

## **Cabinet Meeting on Wednesday 20 October 2021**

### **Impact of Covid-19 on SCC Communities, Economy and Organisation and Recovery Progress – Update October 2021 and Way Forward**



**Cllr Alan White, Leader of the Council said,**

“Since the easing of restrictions, it has been fantastic to see our schools, our businesses and our hospitality and our leisure sectors once again fully reopening their doors.

“While Covid and its legacy will be with us for some time. we must look forward to rebuilding our economy, ensuring that our children get the schooling they need and that people can once again aspire to happy, healthier and rewarding lives.

“As a county council, we remain at the forefront of managing Covid and also managing the impact it has had on our services and the communities we serve.

“The pandemic has shown Staffordshire’s strengths: Our resilience, our determination and our compassion. It is also opened up new ways of smarter working which will be invaluable as we go forward with our lives.”

#### **Report Summary:**

This paper details the high-level impacts which the COVID-19 pandemic has had upon our communities, the economy and the organisation.

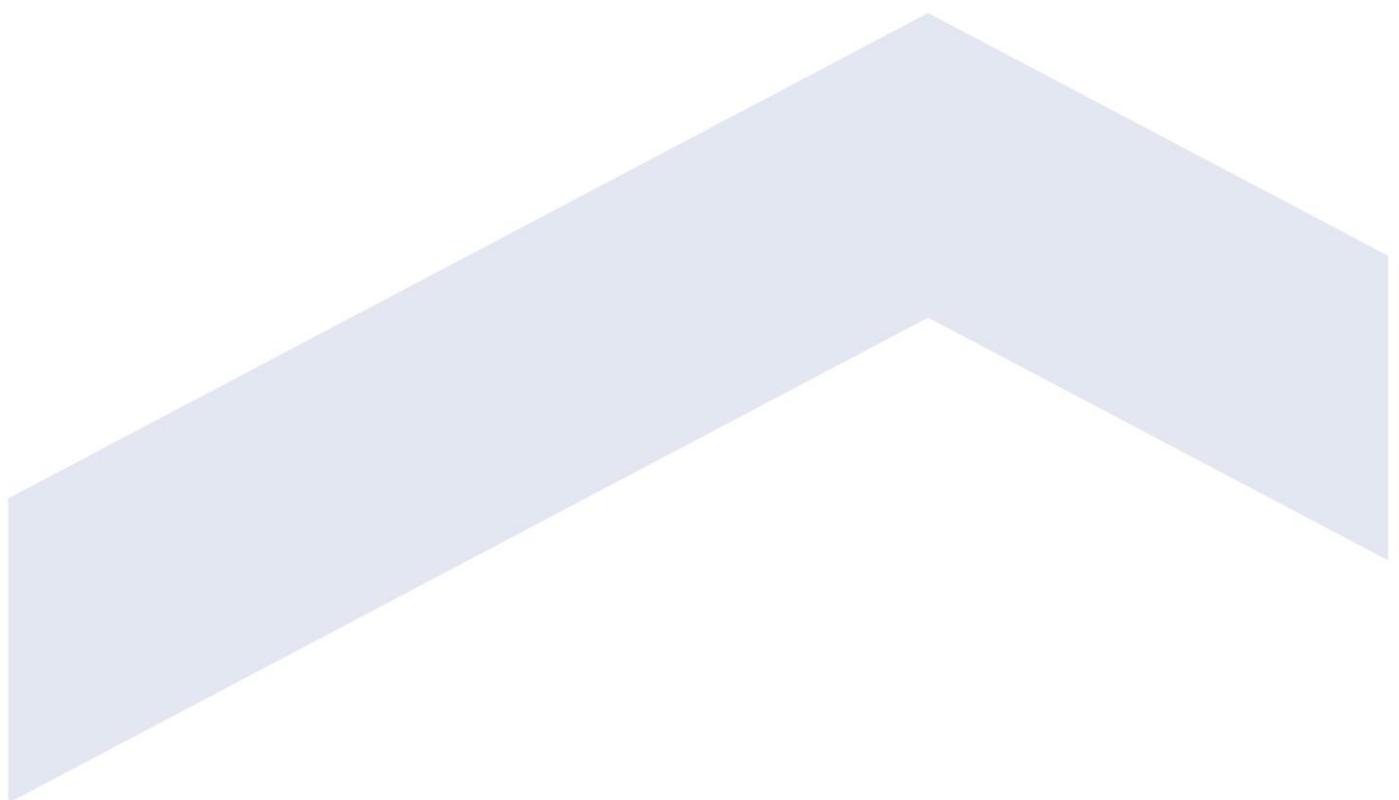
We recognised that recovery from the pandemic would not be a traditional recovery and that it would take an extended period of time and therefore this is the third paper to Cabinet.

This paper describes the high level priorities which have been identified for recovery across the County Council and our continued progress against these; and it details our on-going approach to the leadership, influencing and monitoring of the recovery process moving forwards.

