

CABINET

4 AUGUST 2020

COVID-19 RECOVERY

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Summary

This report provides Cabinet with an overview of the Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan, the emerging workstreams, the work undertaken to date and our desire to return to a **Back to Better** position.

1. Budget and policy framework

1.1 The Cabinet has responsibility for service provision; therefore, this is a matter for Cabinet.

2. Background

2.1 The national response to the pandemic has been heroic with our colleagues in the NHS working tirelessly to save lives and many sectors and organisations swinging into action to support our communities, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

2.2 The pandemic put the spotlight on local government to respond and support residents in many different ways. We are very proud of the way our staff at Medway Council stepped up to the mark, with many teams working on the frontline and others redeploying to step into vital roles to support colleagues and residents. Our responsiveness, innovative thinking and committed professionalism has enabled us to continue to provide as many services to local people during this time as well as creating new platforms for helping people. Council teams worked even closer together to support each other and the strength of our partnership working has deepened as we have worked as one to respond to the pandemic – something everyone should be proud of.

- 2.3 As we move into our recovery phase, it is also important we take a moment to reflect on some of our achievements and learning from Medway's response. To name just a few: quickly building our own emergency support service with the help of partners to deliver food to the most vulnerable, redeployed staff from our Sports Team doing food shopping for residents in need of help, answering a variety of queries from concerned residents on the phones and on social media, processing thousands of applications from businesses for financial support, supplying Medway young children with activity packs, swiftly setting up additional support to get rough sleepers immediately off the streets and developing new ways to hold, and for the public to watch, council meetings online. We have been particularly proud of the strong working relationship forged between schools and the council to co-ordinate a magnificent response that has seen most schools remain open throughout.
- 2.4 Although we will, for some months still be in the response phase to the pandemic, we are also now actively planning and implementing our recovery. It is important that we reflect on what we have learned during this time, and the different ways we have been working, to radically look at what we can do differently in future and further improve the services we deliver for Medway residents and businesses. Just as our response to the pandemic has been creative, selfless, and ambitious, so too should be our approach to recovery. So rather than everything back to normal, we are proposing that the next steps should be to discover our ***Back to Better***.
- 2.5 We remain as ambitious for Medway as we have ever been and this most recent experience has seen a coming together of all our communities in Medway, people working together and supporting each other through this challenging time. We have more work ahead from our ongoing response to Covid-19, to establishing Medway as a child-focused city and our ambition to bid for UK City of Culture 2025. We must harness and lock in this new spirit, as well as our revitalised partnerships, to act as a springboard to create together a sustainable, successful and vibrant Medway with people at its heart – an even better place to live, work, learn and visit.
- 2.6 Medway Council's Recovery Plan was written with this in mind.

3. Medway Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan

- 3.1 Recovery is usually a return to business as usual (BAU), however, given the unprecedented scale of Covid-19 and the social and economic impacts, Recovery will not just be a return to BAU. We will need to look at where our operating models, policies and strategies need to be realigned or reimaged over the short, medium, and long term as will our partners.
- 3.2 Recovery from the unprecedented event of Covid-19 will take us into uncharted territory and present us with opportunities, as well as challenges, to

review our services and the way we deliver them in the future and Medway's Covid-19 Recovery Plan will embrace this.

- 3.3 We mobilised our Recovery operation during the Response stage to enable us to not only focus on the exit strategy from the pandemic but to start considering medium and long-term planning.
- 3.4 The Recovery work covers all aspects of the Council's business with a particular focus given to children, young people, vulnerable adults and those who may have been adversely affected by the pandemic.
- 3.5 There are three distinct work streams in the Medway Council Covid-19 Recovery Plan as set out below and these will run concurrently. All three work streams will be supported by Finance, Communications, Legal and HR.

4. Workstream 1 – Service Resumption

- 4.1 This workstream focuses on service resumption, reopening services where they have closed, returning redeployed staff to their substantive posts, reversing any special arrangements that have been put in place during the emergency and resuming meetings and consultations that have not been able to take place remotely. This will be led by Service Managers and coordinated by Recovery Cell leads for each Division. Each service will complete its own Service Recovery Plan, risk register and financial implications on standard templates which have been provided.
- 4.2 Service Recovery Plans are signed off by Assistant Directors/Directors before being enacted to ensure that any corporate and strategic issues are captured and that services do not return to the old normal if there is an opportunity to go 'Back to Better'. They are then reviewed by the Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG) and reported to Medway's Gold for any strategic decisions.
- 4.3 During this stage it is likely that we will see increased demand for services especially, but not limited to, social and health care. Service Managers will be asked to identify these demands in their Service Recovery Plans and Risk Registers.
- 4.4 This is a complex stage with services coming back on-line at different times and often with a phased approach and with the possibility of further waves of Response.
- 4.5 It is essential that all staff factor in the potential for new normal 'Back to Better' working arrangements when constructing their Recovery Plans. This could include changes to the way back-office services are delivered; building on the benefits around mobile working to free up space in Gun Wharf to support property rationalisation; identifying opportunities to accelerate our ambition around climate change and looking at our roads and transport systems to reflect changed long term habits.

