Community Impact Assessment

Name of Proposal: Impact of COVID-19 on SCC Communities, Economy, and Organisational and Recovery Approaches

Project Sponsor (if applicable):
Janene Cox OBE, Assistant Director Culture, Rural, and Safer Communities
Kerry Dove, Head of Strategy and Digital

Project Manager (if applicable) or Lead: Deborah Sullivan, Senior Project Manager

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Community Impact Assessment – COVID-19 Recovery Approach:

1.   Introduction:

1.1.   This is a CIA on Staffordshire County Council's **approach to the planning and recovery from COVID-19**. It builds upon a CIA produced in September 2020 which considered initial impacts of COVID-19 on our communities, the economy and organisation. The recovery process will take an extended period, and as such this CIA will be updated in line with Cabinet decisions and updates where appropriate. It will also be appropriate for separate individual CIAs to be produced when substantial proposals are made.

2.   COVID-19 – Overview:

2.1.   COVID-19 continues to circulate around the world and in the UK. As of 12 July 2021, there have been 5,155,243[1] confirmed cases and 128,431 deaths in the UK. Within Staffordshire, as of 12 July 2021, there have been 73,121 confirmed cases and the number of deaths up to 2 July 2021 is 2,707. The below table shows that East Staffordshire has experienced both the highest number of cases and highest number of deaths. Over the course of the pandemic the hardest hit district has changed from one to another. Please note that the figures include cases from care homes and prisons and numbers of these vary from district to district – South Staffordshire has a disproportionately large percentage of the prison population.

Area name	Cumulative lab-confirmed cases	Cumulative Rate	Cumulative Deaths
Cannock Chase	8240	8177.7	303
East Staffordshire	11282	9421.0	468
Lichfield	8193	7821.0	324
Newcastle-under-Lyme	10621	8205.3	407
South Staffordshire	9932	8833.5	305
Stafford	10304	7505.8	371
Staffordshire Moorlands	7029	7140.8	302
Tamworth	7520	9804.9	227
Staffordshire	**73121**	**8313.4**	**2707**

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[1] Cases in the UK | Coronavirus in the UK (data.gov.uk)

2.2.   The UK has had a number of COVID-19 restrictions placed upon it since the first national 'lockdown' was imposed in late March 2020. In July 2020 most 'lockdown' restrictions were lifted, however in September 2020 restrictions were tightened and a patchwork of local restrictions were imposed across England. Two further 'lockdowns' were imposed in England in November 2020 and January 2021.

2.3.   In March 2021, England began a phased exit out of 'lockdown'. This consists of a four-step plan[2], forming part of the Government's wider roadmap to 'cautiously but irreversibly' ease restrictions. In July 2021 England moved to step 4 of the roadmap with the removal of all legal limits on social contact but with the warning from Government that the pandemic is not over and to proceed with caution.

2.4.   A successful UK vaccination programme is a key factor in enabling the remaining restrictions to be lifted. As of 12 July 2021, a total of 80,795,852 vaccinations have been given in the UK, with 45,923,721 being first doses and 34,872,131 being second doses.

3.   Staffordshire response to Covid-19:

3.1.   Staffordshire continues to respond strongly to the pandemic and will maintain Covid defences such as testing, contract tracing and outbreak management. This will likely be the case for the remainder of 2021/22 and possibly longer-term, with the duration and capacity of defences varying dependant on the severity of outbreaks.

3.2.   Staffordshire has made good progress with the vaccination programme with more than two thirds of the adult population having received two doses. This ranges from >90% of over 50s down to <25% of those aged 18-30. The success of the vaccination programme means that the future course of the pandemic is more predictable and more optimistic.

3.3.   Staffordshire has a sophisticated testing programme that provides a range of testing options to suit the needs of the resident. Community, surge, at-home and workplace testing have all played a key role to identify the virus in Staffordshire and to assist the County in its outbreak response.