#### **Recommendations**

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Notes the impact of Covid-19 on Staffordshire since October 2020;
- b. Notes the progress being made towards resetting the Corporate Strategy;
- c. Notes the progress made towards delivering the high-level priorities and plans from each recovery area; and
- d. Endorses Staffordshire County Council's approach to the leadership, influencing and monitoring of the Recovery process moving forward.



<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

## **Cabinet – Wednesday 20 October 2021**

### **Impact of Covid-19 on SCC Communities, Economy and Organisation and Recovery Progress – Update October 2021 and Way Forward**

#### **Recommendations of the Leader of the Council**

I recommend that Cabinet:

- a. Notes the impact of Covid-19 on Staffordshire since October 2020;
- b. Notes the progress being made towards resetting the Corporate Strategy;
- c. Notes the progress made towards delivering the high-level priorities and plans from each recovery area; and
- d. Endorses Staffordshire County Council's approach to the leadership, influencing and monitoring of the Recovery process moving forward.

#### **Report of the Director for Corporate Services**

##### **Reasons for Recommendations:**

1. On 17th June 2020 Cabinet endorsed the Staffordshire County Council (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). An update on progress was received on 21st October 2020 (Impact of COVID-19 on SCC Communities, Economy and Organisation – October 2020 Update).
2. Since October 2020 the prevalence of COVID-19 within our communities increased to a peak in January 2021, before an additional lockdown on 4th January had an impact; with cases increasing again from April 2021 as restrictions gradually eased, following the implementation of the government roadmap out of lockdown. The final easing of most restrictions on July 19th happened at a time of increasing case numbers and they have continued to rise across the Summer months, however, the success of the vaccination programme has meant that hospital

admissions and death rates have so far remained low. It is not the government's current intention to reimpose restrictions.

3. The Health Protection Board (HPB), required as part of the Local Outbreak Control Plan continues to oversee surveillance and management of incidents and provides support to local IMTs addressing specific outbreaks within our communities. Alongside this, the Member-led Local Outbreak Control Board ensures democratic oversight of the Local Outbreak Control Plan development and the management of incidents overall and individually. It also leads communication with communities about the overall management of incidents.
4. It is acknowledged that moving forwards society will have to learn to live with COVID-19 and the council has an approach to doing this, with some thoughts on likely short – medium term scenarios, organisation and societal impact, and learning and considerations to take forward as we recover, discussed in the paper Living with COVID-19 (Richard Harling, July 2021).
5. The SCC COVID Defence Force will be maintained, focussed on the priorities of testing, contact tracing and outbreak management for at least the remainder of 2021/22 and possibly longer term with the duration and capacity greater in more worse cases scenarios, and there is funding to support this.
6. Although government restrictions have tightened and eased over the first half of 2021, progress has been made across SCC towards organisation and service recovery. This has been managed through existing governance structures and overseen by the Planning and Recovery Group (PRG) as restrictions eased between March and July 2021. We have endeavoured to ensure that our services remain open wherever possible, so that we can continue to support our residents, communities, and businesses.
7. As Lockdown restrictions were removed in July 2021 moving forward, we need to manage recovery where it falls to SCC to do so, influence others where this is appropriate and monitor the situation so that we are able to respond quickly, if needed, to any changes and to ultimately ensure recovery progresses for our residents, communities and organisations.

### **Understanding the Impact of COVID-19**

8. Coronavirus COVID-19 continues to circulate around the world and in the UK. As of 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021, there have been over 225 million confirmed cases and more than 4.5 million deaths globally, with over 7 million confirmed cases and almost 155,000 deaths in the UK.

9. Case rates in the UK and locally, are rising, as social distancing restrictions have been relaxed. Hospitalisations have plateaued, and remain considerably lower than during previous peaks, as a direct result of the vaccine programme. As at 11<sup>th</sup> September 2021, Staffordshire recorded a 7-day rate per 100,000 population of 366.0, higher than the national figure (285.6) and the regional figure (319.9).

### **Resetting the Corporate Strategy**

10. Following the May 2021 elections, work to develop the Strategic Plan and Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2022-26 is underway and will continue throughout the Summer and Autumn. This work has been informed by both the response to COVID-19 and our recovery process, the completed plan and financial strategy will be considered by Cabinet and Full Council in early 2022.

### **Priorities for Recovery**

11. As detailed in the June 2020 and October 2020 Cabinet papers, 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.
12. Detailed progress against the priorities for each directorate and corporate principles groups, alongside an updated Community Impact Assessment are appended:
  - a. Appendix 1 Health and Care
  - b. Appendix 2 Families and Communities
  - c. Appendix 3 Economy, Infrastructure and Skills
  - d. Appendix 4 Corporate Services
  - e. Appendix 5 Communities
  - f. Appendix 5A Libraries
  - g. Appendix 5B Children's Centres
  - h. Appendix 5C Archives and Heritage
  - i. Appendix 6 People
  - j. Appendix 7 Digital and Climate Change
  - k. Appendix 8 Community Impact Assessment

### **SCC management, influencing and monitoring of the recovery process moving forward**

13. As we emerge from lockdown restrictions the Local Authority has stepped back from some of the direct support provided to our communities and businesses during the pandemic. However, there is still a need to manage

some service specific elements of recovery, to monitor some key data sets to understand where additional intervention might be required, and to support and influence the local economy, our communities and partners as we learn to live with COVID-19.