- 4.6 Many services have continued to run during response, albeit using different delivery methods. The following is a summary of some of the key areas of Recovery that have been undertaken to date.

Re-opening High Streets & Markets Safely

- 4.7 Following the announcement by the government that non-essential retailers could open from 15 June 2020, the Town Centre Management Team worked with colleagues across the Council, businesses, Town Centre Forums and Ward Members to develop and implement a programme of interventions to ensure the safe re-opening of Medway's high streets.
- 4.8 Utilising government guidance, and after undertaking site visits, an action plan was developed and agreed. The key workstreams that have been implemented successfully are Comms Plan, Business Guidance Pack and Postcards; signage, cleansing programme, Information Officers and a two week, temporary closure of Rochester High Street (completing on Sunday 28 June 2020).
- 4.9 Following the announcement by government that hospitality businesses could open from 4 July 2020, the Town Centre Management Team worked with colleagues across the Council and key partners to implement an additional number of measures to support a safe reopening of these businesses, including additional guidance pack; comms plan and tactical front line launch team.
- 4.10 Gillingham Market: following a risk assessment, Gillingham market safely and successfully re-opened on 6 July 2020. Safety measures implemented included revised stall layout to ensure social distancing, hand sanitiser stations, barriers, signage, additional stewards, comms plan and a chip n pin payment system for cashless rent payments.
- 4.11 Rochester Farmers' Market: Rochester Farmers' Market re-opened on Sunday 19 July at Blue Boar Lane Car Park. This was subject to appropriate social distancing and safety measures including sanitising stations, barriers, signage, additional stewards, chip n pin payment system and agreement to utilise the entire Blue Boar Lane Car Park with overnight security to control vehicular access.
- 4.12 Rochester Artisan Market: the TCM and Highways Team met with the Chair of Rochester City Centre Forum to discuss the minimum requirements necessary to agree the safe reopening of the Rochester Artisan Market. A revised stall layout and risk assessment facilitated the reopening on 11 July 2020.
- 4.13 Re-opening High Streets Safely Fund: Medway Council was allocated £246,396 from the Re-opening High Streets Safely Fund. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's £50million fund aims to help Councils across England prepare for the safe reopening of high streets and other retail spaces. The funding can support practical measures so

businesses can re-open quickly when they are able to, enable staff get back to work and help customers return to shops confident it is safe. Eligible expenditure can include support for action planning, communication and materials and equipment for temporary public realm improvements.

- 4.14 This fund is supporting the delivery of the workstreams necessary for safely re-opening Medway's high streets. Additional interventions to support the on-going safe operation of Medway's high streets over the next 12 months and support the businesses, via the fund, are being considered and scoped.

Hospitality reopening

- 4.15 The re-opening of the hospitality sector saw a further easing of the lockdown. On 4 July 2020, the government allowed pubs, cafes and restaurants to reopen and resume service (not just take away or delivery service). This represented a challenge for local authorities and the police to ensure that licensed businesses reopened and operated within social distancing guidelines to keep their patrons safe.
- 4.16 A multiagency approach was taken in Medway which saw a great deal of collaborative work undertaken in preparation for the opening weekend with Council teams from Trading Standards, Food Safety, Noise & Nuisance, Parking, Waste and Enforcement all working with colleagues in Licensing to ensure support for businesses. With the likelihood of additional people visiting town centres, Medway had to plan for additional cleansing, litter enforcement and the management of objects on the highway e.g. tables and chairs.

Heritage attractions

- 4.17 Heritage attractions began a phased reopening from Saturday, July 4th when Rochester Castle welcomed back visitors. The layout of the historic castle keep makes it impossible to operate a one-way system throughout so additional heritage and sports staff were drafted in to manage the flow of visitors, as well as collect visitor details under Government track-and-trace guidance. A maximum of 18 visitors are allowed around the keep at any one time, and the opening weekend saw nearly 200 visitors in total. Rochester Castle was followed on July 7th by the reopening of the Guildhall Museum and Visitor Information Centre, again with additional sports staff brought in to assist. The next phase saw Upnor Castle and Eastgate House reopen, initially on reduced days/hours.

Libraries & Community Hubs

- 4.18 The reopening of Community Hubs and Libraries is dependent on Government guidance on social distancing. As seen in the Covid-19 Response phase, the service is agile, and the reopening programme is considered and responsible. The Council is taking a phased approach to ensure a safe environment for customers, where staff can feel confident about the services they are providing and allows the service to complete all the necessary building changes.