3.4.   We have worked closely with our multi-agency partners across the public sector to respond to Covid-19, strengthening existing relationships and developing new ways of working where required. We have also worked closely with our communities, including the local VCSE sector, who have been vital in supporting our response. Through the Council's Recovery work and our recently agreed Communities Delivery Plan 2021/22, we will continue to learn from the response to the pandemic and work together to empower our residents to support themselves and each other.

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[2] COVID-19 Response - Spring 2021 (Summary) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

4.   Summary of Engagement

4.1.   At the heart of all our recovery plans and activities is considering and understanding the impacts of COVID-19 on our residents and communities. As recommended in previous CIAs, the Council undertook a COVID-19 Residents' Survey to understand how the pandemic has affected the people of Staffordshire and their views on priorities for recovery. Between August and September 2020, we received more than 3,900 responses to the survey. This is the largest response to a cross-cutting survey in some time.

4.2.   Findings show that almost two thirds (63%) experienced an overall negative impact on life, compared with 12% who reported a positive impact. Further findings include:

- The overall negative impacts experienced include not seeing friends and family, being unable to travel and being worried about vulnerable friends and family.

- The overall positive impacts experienced include saving money, spending more time outdoors and / or with immediate family, however those with disabilities / long-term medical conditions are less likely to have experienced the latter two positive impacts

- Over half of residents increased their use of digital by doing more online shopping and chatting more online.

- Over half of residents provided support to others and almost all of these people indicated that they were willing to continue.

- Some of the greatest concerns looking forward include the recovery of the local economy, the impact on the environment / climate, mental health and wellbeing, and access to health care.

4.3.   A further COVID-19 residents survey is due to take place in August and September 2021 to ensure the County Council continues to listen to residents to understand how the pandemic continues to affect the people of Staffordshire.

5.   Emerging Recommendations

5.1.   Based on the updated assessment below, this CIA makes the following overarching recommendations in order to continue supporting the recovery process:

- **Engagement** – Ensure the results of the previous and future Covid-19 surveys are considered when developing recovery plans, business plans, and new Strategic Plan.

- **Mitigations** – Ensure the mitigations set out in this CIA continue to be delivered and are aligned as appropriate to minimise the ongoing impact of Covid-19 on residents with protected characteristics.

- **Contingency planning** – Ensure all contingency planning is updated in the event of further waves of the pandemic.

- **CIAs** – Produce individual CIAs if further significant changes to community-related services are proposed.

Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) – Use this section to identify if the proposal will impact on our legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 for both residents and staff. In summary, those subject to the general equality duty must have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity between different groups and foster good relations between different groups.

Please consider:
- Who is currently using the service, across the protected characteristics?
- What do we know about their experiences and outcomes?
- What relevant information is available from the Census and population trends data?
- What were the findings of the engagement/consultation?
- Is there any relevant national, regional and/or local sources of research/evidence available?
- Is there any relevant information from partners or voluntary, community, social enterprise organisations?
- What is the analysis of the impact on those with relevant protected characteristics?

Protected Characteristics:	Which groups will be affected?	Benefits	Risks	Mitigations / Recommendations

• **Race**	All	People of all ethnicities will continue to benefit from the safe recovery of Council services and assets.	• Evidence has demonstrated that some ethnic groups are at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19, being severely ill and dying from COVID-19.
			• Risks to BAME groups will continue to be monitored as restrictions lift and if new variants pose specific impacts.
				• SCC have and will continue to support all residents, including extra measures for ethnic minorities where necessary and build public confidence as COVID-19 continues to circulate and restrictions lift, by:
				  o Managing local outbreaks, particularly in communities with high numbers of BAME
				  o Provision of Public Health IAG in accessible way ensuring residents whose first language is not English are fully informed
				  o Contract tracing to reduce further transmission
				  o Maintain its successful flexible and responsive testing scheme
				