14. Tabulated below are summaries which demonstrate how we intend to do this across SCC directorates and corporately.

a. Health and Social Care

<b>Staffordshire County Council Role in Recovery from COVID-19 Moving Forwards</b>		
<b>Health and Social Care</b>		
<b>Manage</b>	<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Influence</b>
<p><b>ASC</b> Manage increased flexible working including video and telephone social care assessments</p> <p>Levels of referrals and ensure prioritisation of those at greatest risk</p> <p><b>Care Commissioning</b> Ensure care market resilience through provision of advice to care providers around infection prevention and control</p> <p>Distribute government grant funding related to COVID</p> <p>Alternatives to building based day services and replacement care</p> <p><b>In-house Learning Disability Provider Services</b></p>	<p><b>Care Commissioning</b> Monitor market to identify trends and future capacity requirements, especially care homes</p> <p><b>In-house Learning Disability Provider Services</b> Best practice guidance and regulations</p>	<p><b>Care Commissioning</b> Working with NHS to improve urgent care and to prepare for winter 2021/22</p> <p>Promote the value of the care workforce alongside NHS</p> <p><b>In-house Learning Disability Provider Services</b> Promote SCC in-house services as a social</p>

<p>New ways of providing support including remote electronic interactions</p> <p>Ongoing infection control, testing and vaccine compliance to reduce risks of outbreaks in services.</p> <p><b>Public Health</b> COVID response and outbreak management</p> <p>Manage initiatives to increase support for stop smoking services, alcohol treatment services, mental wellbeing and resilience, healthy lifestyles, and workplace health</p> <p>Continue to implement the Supportive Communities plan agreed in Feb. COVID outbreak management</p>	<p>regarding COVID-safe practice across a range of regulated and non-regulated settings.</p> <p>Monitor market demands for flexible, integrated services, provided in the community.</p> <p><b>Public Health</b> Monitor trends in cases of COVID, hospital admissions, vaccination uptake and variants of concern.</p> <p>Monitor community activity and assets, and build on the success of the Supportive Communities initiatives</p>	<p>care employer of choice, encouraging the social care industry as a positive choice for young people.</p> <p>Be an industry leader in COVID-safe practice.</p> <p><b>Public Health</b> Influence the public to healthier lifestyles through a program focussed on obesity</p> <p>Work with partners to provide a more joined up approach to people with multiple complex challenges.</p> <p>Enable and support further development of community assets and strengths-based care.</p>
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b. Families and Communities

<b>Staffordshire County Council Role in Recovery from COVID-19 Moving Forwards</b>		
<b>Children and Families</b> (Communities in a separate section below)		
<b>Manage</b>	<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Influence</b>
<p><b>Workforce</b> Consistency of services, maximising virtual opportunities whilst maintaining face to face contact where required</p>	<p><b>Workforce</b> Staff welfare</p> <p>Offering a blend approach to returning to the workplace from 1<sup>st</sup> Oct,</p>	<p><b>Workforce</b> Promote well-being services and online e-learning.</p>

<p>Virtual training for workforce and support for newly qualified social workers</p> <p>Manage returning to the office where possible to improve emotional support available to staff, for new staff to receive practical support and to ensure teams able to deliver the aims and objectives of the transformation</p>	<p>ensuring risk assessments in place for most vulnerable.</p> <p>Monitoring staffing levels and consider contingency around flu season.</p>	
<p><b>Education</b></p> <p>Solutions for emotionally based school refusals which have increased during COVID</p> <p>Manage increased demand for attachment and trauma training for schools</p> <p>Ensure Personal Education Planning completion rates recover to pre-pandemic levels for children in care</p> <p>Implement new duties from DfE for Virtual School Headteacher from September 2021</p>	<p><b>Youth Offending Service</b></p> <p>Numbers of children and backlog in courts now at normal levels. The YOS Management Board will continue to monitor.</p> <p><b>Education</b></p> <p>Monitor school attendance, linked to both increased numbers being educated at home and some families failing to return children to school</p> <p>Attendance patterns across different ages and phases of statutory education</p> <p>Monitor permanent exclusions and the reasons.</p> <p>Virtual School overseeing a COVID recovery plan to</p>	<p><b>Education</b></p> <p>The return of face to face alternative provision</p> <p>The use of restorative practice in schools in response to fixed term and permanent exclusion</p> <p>The use of the graduated response in education settings to support the social, emotional, and mental health and other needs of children and young people</p>