- 4.19 Phase 1 began on 6 July when a limited number of Community Hubs and Libraries opened to recover existing stock borrowed before lockdown. Phase 2 commenced on 13 July when the launch of the new Click and Collect system for the library service was implemented; this meant that residents could reserve specific titles and collect those from a specific branch. Phase 3 and 4 in early August will see all Community Hubs and Libraries along with Medway Archives Centre reopen for face-to-face enquiries, browsing, self-serve points and socially distanced public computer use via a booking system.
- 4.20 Each phase is predicated on buildings being risk assessed, inspected, and audited to be Covid-19 Secure, ensuring that processes, protocols, protective equipment, and PPE are correctly in place.
- 4.21 As part of the Recovery process we have launched the new Click and Collect system. This personalised online and telephone service, will allow customers to reserve individual titles and ask for collections/genres of stock to be chosen for them by trained staff. The book/s will be available to collect from a specified library on a specified date.
- 4.22 Unfortunately, at the time of writing, mass attended events and activities including Baby Bounce and Rhyme, Toddler Shake and Boogie, Storytime and large-scale author events remain cancelled until Government guidance allows. The Council is regularly reviewing this position and when possible will reintroduce the programme. The Council will continue to improve and extend our digital events programme, that has been very well received including the Summer Reading Challenge, online Book Clubs and Story-times.

Leisure Centres

- 4.23 Sports Centres began reopening on 25 July, with Medway Park and Strood Sports Centres the first to reopen in line with guidance from Government and sport National Governing Bodies.
- 4.24 Sports centre membership entitles customers to use any Medway-Council operated centre.
- 4.25 A range of amended operating measures have been put in place and have been published on the Medway Council website. Sports centre members were written to informing them of the changes.
- 4.26 Key changes introduced included:
- Booking sessions online in advance
 - Customers to provide contact details as part of the track-and-trace measures
 - Reduced range of sporting activities available
 - Changing rooms closed, except for swimming.
- 4.27 Sports centre members requiring a part-month credit for the lockdown closure in March were allowed free use of the centres from opening date until the end

of July and then had their monthly payment in August reduced on the relevant pro-rata basis.

- 4.28 The second phase of reopening is scheduled for 15 August, when Hoo Sports Centre is planned to reopen.
- 4.29 Splashes will remain closed while it undergoes an extensive redevelopment following Council approval of a £5m investment to create a modern, family-friendly fun centre.

Safe Opening of our buildings for the staff and public

- 4.30 The Property team has conducted surveys over recent weeks to follow Government guidance on the reopening of offices and buildings, as initially issued on 12 May 2020. Immediately following receipt of Government guidance a template was issued to all building managers to complete what was required by way of signage, sneeze screens, sanitisers etc, so that orders could be placed in good time. The Building Recovery Cell, led by the Head of Property & Capital Projects co-ordinated this initial work. A ten-step guide for Building Managers was produced with input from the Communications, Emergency Planning, Health and Safety, Human Resources and Medway NORSE.
- 4.31 Buildings were placed in an agreed priority listing and a Bronze Delivery cell was established to support the work to make buildings Covid-19 compliant and to complete an audit of those works. To date 33 urgent priority buildings have been surveyed by the Property & Capital Projects team, there are a further 32 high priority buildings, 2 medium priority buildings and 10 low priority buildings. The subsequent works to make them appropriately safe for the public, Members and officers to use, have then been checked by our Internal Audit Team. The works carried out have included amendments at our Registry Office to facilitate birth registrations and at the Princes Hall of the Corn Exchange, in Rochester to enable marriages to take place. Gun Wharf and Broadside, our two principal operational buildings have also seen significant work to enable a limited number of staff to return. Managers are encouraging the majority of staff to continue to work from home, in line with Government guidance, as the Council reviews future working arrangements.

Children and Young People

- 4.32 Work is continuing with families and vulnerable children including face to face contacts with the most vulnerable, specifically resuming for children subject to child protection plans. The service will return to usual practice as soon as practicable, as social contact begins to increase and in line with government advice on social distancing and restrictions. All children and families have been risk assessed and safety plans are in place which determine the level and type of contact required.
- 4.33 Detailed and comprehensive operating procedures have been revised to take account of the Recovery phase and provide staff with clarity on dealing with

children and families, how to maintain contact with families, working from home and managing all aspects of child protection planning and processes. These have been communicated to other safeguarding partners.

- 4.34 Those parts of the service who have a reliance on buildings for the delivery of services have been adapted to be compliant with social distancing and other health and safety measures, allowing them to resume in a phased way e.g. plans for the resumption of group work in Early Help hubs and Youth Services venues. For some buildings this will have a financial cost related to minor alterations and some investment in technology, such as large screens for conference meetings.
- 4.35 The ongoing development of 'blended' working arrangements for each element of the service will ensure the right balance of face to face direct work with children and families, home working, office, and using virtual/remote delivery or creative ways of working where benefits are clear.
- 4.36 Multi agency meetings are taking place virtually. This has worked well for partners but is more challenging when those meetings involve families whose access to digital technology is more difficult. This is also proving a challenge with legal proceedings which are all currently taking place on-line.
- 4.37 Some recovery challenges remain outside the influence of the Council. Covid-19 related delays in court final hearings are impacting on the numbers of children in care – a rise in recent weeks due to final orders e.g. Special Guardianship not being made in a timely way. Courts are currently working on their own recovery plans likely to be for later in the summer. In the meantime the service is trying to mitigate the adverse impacts on children and the volume of work.