				• Specific programmes of work are taking place that will support BAME communities during recovery including the Community Champions programme in Burton to engage with

				local communities and promote vaccine uptake
				
				• In the event of future variants and lockdowns/imposition of restrictions, SCC will monitor impacts and ensure mitigations are put in place for BAME communities, particularly if:
				  o New variants pose a specific concern
				  o Council services have to reduce/shut
				
				• Consider lessons learnt from Covid-19 when developing our Diversity and Inclusion Objectives, and strengthen our approach to engaging and collaborating with our workforce and community on diversity and inclusion issues

• **Disability**	All (in particular people over 70 with long-term conditions)	People with disabilities will continue to benefit from the safe recovery of Council services and assets.	• Evidence has demonstrated that people with disabilities have been at greater risk from COVID-19, due to access to services, isolation and digital exclusion. However, as restrictions have lifted and Council services fully reopen the risk greatly reduces.
			
			• Risks to disabled people will continue to be monitored as restrictions fully lift and if new variants pose specific impacts.
				• SCC have and will continue to support people with disabilities where necessary and build public confidence as COVID-19 continues to circulate and restrictions lift, for example:
				  o Managing local outbreaks
				  o Provision of Public Health IAG in accessible way e.g. for people with learning disabilities, the visibly impaired, residents who are isolated and/or digitally excluded as a result of a disability, are fully informed

				- Contract tracing to reduce further transmission - Maintain its successful flexible and responsive testing scheme - Targeting take-up of vaccinations - Continue to ensure the implications of disabled people are considered in the redesign of all services and measures are in place in community assets as part of recovery. • Specific programmes of work are taking place that will support people with disabilities during recovery, for example: - To support digital inclusion, the SEND Adult Learning Disability team have been consulting residents with disabilities and their carers online during the pandemic. The libraries have introduced 'digital buddies' to provide phone support for digital skills. The Digital Device Recycling scheme has been introduced to benefit residents most likely to be at risk of digital exclusion. - The Supportive Communities programme has provided communities with information, advice and guidance and linked them to voluntary and local community resources.

				- Community Help Points have been launched in community venues to provide a non-digital information/signposting offer. - In the event of future variants and lockdowns/imposition of restrictions, SCC will monitor impacts and ensure mitigations are put in place, particularly if: - New variants pose a specific concern - Council services have to reduce/shut
• **Sex**	All	People of all genders will continue to benefit from the safe recovery of Council services and assets.	- While both genders are affected by COVID-19, evidence shows that men are more likely to be severely ill and/or die from COVID-19, particularly those in older age groups. - Services that support each sex that are usually provided in community assets, together with services that are used by higher numbers of women pose risks when lockdowns/restrictions are in place, e.g. breastfeeding support groups, alcoholism support groups, domestic abuse support. - However, as restrictions have lifted and Council services fully reopen the risk greatly reduces.	- SCC have and will continue to support people and build public confidence as COVID-19 continues to circulate and restrictions lift, by: - Managing local outbreaks - Provision of Public Health IAG - Contract tracing to reduce further transmission - Maintain its successful flexible and responsive testing scheme - Targeting take-up of vaccinations - Specific programmes of work are taking place that will support families during recovery, including: - Health and Wellbeing provision - Facilitating 'family time' for children in our care - Facilitating virtual Family Hub Offer

			• Risks will continue to be monitored as restrictions fully lift and if new variants pose specific impacts.	• In the event of future variants and lockdowns/imposition of restrictions, SCC will monitor impacts and ensure mitigations are put in place, particularly if:
				  o New variants pose a specific concern
				  o Council services have to reduce/shut

• **Age**	All (in particular older people, including those with long-term conditions, and children and young people).	People of all ages will benefit from the safe recovery of Council services and assets.	• All age groups are at risk of COVID-19; however, evidence shows that older age groups and younger people have been at greatest risk.
			