<p>Provide advice to schools and education settings upon the actions required when implementing COVID-19 outbreak management plans</p> <p><b>Children with Disabilities</b> Establish a dynamic purchasing scheme to attract new entrants and increase market capacity and availability of urgent care packages. New contracts live April 2022</p> <p><b>Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health</b> Manage the provision of support sessions in schools and communities to address increased demand across the CAMHS system</p> <p>Focus on early years and staff wellbeing as part of the DfE second phase Wellbeing for Education Recovery</p>	<p>minimise the impact of gaps in learning on attainment and progress</p> <p><b>Children with Disabilities</b> Monitor impact of dynamic purchasing scheme on children's disability care market</p>	<p>Provision of effective support in terms of Local Outbreak management and clear advice and guidance to settings to reduce and help manage/reduce COVID disruption to education.</p> <p>Effective planning of the roll out of the 2021 Flu vaccination and 12-15-year-old COVID -19 vaccination plans</p> <p>Influence education settings to have effective Outbreak Management plans</p> <p><b>Children with Disabilities</b> Influence the market through establishing a dynamic purchasing scheme</p> <p>Influence schools and providers to ensure children with disabilities able to access all aspects of their support packages</p> <p><b>Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health</b> Work with partners to influence policy and planning across the system</p>
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<p><b>Domestic Abuse</b> Continue to work with partner commissioning organisations and the provider (New Era) for the domestic abuse contract to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on service delivery and to enable increased provision to address increased demand.</p> <p><b>Children's Social Care</b> Manage numbers of Children in Care – identifying difficulties with shortage of placements that meet the needs of the most complex, and increased costs</p> <p>Manage increased numbers of Children with Disabilities on the edge of care entering care due to reduced school attendance, reduced health support, reduced availability of respite and home care.</p> <p>Continue to manage increase in prevention referrals to YOS.</p> <p>Continue to manage the increased numbers of children in care due to court closures and timescales to complete proceedings</p>	<p><b>Domestic Abuse</b> Monitor demand on provider</p> <p><b>Children's Social Care</b> Monitor number and nature of referrals to ensure the right support</p> <p>Social workers in schools to monitor this cohort of children</p> <p>Court delays. Prepare for changes post 1<sup>st</sup> Oct</p>	<p><b>Children's Social Care</b> Provide advice and support to Tier Two providers (Early Help) to manage backlogs and address areas of concern</p> <p>Utilisation of in-house resources to provide creative support.</p> <p>Dynamic purchasing in place/Home to support agencies support children remaining at home</p> <p>Health and safety review of current arrangements beyond 1<sup>st</sup> Oct</p> <p>Influence Partners in the wider children and families' system to</p>
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<p>Manage family time arrangements with reduced building capacity until October 1<sup>st</sup> and convening foster career support groups.</p> <p>Ensure Business Continuity Plans are up to date and have actions to mitigate against risks.</p>		<p>support through earliest help</p>
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c. Economy, Infrastructure and Skills

<b>Staffordshire County Council Role in Recovery from COVID-19 Moving Forwards</b>		
<b>Economy, Infrastructure and Skills</b>		
<b>Manage</b>	<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Influence</b>
<p>Review the existing Economic Recovery, Renewal and Transformation Strategy agreed by Cabinet in June 2020, and related strategic priorities.</p>	<p>Monitor the current state of the Staffordshire economy to ensure we support and develop the economy further - % on government support; Universal Credit claimant count; numbers on furlough; job vacancies; skills shortages</p>	<p>Influence partners and businesses to capitalise on the opportunities that have arisen, to hasten the development of the Staffordshire economy and to support business to thrive</p>
<p>Manage the Staffordshire Means Back to Business (Additional Restrictions Grant) programme, launched in April 2021 to deliver against the Strategy through four workstreams</p>	<p>Through the Programme board consider delivery statistics monthly working with our Districts and Boroughs to ensure programmes are effectively implemented across the County.</p>	<p>Work with the private sector to ensure the Programme remains up to date and effective.</p>
<p>Deliver the i54 Western Extension site, to be largely complete July 2021</p>	<p>Monitor job creating announcements in Staffordshire</p>	<p>Support the Districts and Boroughs through enhanced 2 tier working in the delivery of their Town Deal and Future High Street</p>

<p>Ensure the County is well positioned to benefit from programmes being developed by central government including Community Renewal Fund and Levelling Up Funding</p>		<p>Fund Programmes to promote job growth and activity in our urban centres.</p> <p>Infrastructure led growth to ensure as our economy recovers and thrives, we have the infrastructure to support communities as a result of economic growth.</p>
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d. Corporate Services

<b>Staffordshire County Council Role in Recovery from COVID-19 Moving Forwards</b>		
<b>Corporate Services</b>		
<b>Manage</b>	<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Influence</b>
<p><b>Registration Service</b> Manage the backlog of wedding ceremonies and related increased admin work to remove backlog</p> <p><b>Governance</b> Ensure voting meetings are held physically following the repeal of emergency legislation</p> <p>Review Governance, updating as and when necessary along with communication of changes</p> <p><b>Legal IMT</b> Manage the return of team members supporting IMT to their substantive roles</p>		<p><b>Governance</b> We will continue to make the best use of technology whilst adhering to the relevant legislation. We will work with organisations such as LGA and LLG to lobby Government to allow for the use of virtual attendance at Committee meetings.</p>