Schools

- 4.38 Throughout the lockdown period schools maintained provision for children of key workers and vulnerable pupils. The phased return to schools for year groups N, R, 1, 6, 10 and 12 from 15 June up until the end of the summer term, as well as maintaining the provision for keyworker children and vulnerable pupils has been implemented smoothly, with head teachers taking individual responsibility for their own schools as they are in the best position to understand the challenges their sites present with regard to safely returning pupils to school.
- 4.39 Medway Council has rigorously supported schools in re-opening throughout. Regular meetings with headteachers and the DfE have taken place and continue to do so to highlight and resolve any issues that may arise. This regular communication through 'Teams' has proved invaluable in ensuring schools remain open safely, and daily briefings providing information and comprehensive guidance have been well received by schools.
- 4.40 Numbers of pupils returning has risen throughout the phased return from 1 June and expected to continue to do so up until the end of term. SEND

transport has worked well, with providers working collaboratively and flexibly with the schools to ensure that pupils are transported to school safely and to time.

- 4.41 Central government has recently set out that all pupils will return to school in September and guidance has been provided to support this. The Medway Council will continue to work with schools and associated stakeholders to ensure that schools are positioned to admit all pupils in September. Regular updates to schools as well as a Headteacher recovery group are established and functioning well to facilitate the full return.
- 4.42 Internally staff have been working flexibly with most working remotely from home. This has proven successful and we will explore how this can be effectively extended going forward. The utilisation of 'Teams' for internal and external meetings has been successful to enable colleagues to keep in touch and assist in the progression of day to day tasks as well as Covid-19 related ones.

Front Line Services

- 4.43 Highways was able to maintain business as usual in the majority of its functions although there was some impact on gully cleansing with more vehicles parked at home blocking access. There were some opportunities to get ahead with programmed work taking advantage of the clear highways during the lockdown. The service is now running normally.
- 4.44 The Utilities Permit Scheme continued business as usual, encouraging possession of the network during the quieter period and working with our statutory utility companies to facilitate their essential works and assist in the national response.
- 4.45 The waste collection service operated as normal throughout the lockdown and this was incredibly well received by residents. The HWRCs were forced to close on advice from the police on social distancing and essential-only travel. However, using a booking system and limited visits, allowed us to reopen two of the three sites in June. We were able to increase the number of bookable visits from 1 to 2 per month in July. There has been a noticeable increase in waste tonnages compared to 2019 but also a decrease in fly tipping tonnages and incidents which is testament to the fact residents saw little change to their services. For some considerable weeks now the service has been operating as business as usual. As well as the normal weekly collection of residual waste, residents have been able to dispose of their waste either via a bulky waste collection or through one of the HWRCs. Organics waste (green and food) via their weekly bin collection and dry recyclables through their weekly doorstep collections.
- 4.46 Environmental Health was able to operate business as usual throughout the crisis. There was a sharp increase in noise complaints and nuisance such as bonfires. This can be attributed to more people being at home; the trend was mirrored across Kent. The Food Safety team has been risk assessing

businesses and is maintaining their service mainly working from home. The Trading Standards team were exceptionally busy during the crisis mainly ensuring that businesses that were unable to open, stayed closed, e.g. hairdressers etc. They also had to regulate services that commenced food delivery and take away from eat in. As the lockdown eased, they have turned their attention to the reopening of establishments in particular pubs, cafes and restaurants.

- 4.47 Green spaces were affected by the lockdown and initially there was a complete closure of car parks at the country parks. Although the parks and greenspaces were open during the crisis, there was a complete closure on courts, play areas, and outside gyms. From 4 July 2020 all closures have been lifted in favour of messaging around social distancing and hand washing.
- 4.48 Controlled Parking Zones were suspended to ensure that residents were able to park up without fear of being penalised. The Parking team concentrated on maintaining safety on busy areas of the network and in car parks. The parking service returned to business as usual in June.
- 4.49 There was a significant impact on public transport during the lockdown which saw only key workers travelling, and therefore a massive reduction in scheduled routes. As the lockdown eased, the bus operators have increased but are still only around 20% compared to this time last year. The government guidance is to avoid public transport where possible and to favour cycling and walking. The bus operators are trying to improve safety but it is likely that the uptake will remain low at least in the foreseeable future.
- 4.50 Road Safety education services had to go on hold. However, School Crossing Patrols are now operating again in some areas and have adapted to staggered opening and closing times. Road Safety schemes have continued where possible, but in many cases had to go on hold. They are now back on track and Traffic Orders are again being consulted on. There will though be delays to the programmed work in many areas.
- 4.51 The work of the Community Safety Partnership has carried on as normal throughout the crisis. The Medway Task Force was invaluable during the response phase and was able to assist with keeping critical services on track within Children's Services in particular. They also assisted with the reopening of high streets, pubs, cafes and restaurants.
- 4.52 The Register Office function was paused by the crisis including marriages. A backlog quickly grew for birth registrations as Medway sees on average 100 new babies per week. Birth registrations were allowed again in June and the Register Office was quickly adapted to allow social distancing. It is estimated that it will take until around November 2020 to return fully to normal. However, the Government rules on small weddings have been relaxed and on the first day, 4 July 2020, we saw the first four weddings take place in Medway.
- 4.53 The Bereavement Service, in particular the Crematorium, saw an increase in services from the start of the crisis. This was because we were giving mutual

aid to other boroughs in South London and Kent and we have also seen an increase in general since the changes to the crematorium. We are still seeing higher levels of bookings than this time last year and are operating business as usual.