			Older people:
			
			• Older people are at greater risk of being severely ill/dying from COVID-19.
			• Older people also suffer wider implications of lockdowns / restrictions e.g. isolation and loneliness, digital exclusion, care services
			• However, as restrictions have lifted and Council services fully reopen the risk greatly reduces. Older people have also been prioritised for vaccinations which has reduced risk.
			• Risks will continue to be monitored as restrictions fully
				• SCC have and will continue to support people and build public confidence as COVID-19 continues to circulate and restrictions lift, for example:
				  o Managing local outbreaks
				  o Provision of Public Health IAG, particularly those who are elderly and digitally excluded
				  o Contract tracing to reduce further transmission
				  o Maintain its successful flexible and responsive testing scheme
				  o Targeting take-up of vaccinations, particularly to younger age groups
				  o Engage with schools to address specific issues
				
				• Specific programmes of work are taking place that will support older people during recovery, for example:
				  o The libraries have introduced 'digital buddies' to provide phone support for digital skills. The Digital Device Recycling scheme has been introduced to benefit

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lift and if new variants pose specific impacts.

Younger people:

- Younger people are most at risk of lockdowns / restrictions, particularly those who are vulnerable, have SEND / disabilities, have low educational attainment, depend upon Council/care services/support.
- There is increasing evidence that younger people may be more at risk of long Covid and less likely to take up the vaccine.
- There is also increasing evidence that young people may suffer long term mental health issues associated with isolation in first lockdowns and anxiety regarding educational attainment and the ending of isolation for under 18s / ending of school bubbles
- Younger people also have specific risks associated with COVID-19, including the impact of lockdown on vulnerable families and the longer-term impact of social isolation on young people, their education and mental / physical health.

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residents most likely to be at risk of digital exclusion.
  - o The Supportive Communities programme has provided communities with information, advice and guidance and linked residents to voluntary and local community resources.
  - o Community Help Points have been launched in community venues to provide a non-digital information/signposting offer.

- Specific programmes of work are also taking place that will support children, young people and families during recovery, including:
  - o Facilitating Family Time for children in our care and the Virtual Family Hub offer.
  - o We are continuing to engage with young people through our VCSE Strategic Capacity Building partnership contract, which includes engaging with and representing the views of young people across the county. This includes the Wellbeing and Health Action Map (WHAM) plan, a resource that helps support young people to reflect and learn about their own emotional health and wellbeing and develop their own plan to improve it.

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				However, as restrictions have lifted and Council services fully reopen the risks reduce, however risks should continue to be monitored and mitigations put in place where necessary	In the event of future variants and lockdowns/imposition of restrictions, SCC will monitor impacts and ensure mitigations are put in place, particularly if: o New variants pose a specific concern o Council services have to reduce/shut
• **Religion or Belief**	All	People of all religions and beliefs will benefit from the safe recovery of Council services and assets.		• COVID-19 lockdowns / restrictions impacted upon people wishing to attend religious services / ceremonies and practice their faith • However, as restrictions have lifted community assets have reopened	• SCC have and will continue to support people and build public confidence as COVID-19 continues to circulate and restrictions lift, by: o Managing local outbreaks o Provision of Public Health IAG o Contract tracing to reduce further transmission o Maintain its successful flexible and responsive testing scheme o Targeting take-up of vaccinations • Specific programmes of work are taking place that will support communities during recovery including the Community Champions programme in Burton to engage with communities and promote vaccine uptake • In the event of future variants and lockdowns/imposition of restrictions, SCC will monitor impacts and ensure mitigations are put in place, particularly if:

				o New variants pose a specific concern o Community assets have to shut
• **Gender Reassignment**	All	People who have undergone gender reassignment or are transitioning will benefit from the recovery of Council services and assets.	• People who have undergone gender reassignment or are transitioning are potentially at greater risk of physical and mental health issues due to less support being available during COVID-19 lockdowns / restrictions to services • However, as restrictions have lifted the risk reduces.	• SCC have and will continue to support people and build public confidence as COVID-19 continues to circulate and restrictions lift, by: o Managing local outbreaks o Provision of Public Health IAG o Contract tracing to reduce further transmission o Maintain its successful flexible and responsive testing scheme o Targeting take-up of vaccinations • In the event of future variants and lockdowns/imposition of restrictions, SCC will monitor impacts and ensure mitigations are put in place, particularly if: o New variants pose a specific concern o Access to support/health services are reduced
• **Sexual Orientation**	All	People of all sexual orientations will benefit from the recovery of Council services and assets	• LGBT people are potentially at greater risk of mental health issues due to less support being available during COVID-19 lockdowns / restrictions to services • However, as restrictions have lifted the risk reduces.	• SCC have and will continue to support people and build public confidence as COVID-19 continues to circulate and restrictions lift, by: o Managing local outbreaks o Provision of Public Health IAG o Contract tracing to reduce further transmission o Maintain its successful flexible and responsive testing scheme

				o Targeting take-up of vaccinations • In the event of future variants and lockdowns/imposition of restrictions, SCC will monitor impacts and ensure mitigations are put in place, particularly if: o New variants pose a specific concern o Access to support/health services are reduced
• **Pregnancy and Maternity**	All	Pregnant women will benefit from the safe recovery of Council services and assets	• Services that support pregnant women that are usually provided in libraries and children's centres (e.g. mother's support groups, breastfeeding support groups etc) have not been fully accessible during lockdowns / restrictions • However, as restrictions have lifted and support services have resumed the risk has decreased. There is a risk that pregnant women may feel anxious about being vaccination and this and other potentially risks should be monitored	• SCC have and will continue to support people and build public confidence as COVID-19 continues to circulate and restrictions lift, by: o Managing local outbreaks o Provision of Public Health IAG o Contract tracing to reduce further transmission o Maintain its successful flexible and responsive testing scheme o Targeting take-up of vaccinations particularly to pregnant women • In the event of future variants and lockdowns/imposition of restrictions, SCC will monitor impacts and ensure mitigations are put in place, particularly if: o New variants pose a specific concern o Access to support/health services are reduced

• **Marriage and Civil Partnership**	All	The recovery of Council services and assets will benefit marriages and civil partnerships where appropriate.	• Whilst national lockdowns / restrictions have affected weddings and civil partnership ceremonies, there are no specific issues that impact upon people who are married or in a civil partnership	• SCC have and will continue to support people and build public confidence as COVID-19 continues to circulate and restrictions lift, by:
				  o Managing local outbreaks
				  o Provision of Public Health IAG
				  o Contract tracing to reduce further transmission
				  o Maintain its successful flexible and responsive testing scheme
				  o Targeting take-up of vaccinations
				  o Communications to people/businesses to take personal responsibility to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 during large social gatherings such as weddings
				
				• In the event of future variants and lockdowns/imposition of restrictions, SCC will monitor impacts and ensure mitigations are put in place, particularly if:
				  o New variants pose a specific concern
				  o Access to services are reduced

• **Impact on SCC Staff**	All staff	The recovery of Council services and assets will allow staff to return to Council buildings where appropriate and safe to do so.	• SCC have and continue to support staff to work in a way that suits individual needs and circumstances in order to manage risks to the workforce, however risks should continue to be monitored particularly as restrictions are lifted and the	• SCC have and will continue to ensure staff feel safe and confident about how and where they work. • There are restrictions and safety measures in place for people who wish to visit the workplace. • There is ICT equipment available and support for people who wish to work from home.