<p><b>Workflow</b> Realigning staff who had been tasked to provide support on COVID Regulations.</p> <p><b>Transformation Project</b> Legal support and guidance support to the children's system transformation</p> <p><b>Backlogs</b> Support to F&amp;C and H&amp;C and Court system to address remaining backlogs</p> <p><b>Property</b> Support to property on building additional housing and capital receipts and realisation of assets, work which did not reduce during the pandemic</p> <p><b>Emergency Planning/Response</b> Respond to COVID-19 and evaluate the impact across service delivery, including community and citizens' impact</p>	<p><b>Workflow</b> Changes in statutory obligations or requirements in relation to specific subject areas that impact on legal practice.</p> <p><b>Transformation Project</b> Monitor legal risks arising as a direct or indirect consequence of the project.</p> <p><b>Emergency Planning/Response</b> Monitor resource resilience and ability to respond to concurrent or major incidents</p> <p>Review and monitor BCPs and ability to respond during COVID – critical services list</p> <p>Monitor Staffordshire uptake to vaccination programme, SCC and</p>	<p><b>Backlogs</b> Continue to liaise with HMCTS and key partner agencies to highlight and propose developments and solutions to the backlog.</p> <p><b>Emergency Planning/Response</b> National resilience Strategy - call for evidence</p> <p>National 'big resilience Conversation' – post COVID</p> <p>Civil Contingencies Act consultation</p> <p>LRF roles, responsibilities and Structures (inc funding)</p>
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<p><b>Property</b> Manage the development of Shire Hall in Stafford</p> <p>Support and respond to COVID-19 building control and changing ventilation standards and new workplace guidance.</p> <p><b>Policy &amp; Insight</b> Process and analyse a wide variety of information related to COVID-19 to enable Staffordshire to identify and respond rapidly to outbreaks</p> <p><b>Customer Services</b> Manage the dedicated phonenumber to support the public with IAG to improve isolation compliance</p> <p>Streamline processes to release support to support Local Outbreak Control and other parts of SCC</p> <p>Continue new ways of working employed through pandemic as</p>	<p>provider staff to ensure continuity of service</p> <p>Monitor and evaluate new risks eg Cyber and ensure relevant plans to mitigate risk(s)</p> <p><b>Property</b> Monitor compliance and implement revised controls to premises where needs identified</p> <p><b>Policy &amp; Insight</b> Monitor data sets to ensure rapid response if needed to changing COVID situations</p> <p><b>Customer Services</b> Monitor demand across all services. Current trends demonstrate that some service area demand is higher than pre-pandemic levels in 2019</p>	<p>– multiagency response and recovery</p> <p>National risk &amp; resilience planning, assurance and governance</p> <p><b>Policy &amp; Insight</b> Dashboards shared with Local Resilience Forum to enable evidence-based decision making across Staffordshire.</p> <p><b>Customer Services</b> Working with partners internally to influence the Customer Journey</p>
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<p>normal services resumes and demand increases</p> <p><b>People Services</b> Ensure suitable resources available to effectively deal with the People Response and recovery requirements (see section and link to the People section)</p> <p>Ensure that our people policies, processes and procedures reflect and support our new ways of working</p> <p>Ensure that we can provide the appropriate people focused data and insight to inform business needs and decisions</p> <p>Ensure that our SMART working vision supports our new ways of working following COVID-19</p> <p>Ensure that we develop an ambitious vision for SMART working based on the experiences that COVID-19 has provided us</p> <p>Ensure that we use opportunities post COVID-19 to increase our ability to work agile effectively</p>	<p><b>People Services</b> That the people strategy priorities support organisation through living with COVID</p>	<p><b>People Services</b> Workforce planning for long term needs to ensure COVID does not impact organisational performance</p> <p>Influence a new culture for the organisation where SMART is embedded in the way people work, buildings are configured around activity undertaken and technology supports this approach</p> <p>SMART is how we work ensuring the needs of the business come first</p>
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e. Communities

<b>Staffordshire County Council Role in Recovery from COVID-19 Moving Forwards</b>		
<b>Communities</b>		
<b>Manage</b>	<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Influence</b>
<p><b>Libraries</b> Fully operational services with ongoing COVID-secure environments to keep staff and customers safe, subject to further review</p> <p>Phase in regular activity programmes</p> <p>Re-introduce soft furnishings and toilet access with Zoono Cleaning in place</p> <p>Support and enable the return of IT Buddies</p> <p><b>Children's Centres</b> Provision of Childcare, Family Time and health and wellbeing appointments, in line with government guidance. The Early Years Coordination Service continues to facilitate a virtual offer which is supported by a broader Family Hub Offer</p> <p><b>Archives and Heritage</b> Increase capacity for onsite visitors and volunteers from 1st October.</p>	<p><b>Libraries</b> Monitor PC use to increase availability where possible.</p> <p>Monitor number of people attending events and activities, increasing capacity in line with social distancing guidelines.</p> <p>Consider when to reintroduce overdue charges. Monitor the impact of COVID-19 on income for the service.</p> <p><b>Children's Centres</b> H&amp;S site visits been carried out. H&amp;S advice is to maintain low numbers and social distancing which is impacting on recovery</p> <p><b>Archives and Heritage</b> Monitor occupancy rates in visitor spaces, the increase of capacity with social distancing guidelines, and the</p>	<p><b>Libraries</b> Work with partner organisations to encourage Community Managed Libraries to recover their library offer and ensure a consistent approach across Staffordshire.</p> <p>An update on SCC Libraries recovery will be submitted to DCMS by October 8<sup>th</sup></p> <p><b>Archives and Heritage</b> Work with other local authority archive services through Chief Archivists in Local</p>

