouchers over the summer holidays, and for changes required to enable school transport to be COVID-compliant in September.
115. The estimated financial impact of the crisis, which includes direct expenditure, loss of income and delays to cost reduction/transformation programmes is expected to be covered by the grants, however there is a risk that significant additional costs could be incurred if there is a prolonged 'second wave' of infections. Cabinet have approved the allocation of the additional grant to the revenue budget for 2020/2021.
116. As we move forward with our recovery, it is recognised that there is a great deal of uncertainty facing local government finances. Therefore, as part of the recovery

plans, services have endeavoured to manage their finances within their approved 2020/2021 budget (as adjusted for emergency grant allocations).

117. The current MTFS is predicated on delivering a £62m cost reduction programme. The response and recovery to the pandemic has impacted upon our ability to deliver this programme. It will be important to continually assess and monitor this programme and ensure that we adhere to the agreed principle of “£ in : £ out”. As we progress through 2020/21 this may mean that Directorate recovery plans may need to identify alternative options to replace delayed cost reduction measures. In addition, any windfall savings that may arise due to reductions in demand for our services should be allocated to cover gaps.

2021/22 and beyond

118. Prior to the pandemic there were a range of ‘unknowns’ as part of the financial planning. These included, for example, the 2020 Spending Review, The Fair Funding Review, Business Rates Retention, Adults Social Care Green Paper, reforms of schools funding and longer term SEND funding.
119. These issues remain as we progress with recovery. The response to the pandemic has generated additional pressures particularly with council tax and business rates collections, increased demand for services, reduced income from fees and charges, and the pause in the cost reduction programme.
120. The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on the funding issues facing local government and the care sector. Through a combination of a huge local effort and non-recurrent funding SCC has been able to mount a successful response, limit the number of cases, and maintain care and support for vulnerable people. It is recognised that this is not sustainable without a longer-term funding settlement. Without sustainable funding the care sector will remain fragile and will not be resilient to future emergencies. A key financial risk is also a potential significant increase in the level of demand as a result of the impact of the pandemic, in areas such as Children in Care, Mental Health and Domestic Abuse.
121. As we continue to recover it remains unclear how the government intends to respond nationally to the overall cost of the response and recovery of the crisis. However, as we move further into recovery and the potential for local lockdowns/second wave and the closure of the furlough scheme, it is likely that our communities and our economy may require more of our support than previously. Government have indicated that The Spending Review will address these issues. The Spending Review is expected to be announced in the late Autumn.
122. Lost income from council tax and business rates is a major concern. Indications so far are that MHCLG are considering a similar scheme to that introduced to reimburse councils for lost income from sales, fees and charges but no decisions have been made at this stage. Given the importance of these income streams for council services, particularly care services, it is imperative that for future years the government provides financial support for any losses in council tax and business rates collections.

123. The work of the whole SCC as part of the Recovery Phase will inform the MTFs which is expected to be re-set. At this point it is not possible to be specific about changes to the MTFs until the recovery is further progressed.
124. As we further manage the recovery process through the autumn it will be important that SCC maintains flexibility in its plans, funding decisions and unallocated reserves to enable an effective response. It also remains imperative that the £62m cost reduction programme is delivered.
125. We must as part of our overall strategy continue to work closely with government to identify solutions to the current problems, however it seems likely that difficult decisions lie ahead, particularly with regard to the total quantum of funding that the sector has identified as being required to support our residents, community and economy.

Risks Identified

126. There is a risk that COVID-19 may re-emerge, and this will impact recovery timescales, dependent on the nature and scale of the outbreak, and whether this results in local or national lockdowns. Planning for a second wave of COVID-19 has been completed and a paper detailing the updated approaches to business continuity was discussed at SLT on 10th August.
127. There is a risk that unpredictable and immediate class/year group closures in schools may significantly impact upon the workforce as a whole resulting in unscheduled absences and potential backlogs of work. It may also increase the workload for SCC education workforce, resulting in other operational work being delayed and with potential additional resources being required to meet demand.
128. The risk to SCC's finances and MTFs remains, as the costs of recovery and potential of further outbreaks are currently unknown, linked to unknown increased demand, future funds and funding settlements from central government.
129. There is a risk that the response and recovery of individual partners may inadvertently negatively impact the SCC's plans.
130. There is a risk that individual partners recover in silos, reducing the likelihood of improved future public sector provision.
131. There is a risk that SCC does not take the learning from the response and recovery to date, and transformation programmes are limited as a result.
132. There is a wider social impact risk from COVID-19 on residents' individual finances and mental health, which may mean SCC will have to intervene more actively to support our residents and wider communities.

Continued Leadership and Management of Recovery

133. The agreed PRG objectives are:

- a. To ensure co-ordination, appropriate challenge, support and assurance to SCC's recovery process
 - b. To understand the likely progress of the COVID-19 pandemic in Staffordshire, linked to central government guidance on restriction of movement
 - c. To understand the potential timeline for removal of central government restrictions (including the likelihood of repeated imposition/removal cycles) over the next 18 months
 - d. To understand the potential impacts of COVID-19 on the county council services and provision; on the economy; and the council strategic priorities and principles
 - e. To ensure the coordinated and integrated development and implementation of plans to mitigate these impacts, as effectively and quickly as possible, including dissemination of any government funding for this purpose
 - f. To provide consistency through a set of principles for use by recovery subgroups in recovery planning and implementation, which acknowledges how the council has adapted and moved forward during the emergency response phase and recognising that some of the changes implemented have been beneficial to residents and the council
 - g. To understand the financial impact on SCC from responding to and recovering from COVID-19 including direct expenditure, MTFS savings foregone and income lost due to impacts on the wider economy.
134. The PRG met weekly through May and June, to deliver against these objectives, and has been meeting fortnightly since July, based upon need, as day to day management of recovery is governed through business areas.
135. Given the significant progress to date and acknowledging both the length of time we can reasonably expect recovery to take and the existing governance structures used to monitor delivery against plans, it is proposed to stand down the PRG and manage recovery through business as usual channels.
136. Recovery Groups within Directorates will remain for as long as coordination of activity is required and be managed through the existing governance structures. Decisions which require escalation will be taken to SLT as usual.
137. Data monitoring will continue through the Insight Team as part of the Local Outbreak Plan.
138. A small planning and recovery team led by the Director for Corporate Services will continue to meet regularly to coordinate any SCC-wide recovery required.
139. The partnership Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG) remains scheduled to meet every two weeks, meeting only if there is something specific to discuss. It will remain in operation for as long as the Staffordshire Resilience Forum, advised by the RCG, considers it necessary.

Legal Implications

140. There are no specific legal implications to report at this stage.

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Community Impact Assessment – Summary Document

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