			Council reviews its working arrangements for staff, consideration should be given to: • Staff who wish to continue to work at home but are being strongly encouraged to return to the office • Staff who wish to return to the office but feel anxious doing so • Staff whose mental well-being has been affected due to increased and continued working from home	• Staff should be continually reminded of the mental health support available e.g. ThinkWell and MindKind • Workplace COVID-19 restrictions remain in place until October 2021. This will be reviewed in September and it is recommended that risk to staff continues to be considered during any decision making on working arrangements.
			• Some staff continue to be disproportionately pulled into the Covid-19 response risking increased stress levels and long working hours.	• Ensure SLT monitor and manage capacity/workload within teams who are responding to Covid-19 • Encourage staff to take their annual leave
• **Communities / localities**	Districts with higher proportion of older people. Districts with higher levels of deprivation and unemployment.	The recovery of Community assets and services has taken place in each district, and will allow communities to access more support services, leisure and cultural activities.	• The risks have been reduced due to targeted measures taking place in specific localities e.g. ○ Managing local outbreaks ○ Provision of Public Health IAG ○ Contract tracing to reduce further transmission ○ Maintain its successful flexible and responsive testing scheme	• SCC have and will continue to support communities / localities and build confidence as COVID-19 continues to circulate and restrictions lift, by: ○ Managing local outbreaks ○ Provision of Public Health IAG ○ Contract tracing to reduce further transmission ○ Maintain its successful flexible and responsive testing scheme ○ Targeting take-up of vaccinations

			○ Targeting take-up of vaccinations - Risks should continue to be monitored and mitigations put in place in specific localities as necessary - The VCSE sector has been vital to supporting communities to recover from Covid-19. However, national evidence has shown that the VCSE sector is facing increasing demand and reducing resources. Parts of the VCSE sector will be at increased risk, and the sector will continue to need supported to recover and remain sustainable.	○ Communications to people/businesses to take personal responsibility to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 ○ Provide capacity building support for the VCSE sector affected by Covid-19 through the Communities Delivery Plan. This will include the VCSE Strategic Capacity Building Partnership, Do-It Staffordshire, Covid-19 fund etc. ○ Encourage individuals to continue to 'do their bit' within their communities - In the event of future variants and lockdowns/imposition of restrictions, SCC will monitor impacts and ensure mitigations are put in place, particularly if: - New variants pose a specific concern - Access to services are reduced
• **Economy**	Districts with higher levels of deprivation and unemployment. Local businesses and skills providers	The recovery of Council services and assets is allowing SCC to provide greater levels of support for employment, skills, infrastructure and businesses which is aiding the economy	Some communities in Staffordshire have been more impacted than others and this will have implications for recovery (e.g. East Staffordshire recording the highest number of COVID-19 related and excess deaths, Cannock Chase and Tamworth reporting the	- Identify financial implications arising for skills provider's economic viability - SCC to support businesses to build confidence whilst remaining responsible and cautious as final restrictions lift to ensure premises remain open to support the economy

		Supporting the recovery of town centres and businesses is supporting communities and economic recovery and the further lifting of all restrictions will aid this further	highest unemployment rates in Staffordshire). • Business sectors that are at risk following COVID-19 include retail, wholesale, and manufacturing. Communities that are most reliant on these areas of business (such as Staffs Moorlands and Tamworth) will potentially see a higher level of impact. • Economic viability of skills providers is at risk.	
• **Environment**	All	The use of countryside and green spaces significantly increased when lockdowns / restrictions were in place, and people continue to utilise this resource which aids mental and physical health and well-being	• COVID-19 and the resulting lockdown has resulted in improvements to the environment (lower emissions etc) – however the recovery of services and end to restrictions may result in emissions going back to pre-lockdown levels • Transport is a key constraint for volunteers on the Rights of Way Network which is impacting on service delivery • Volunteers at country parks / rights of way may be anxious about returning to volunteer which could result in a constraint to delivery • Increased use of countryside may impact negatively upon the natural environment	Specific programmes of work are taking place that will support the environment during recovery, including: • Continuing to support the use of country parks and public rights of way with added Marshalls in place during busy periods to help manage safety • Provision of new play areas at Cannock Chase and Chasewater • Taking opportunities to secure funding to provide improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure due to a rise in levels during the pandemic • Exploring options to increase the number of Rights of Way volunteers As recovery continues, it is recommended that consideration also be given to:

				- The balance between use of countryside spaces for health reasons and the impact upon the natural environment - Promotion of green travel / climate change measures to ensure emissions do not go back to pre-lockdown levels