<p>Recover small scale onsite events and workshops.</p> <p>Continue to promote onsite and remote volunteer offer. Promote digital offer and online events, and remote copying/research services to offset income shortfalls.</p> <p>Recruit Project Officer for Pandemic War Diary project to record the corporate response to COVID-19</p> <p><b>Rural</b> Availability of contract cleaners to enable public toilet provision</p> <p>Explore how to restore volunteering on public rights of way network, transport impacting on service delivery</p> <p>Resume meeting provision at Chasewater Innovation Centre and at leased buildings though capacity remains reduced</p> <p><b>Trading Standards</b> Manage COVID-19 related enforcement and prevention activities where applicable</p> <p>Support to premises owners for return of</p>	<p>impact of COVID-19 on income for the service</p> <p><b>Rural</b> Monitoring numbers at Chasewater Innovation Centre and leased buildings with reduced capacity and impact on service</p>	<p>Government Group to influence continued recovery of services.</p> <p><b>Rural</b> Working with parishes and user groups on local schemes where possible to achieve volunteering outcomes</p>
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<p>spectators at sporting events</p> <p>Coroners inquests continue to be held, making use of digital facilities with limited attendees in person and remote access for most. Inquests requiring a jury are taking place making use of the County Council Chamber.</p> <p><b>E,I&amp;S Community Work</b> Resumption of road safety education</p> <p>Manage the increased workloads due to impact of isolation on school transport</p> <p>Manage restrictions at Household Waste Recycling Sites</p> <p>To help maintain the substantial rise in walking and cycling levels during the pandemic, all opportunities are being taken to secure funding to provide permanent improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure, in line with the 2021 version of Staffordshire’s Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)</p>	<p><b>Road Safety Education</b> Monitor the opportunities to deliver in schools and the take up of new digital resources</p>	<p><b>Road Safety Education</b> Continued engagement with priority schools to prioritise delivery of in-school activities</p>
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<p><b>Supportive Communities &amp; Volunteering</b> Manage dissemination of grant to VCSE groups to support groups reopening post COVID</p> <p>Roll out Community Champions approach to other localities</p> <p>Adapt the Do-It volunteering platform to ensure sustainability</p> <p>Manage the new Volunteering Task and Finish Group to increase the number of volunteers into key service areas impacted by COVID-19, review the offer for volunteers and internal policies</p>		<p><b>Supportive Communities &amp; Volunteering</b> Through the Volunteering Task and Finish Group, influence residents and staff to increase the number of volunteers</p>
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f. People

<b>Staffordshire County Council Role in Recovery from COVID-19 Moving Forwards</b>		
<b>People</b>		
<b>Manage</b>	<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Influence</b>
<p>Continue to manage local outbreaks through the current third wave of the pandemic both for Core Workforce and Education and Early Years</p> <p>Retain current COVID building arrangements until end Sept 2021 and complete a review and recommendations in line</p>	<p>Monitor building occupancy to ensure staff comfort and safety and SMART working</p> <p>Monitor Outbreaks in workplaces/educational settings and ensure effective response and learning.</p> <p>Monitor ventilation levels through Premises Managers and respond</p>	<p>Positively influence the wellbeing of staff through Lifting Lockdown Implementation Plan &amp; Winter impacts to manage anxieties, and communications – webinars, online mental health training, wellbeing offer</p> <p>From October 2021 positively influence the</p>

<p>with the Governments Winter Plan update.</p> <p>Implementation of new Ventilation to manage delta variant and complete required workplace CO2 monitoring. Manage outcomes with support from Strategic Property.</p> <p>Ongoing communication with staff around SMART working</p> <p>Review using space differently in SP1 to support SMART working</p> <p>Complete HSW refresher training for Fire Marshalls, Evacuation Chair use etc</p> <p>Launch effective vaccination Policy to effectively ensure legal compliance with regulation to ensure all employees that work in or attend a CQC registered care home are fully vaccinated/hold valid exemption by 11<sup>th</sup> Nov.</p> <p>Revise Wellbeing Strategy in October 2021, tailored to the changing needs of staff and new ways of working</p>	<p>effectively to any risks identified.</p> <p>Monitor that employees required to be fully vaccinated/hold valid exemption is in place to ensure compliance on the 11<sup>th</sup> November.</p> <p>Monitor consultation on the widening of employee groups that may form part of the requirement for COVID 19 vaccination for deployment in role, allowing effective planning.</p> <p>Monitor H&amp;S standards are maintained across the organisation</p>	<p>wellbeing of staff through implementing a revised Wellbeing Strategy tailored to the changing needs of staff and new ways of working.</p> <p>Influence effective management and planning of the 12-15-year pupil COVID 19 vaccination</p> <p>Influence through effective education, encouragement, and support workforce to be fully vaccinated especial frontline and care staff. Including booster vaccination as they become eligible.</p> <p>Influence employees to be winter resilient by accessing Flu vaccinations to support protection of vulnerable service users and residents of Staffordshire and support our own Business continuity arrangements</p>
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Effective Flu vaccination programme for SCC and Education Workforce		
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g. Digital