- 4.54 Emergency Planning and the Corporate Health and Safety service were crucial to the response to COVID-19. As well as co-ordinating the response on behalf of the Council and being the multi-agency liaison with the Local Resilience Forum, they have guided and advised on the reopening of Council buildings ensuring they are COVID compliant.

5. Workstream 2 – Back to Better

- 5.1 Our Strategic Recovery Plan seeks to use the opportunity to address pre-crisis, place-based structural weaknesses, increase resilience and consider innovative and transformational development models for our place and our communities. We need to prioritise our interventions to make best use of our capacity and resources and get buy-in from our key partners and stakeholders with priorities and funding streams aligned wherever possible. We also need to review and adapt our strategies and policies, such as the Council’s Strategy and Medway 2035, to reflect the new normal. We have a key role to play in influencing regional (and national) policy and strategy to support identified Recovery objectives, and the shaping of the wider landscape of the new normal.
- 5.2 We have used the information provided in the Service Recovery Plans under ‘Lessons Learned’ to inform the work of Workstream 2 and the big ideas for a return ‘Back to Better’ will be taken to Medway’s Gold for a decision on whether to progress the projects.
- 5.3 We have encouraged staff to think outside of the box and across the Council to encourage innovation, drive creativity and bounce forward in terms of transformation and business change. This includes ideas around projects such as digital by design, property rationalisation and the climate change agenda.
- 5.4 This work is being led by the Business Change Team and the ideas generated have been categorised and consolidated into key themes for review by Medway’s Gold. Where appropriate, business cases will be developed, which will include Diversity Impact Assessments, financial analysis of potential savings, staff implications etc.

“Back To Better” – Key themes

- 5.5 The Business Change Team reviewed all Service Recovery Plans and identified 45 “lessons learned” ideas.
- 5.6 These ideas were then consolidated into the following 6 key themes:
- Remote & Agile Working
 - Remote Meetings With External Stakeholders
 - External Processes

- Internal Processes
- Cashless
- External Communications.

5.7 The Business Change Team are already exploring a number of potential future projects:

- Cashless Council
- Children and Adults Transitions
- Waste Service Business Change
- Edge of Care: Troubled Families Programme
- Building Rationalisation
- Total Transport Review
- Revenues & Benefits Business Change
- Parking Service Review.

5.8 Due to the overlap and synergies between the future projects and the **Back to Better** projects, informal soundings have been taken to explore these themes further to assist with the re-prioritisation of the Business Change programme of projects for the future.

5.9 Officers have been tasked to consider whether the enforced reduction in numbers of staff and Members in operational buildings, due to Covid-19, is something that can be maintained longer term after the pandemic has finished. The implications for sustained working from home and impacts on the Council's property portfolio are being developed, including consultation with staff and Councillors. Any significant proposals will be presented to Cabinet in due course.

6. **Workstream 3 – Strategic Planning**

6.1 We are considering strategic issues around six areas - Economy; Health & Social Care; Children and Young People; Community & Voluntary Sector; Infrastructure and Finance, and cells have been set up for these six areas. These cells are considering the medium and long-term issues for Medway and how we will work with partners, stakeholders and others in the future.

6.2 This phase will include identifying corporate risks which may arise from the service recovery risk registers or direct from the Strategic Recovery Cells.

6.3 Each Cell is undertaking an Impact Assessment and is preparing an action plan identifying what the issues are, what needs to be done, who needs to be involved and what the critical success factors are.

Economy Cell

6.4 The Economy Cell is meeting every three weeks, and includes officers from across the Council as well as representatives from:

- Higher Education
- Further Education

- Medway for Business Economic Partnership
- Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
- Town Centre Fora
- Community & Voluntary Sector.

Three of these representatives also sit on the Kent Resilience Forum's (KRF) Economy Cell.

6.5 A first draft impact assessment was produced in June 2020. This is a dynamic document and is being reviewed and updated at each meeting of the Cell.

Areas of impact identified to date include:

Challenges:

- Potential significant rise in unemployment
- Disproportionate effect on:
 - young people
 - part-time and entry level roles
 - women
 - BAME communities
- Decreased apprenticeship vacancies
- Sustainability of higher education, and its impact on place
- Accelerated decline of town centres
- Accelerated decline of street markets
- Impact on supply chains
- Digital inclusion / exclusion
- Decreased relevance of strategic bases
- Sector impact

Opportunities:

- Strength of Medway's business base
- Ability of the public sector to deliver extended services
- Commercial moves out of London
- Commercial and educational space requirements
- Rise in working from home / associated decline in commuting
- Innovation Park Medway
- Confirmed and potential government interventions
- New working patterns and hours
- Interplay with climate change agenda
- Opportunities presented by the 'safe outdoors'.
- Digital inclusion / exclusion

6.6 The Economy Cell Action Plan was developed in outline draft in June 2020. Once the impact assessment has been signed off by the Cell, the Action Plan will be revisited, and developed via a wide-ranging partnership approach. This will be led largely by the members of the Economy Cell, but with additional consultation planned, with, for example, Medway for Business representatives.

Health and Social Care Cell

- 6.7 Adult Social Care has recovery plans in place for each of the service areas. The service continued to operate throughout the pandemic and much learning has been achieved about improved service delivery during the pandemic. The Adult Social care cell is focused on restoring and transforming service with a focus on agile and flexible approach to the restoring of services for the benefit of Medway residents.
- 6.8 The Commissioning team has been working closely with Adult Social Care and the NHS in response and has recovery plans in place for overall service recovery, including Intermediate Care and Reablement service, Medway Integrated Community Equipment Services and Voluntary and Community Services.
- 6.9 These plans are being consistently monitored and updated and have been incorporated into one overall recovery plan for Adult Social Care.

The key areas of recovery include:

- Phased returns to “normal activity”
- Adapting services to facilitate the new discharge pathways
- Continue with flexible/virtual working ensuring better use of technology
- Gradually returning to face-to-face services, with social distancing in place
- Reinstate the debt recovery process
- Reinstate the Direct Payment audit and reclaim process.

6.10 Impact Assessment.

The service has developed an impact assessment which forms part of the Kent and Medway wide KRF Impact Assessment. We have identified three areas which we will have the most significant system-wide impact:

- Increase in demand across all services (possibly combined with second wave of COVID-19 and winter pressures).
- Impact on mental health of population.
- Long-term impacts of COVID-19 on health/wellbeing of population are not yet known or understood. We may need different services to respond, particularly to ensure we continue to maximize independence.

6.11 The following are the biggest risks/impacts of the above issues:

- Ability/capacity of system to manage/support recovery at pace.
- Unknown impact of additional and different types of demand causing difficulty to plan for recovery.
- Risk of silo working resulting in impacts between services if recovery activity is not well managed or coordinated.

6.12 The biggest opportunities arising from this are:

- Introduction of new ways of working, particularly, through the use of technology.

- The ability to build on what has worked well during crisis and to maintain different service configuration and delivery, for example hospital discharge arrangements.
- The opportunity to build on significant volunteering and community asset-based approaches to support different models of support post-crisis.
- Closer and stronger working relationships with partners across the system.

6.13 Action Plan

The actions are being incorporated into our risk register, broken down into the following areas:

- Staffing
- Increase in demand on the service
- Providers/External Partners
- Direct Payments and Audits
- Debt Recovery
- Discharge
- Service User assessments/reviews
- Financial impact.

This is being monitored through our weekly recovery meetings.

Children and Young People Cell

- 6.14 Of the impacts and risks linked to Covid-19 affecting recovery work the most significant will be from the potential of a future wave. The availability and well-being of staff are still paramount. Social distancing measures, adjusting to the home environment as a principal workplace, and the availability of hardware and infrastructure are key elements of resilience to ensure that the service can continue to operate. Innovative new ways of working need to be built upon as they have proven to be effective, so that we minimise the risk of returning to business as usual, losing the opportunity to build a better 'new normal'.
- 6.15 It is anticipated that the reduction in referrals to Children's Social Care and Children's Health services during lockdown will result in a spike in demand from September 2020 onwards as schools, health providers and the other agencies supporting children come back on stream and manage this increased demand. This may be particularly true of those children experiencing hidden harm as a result in part of limited reach during lockdown.
- 6.16 Modelling work is being undertaken to see what the possible surge may look like for Medway to ensure that risks for vulnerable children are managed and do not intensify.
- 6.17 Disruption to children's social care provision during lockdown has resulted in less face to face meetings with vulnerable children and young people, although face to face visiting has continued for those deemed most at need (prioritising those children who have been red RAG rated, following an audit). There is the potential for increased vulnerability of children to sexual and criminal

exploitation due to loss of safeguarding mechanisms and increased amounts of unstructured free time.

- 6.18 Social workers are working alongside schools to actively encourage vulnerable children to attend school. Despite this the percentage of vulnerable children attending school is low. Arrangements are in place for regular contact with schools to identify any child or family who may be at risk of harm, or families who require additional support. Twice daily surgeries taking place with schools to address emerging concerns about children in a timely way.
- 6.19 Some children's mental health and resilience has deteriorated during lockdown, evidenced by an increase in incidents of adolescent harm, including suicides, and the experience of social isolation from peers. The development of the Adolescent Service, and partnership work with schools, health, and commissioning to support children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing will be key to a successful return to learning over the medium term.