<b>Staffordshire County Council Role in Recovery from COVID-19 Moving Forwards</b>		
<b>Digital</b>		
<b>Manage</b>	<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Influence</b>
Ongoing development of our digital programme, which will reflect the 'living with COVID' world we now find ourselves in.		

h. Climate Change

<b>Staffordshire County Council Role in Recovery from COVID-19 Moving Forwards</b>		
<b>Climate</b>		
<b>Manage</b>	<b>Monitor</b>	<b>Influence</b>
Development of a blueprint to help shape and describe the road to net carbon zero for Staffordshire		Influence Staffordshire Business Environmental Network to drive forward a green-led recovery conversation

### **A Pandemic "War Diary" and Lockdown Memories**

15. Two projects have been developed by the Archive and Heritage Service which will become the corporate and community record/ memory of COVID-19 for Staffordshire. Their purpose is:

- a. To capture the official record of Staffordshire County Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic which will be transferred to the Archive and Heritage Service as a resource for future research.
- b. An oral history project to capture the experience of members and officers during the pandemic.
- c. A publicly accessible book/brochure to share the story of how SCC managed the response and create a lasting legacy.

d. Use the Lockdown Memories project which is capturing the community response to COVID-19 to provide additional information and context for the formal record.

16. The intention is to publish a book which will detail how SCC managed the response by March 2023 and deliver a Lockdown Memories exhibition at the Staffordshire History Centre between March and June 2024.

### **Director of Public Health Report**

17. The Director of Public Health Report is an annual independent report by the Director of Public Health. This year's report is entitled "COVID-19 in Staffordshire: Impact and Opportunities" and reviews the pandemic from March 2020 up until the last easing of restrictions on 19 July 2021.

18. The report, which will also inform the Pandemic 'War Diary', details how Staffordshire has been affected by COVID-19, the SCC response and what we have learned which we can build upon. It is anticipated the report will be formally available by October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021. A presentation has been delivered to the Health and Wellbeing Board, and it is intended that this report will lead the way for the JSNA, which will build our knowledge about the longer term impact so of COVID-19; and for a refreshed Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy which will seek to articulate a strategic response for the next 3-5 years.

### **Finances - Impact on MTFS**

2020/21

#### **County Council Financial Outturn**

19. Since the 2020/21 budget was set, COVID-19 has become a global pandemic requiring a combined response from public sector services and which is also having a severe impact on the economy. Central Government have issued four payments of general grant to local authorities, plus grant to compensate for lost income, totalling £48.6m for Staffordshire. This has enabled SCC to support the additional pressures of continuing to provide vital services during the pandemic while protecting both workforce and residents.

20. The table below sets out the outturn of additional costs relating to the pandemic, plus lost income and delayed savings caused by the crisis. This can be funded by the government grant provided.

	<b>£m</b>
Additional Costs	35.407
Lost income	2.680
Delayed savings	3.940
Sales, Fees & Charges Grant	(1.733)
Grant funding	(46.896)
Carried forward into 21/22	(6.602)

*There were £0.680m of costs incurred in 2019/20 which have been funded from the grant.*

21. All grants received by Staffordshire County Council regarding COVID 19 in 2020/21 are listed below. The General COVID Grant can be used for all spend, the remaining grants are specific and go directly to services, the majority of which are paid out to suppliers. As the pandemic is having an impact across more than one financial year, some of the grants below will be carried forward into 2021/22 and are committed to fund the County Council's continuing response.

	<b>£m</b>
General COVID Grant Funding (incl. SFC grant)	46.896
Test and Trace	8.233
Adult Social Care Infection Control	18.183
Lateral Flow Testing in Care Homes	2.463
Workforce Capacity Adult Social Care	1.771
Clinically Extremely Vulnerable	1.094
Food and Essential Supplies	0.823
Home to School Transport	0.661
COVID Winter Grant	2.316
Sales, Fees and Charges Funding	1.733
Contain Outbreak Management	22.114
Local Transport Authority Grant	0.314
Adoption Support Fund	0.225
Growth Hub	0.873
Schools Fund	0.644
Catch Up Premium	1.872
Mental Health Support	0.138
Other	0.332
<b>Total</b>	<b>110.685</b>

22. In addition, a contribution of £5m has been made from the COVID-19 grant to the Local Taxation Loss Reserve which will be used to smooth

out the impact of the pandemic on local taxation in future years. This will be used to fund the 25% of lost local taxation which is not being funded by the government, in addition to other impacts such as reductions in tax base.