Improvement works

- 6.20 The improvement programme for work in children's social care services, in response to the Ofsted inadequate judgement in 2019, continues at pace. It is overseen by the Improvement Board, which is independently chaired, meets monthly, and comprises the Leader, Lead Members, Chief Executive, officers of the council and partners.
- 6.21 The Improvement Plan has recently been updated to reflect the progress made against the original plan and sets the agenda for the next phase of improvement. The Commissioner, Eleanor Brazil, who was appointed by the Secretary of State, has made her second report to the Minister, and will continue to work with Medway for the rest of 2020. She has recognised the contribution of elected members and the senior leadership team to the improvement programme, including agreement of significant resources to increase the staffing capacity in the service and support other improvement initiatives.
- 6.22 The Leader and Lead Member meet regularly with the Director of People to review progress, and the Lead Member participates in six weekly safeguarding visits to different service areas to maintain a line of sight into practice.

Education and Schools

- 6.23 Education and schools are a sub-cell of the wider Children's & Young Peoples cell and has established two groups including head teachers to oversee and monitor the return to school. These each work on a weekly basis with the recovery group feeding into the overarching group comprising of Headteacher representatives, the DfE, and colleagues from various departments within the council e.g. communications, public health, early help, safeguarding and social services, school premises, SEND, and education improvement.

- 6.24 The Portfolio Holders for Children’s Services and Education & Schools attend the meetings. The Director of People – Children and Adults - chairs the overarching group whilst the Assistant Director of Education and SEND chairs the recovery group.
- 6.25 The focus of the groups is to oversee and ensure that pupils currently attending schools within the phased return do so safely and effectively, whilst in tandem looking at how all pupils can return to school in September in a safe manner, taking account of the various guidance provided nationally.
- 6.26 The return to school provides multiple and cross cutting challenges, Medway Council in partnership with schools and academies, the DfE and other stakeholders will robustly monitor and track whilst looking strategically at how the service can improve systems and processes into the future.

Infrastructure Cell

- 6.27 The Infrastructure Cell is focusing on the following areas: Medway’s Transport Network, Climate Change opportunities post Covid-19, the impact on our Housing Delivery projections, major projects such as IPM, LGF schemes and HIF, Environmental services, Waste Services and Digital Infrastructure requirements.
- 6.28 Medway’s Highways Team is working with our stakeholders to ensure planned maintenance work can be completed as originally scheduled, ensure our highways continue to be maintained to a high standard for our residents and visitors. The Transport and Parking Service continues to work with our public transport providers to ensure all residents can access and use public transport safely. Work is also underway to progress the implementation of Active Travel measures, following a Government grant allocation of £242,500. Government intends the grant to be used for closing roads to through traffic, installing pop-up segregated cycle lanes and widening pavements. Whilst the closure of roads and segregated cycle lanes do not form part of our plans, we will seek to progress measures that improve and promote social distancing for users of our pedestrian and cycle infrastructure. We will do this by temporarily widening footways, footpaths and existing cycle lanes (where the impact on motorised vehicles is minimal). We will also seek to install additional cycle parking facilities and rationalise street clutter where we can, to make our footways more comfortable to use. These measures all align with our council plan priority of ‘getting around Medway’. However, with this aim in mind, it should be emphasised that no intervention to aid cycling or walking will result in a reduction in carriageway. Government will be providing the details of a second tranche of funding in due course, which will allow local authorities to embed walking and cycling as part of new long-term commuting habits and reap the associated health, air quality and congestion benefits.
- 6.29 Our Climate Change officer is currently exploring the opportunities post Covid-19 and is working closely with the Transport and Parking team around the Active Travel work stream including the DfT “All Electric Bus Town” bid and EV charging infrastructure. There will be a focus on staff travel too, working

with colleagues in HR services, with a modal shift expected to walking or cycling, as well as the need not to travel, given the number of employees who have been successfully working from home throughout the lockdown period.