23. The county council has managed its response to the pandemic in a range of different ways. Some of this has been by diverting resources from planned activities to supporting the outbreak. In other instances, additional resource capacity has been brought in to assist. Specific use of third sector support has also been facilitated by the additional grant funding. Additional costs have been incurred in a range of areas including:
  - a. setting up vaccination centres
  - b. additional transport costs
  - c. supply of food
  - d. supply of essential protective equipment
  - e. additional cleaning services
  - f. testing and tracing response
  - g. waste disposal arrangements; etc.
24. Services have also suffered from reduced income levels from fees and charges as activity has been curtailed or stopped due to the restrictions and measures in place to control the virus.
25. There has also been a significant impact on planned cost reduction programmes which have been delayed due to the need to divert staff and resources to COVID response activities or have been delayed due to external factors such as the closure of the courts services. Many of the delays impact over multiple financial years.
26. Of particular concern is the uncertainty about the longer-term impact of the pandemic on the care market, which has resulted in higher costs and loss of income for providers, will continue for the foreseeable future. The latest funding settlement for Local Authorities was only for one financial year and there is a risk around future government allocations, particularly considering the significant grant funding provided to tackle COVID-19. Furthermore, and as described in paragraph 4 and Appendix 1 the latest indications are that society will be living with the virus for much longer than had initially been anticipated.
27. There have also been some delays in delivering aspects of the Capital Programme however it is pleasing to note that a final outturn of £132m is broadly at levels experienced prior to the pandemic.

## **2021/22 and beyond**

28. In the current financial year funding levels provide some stability to continue the recovery work and provide some capability to fund further response activity as and when the need arises. Latest forecasts suggest that the council will manage within existing budgets (as supplemented with COVID-19 grant) for the 2021/22 financial year
29. However future years are much more uncertain. Prior to the pandemic there were a range of 'unknowns' which included the 2020 Spending Review, The Fair Funding Review, Business Rates Retention, Adults Social Care Green Paper, reforms of schools funding and SEND and it is still not known when these reviews will begin.
30. This lack of clarity makes longer term financial planning extremely difficult, and in some cases impossible; these issues have not gone away because of COVID-19. In fact, the current crisis has added some additional problems notable around council tax and business rates collections as well as having a significant impact on income from fees and charges and cost reduction programmes that councils are delivering to balance their budgets.
31. 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 we have been able to mount a successful response, limit the number of cases, and maintain care and support for vulnerable people. This is not sustainable without a longer-term funding settlement. Local government has been living 'hand to mouth' for years and this has prevented us from being able to make the long-term investments in the care sector. Without sustainable funding the care sector will remain fragile and will not be resilient to future emergencies.
32. This level of uncertainty does mean that SCC should ensure that it maintains suitable flexibility in its plans, funding decisions and unallocated reserves to help it respond to events as they unfold. It remains imperative that the £62m cost reduction programme is delivered.
33. 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 that it requires to deliver what our residents need.

## **Risks Identified**

34. There is a risk that COVID-19 may re-emerge, either through a new variant or decreasing vaccination immunity levels, and this will impact upon our recovery timescales, dependent on the nature and scale of the outbreaks, and whether this results in local or national lockdowns. Planning for Living with COVID-19 has been considered and a paper was presented to SLT in July 2021.
35. 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.
36. There is a risk that the response and recovery of individual partners may inadvertently negatively impact the SCC's plans.
37. There is a risk that individual partners recover in silos, reducing the likelihood of improved future public sector provision.
38. 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.
39. 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**

40. The SCC Planning and Recovery Group (PRG) was reinstated in March 2021 to oversee the easing of restrictions from the January 2021 lockdown and the related recovery to services and support for communities.
41. 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 again to stand down the PRG and manage recovery through business as usual channels.
42. 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. Data monitoring will continue through the Insight Team as part of the Local Outbreak Plan.

43. A small planning and recovery team led by the Director for Corporate Services will continue to meet regularly to coordinate any SCC-wide recovery which may be required.
44. The partnership Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG) is now scheduled to meet every month rather than 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.
45. A study by Keele University (Appendix 9: Group processes and interoperability: A longitudinal case study analysis of the UK's civil contingency response to Covid-19) in which the Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF) Chair, SCC Director for Health and Care and other colleagues participated, has provided a reflective examination of the response to COVID-19 in Staffordshire linked to the national situation and central government guidance, and provides key learnings for partners locally and nationally moving forward.

### **Legal Implications**

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

### **Resource and Value for Money Implications**

47. Please refer to Finance section above (paras 19 - 33).

### **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

- Appendix 1 Health and Care
- Appendix 2 Families and Communities
- Appendix 3 Economy, Infrastructure and Skills
- Appendix 4 Corporate Services
- Appendix 5 Communities
- Appendix 5A Libraries
- Appendix 5B Children's Centres
- Appendix 5C Archives and Heritage
- Appendix 6 People
- Appendix 7 Digital and Climate Change
- Appendix 8 Community Impact Assessment
- Appendix 9 Group processes and interoperability: A longitudinal case study analysis of the UK's civil contingency response to Covid-19

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