- 6.30 Other key Climate Change projects include the Re-fit Programme with Property Services, to develop and implement a number of measures to achieve energy saving in more than 13 of the Council's key buildings. Measure being explored include LED lighting, building control upgrades and heat pumps. Assessments will be made on the carbon saving each option will deliver and if the changes in service, and hence carbon impact, will be affected post Covid-19.
- 6.31 With the increased usage of parks during the outbreak as an essential part of health and wellbeing, the public desire to see our green infrastructure maintained and improved has been exceptional. Across social media there has been strong support for our greening the verges programme and the value of wildflowers and trees has been recognised. This is being built on with plans to develop a tree strategy, expansion of the wildflower verges being explored, additional bulb planting ready for next spring, exploring the option of a tree nursery within Medway and working with KCC to develop a Natural Climate Change solutions study.
- 6.32 Our Planning Service will be reviewing the expected impact on our housing delivery numbers, working with our Major Developers, SMEs and Private Registered Providers in Medway to determine how the numbers will be affected (if at all) and any delays to new developments across Medway. This will culminate in an update to the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) Action Plan, as prescribed by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). In addition, the Head of Planning is the Deputy Chair of the Kent Resilience Forum and will be engaging with colleagues across Kent to understand the impact further afield.
- 6.33 Our Regeneration Team will be working with stakeholders and contractors to understand any expected time delays or funding challenges for our major capital projects such as IPM, LGF schemes and HIF. Focusing on IPM, we will be continuing to work on delivering the Local Development Order. In addition, we are soft market testing interest in the wider site in advance of the full marketing exercise as the infrastructure works are delivered. Helpfully, the SELEP has agreed an extension of 6 months beyond the LGF spend window of March 2021 to accommodate Covid-19 related delays to delivery. This gives additional room for manoeuvre which we will use if necessary.
- 6.34 In relation to HIF, we will be aiming to have the GDA signed by mid-July, and the team will review the overall programme in more detail to identify any challenges in the 'new normal'. Homes England has raised questions regarding the affect that Covid-19 will have on the delivery of housing in particular, which we are addressing, working with the Hoo Consortium to identify potential impacts. This will be an ongoing process given the iterative nature of the national and international situation.

- 6.35 The Regeneration team has produced and submitted two bids to the Government's 'Getting Building Fund', which aims to kick-start shovel ready projects to create jobs, via the SELEP, for Britton Farm Mall Learning, Skills and Employability Hub and IPM Smart, Sustainable City of Business.
- 6.36 The Housing Service continues to seek opportunities to maximise the supply of affordable housing options to meet the needs of Medway residents. On 7 July 2020, the Cabinet approved proposals to allow the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to pursue the purchase of new build development sites to increase the supply of Council-owned rented housing. This initiative will allow the Council to respond to changing market conditions, reduce the risk posed by developments remaining unsold and increasing the Council's ability to meet housing needs.
- 6.37 Our Property Services team is heavily involved with the opening of our council buildings, ensuring health and safety standards are in place before these are opened to the public.
- 6.38 Our Waste services team has provided exceptional services throughout this pandemic, ensuring our weekly household waste collections continue despite an 18% increase in overall tonnage to date as well as transforming to an online booking service for our Household Waste Recycling Centres. In the 'new normal' we will need to focus on the potential changes around tonnage levels, given more people could move to working at home, therefore disposing of more waste at home than previous levels. We are closely monitoring the capacity at our HWRCs and the effectiveness of the online booking system, and whether this will be a permanent feature.
- 6.39 Our Business Change Team is currently focusing on upgrading digital connectivity across Medway, ensuring all residents and businesses can access sufficient internet connections; supporting an increase of residents working from home post Covid-19. We are working with a major Internet Service Provider (ISP) to plan and deliver Medway-wide full fibre/gigabit rollout, to align with other capital and regeneration projects such as the LED Streetlighting Conversion and Column Replacement programme, our HIF programme, Town Centre regeneration proposals and IPM. Business Change is also working proactively with our Property & Capital Projects Team, ICT and Re:fit Partner, Veolia UK, to plan a rollout of a dedicated Building Management System (BMS) platform across the Council estate, with the aim of supporting building managers with operational oversight, the ability to react to mechanical faults in "real time", to encourage behavioural change and most importantly, help towards the Council's low carbon ambitions. We will be reviewing the recovery of the High Street with plans to install footfall counters over the coming months ahead, starting with Chatham and the Heritage Creative Quarter – both subject to approval and procurement - to utilise up to the minute data to assess occupancy rates and be more informed about consumer patterns. We are working with the Democratic Services team to understand how successful live committee meetings have been during this time and whether this should be a part of the 'new normal', subject to Member approval. Our Digital Team and ICT services have provided an invaluable

service throughout the pandemic and have allowed a number of employees and Members access to agile working, with the Council's aims and priorities being achieved throughout this challenging time. The focus now will be around encouraging a more agile workforce, and this is to be explored with each service.

Community and Voluntary Sector Cell

- 6.40 The Community and Voluntary Sector recovery cell representation includes Medway Council officers, NHS partners and representatives from the third sector. The strategy group meets monthly and this builds on the excellent collaboration that we continue to see as part of the response, particularly supporting vulnerable residents. The key objectives of the cell include: supporting the sustainability of the third sector in Medway, regular communication and partnership work on shared priorities, coordination of large scale volunteer programmes to build on existing schemes, developing a long term partnership between the local authority and community sector. The objectives of this group complement the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny members task group recommendations to cabinet, concerning the long-term viability and relationship between the third sector and Medway Council.
- 6.41 Recent sector surveys and dialogue with system leaders have heavily influenced the impact assessment. Financial challenges are likely to be the biggest short-term risk for the sector and the cell's outputs, due to reduced fund-raising opportunities, a higher demand for some charities' services and a reduced economy. Local and national insights are suggesting up to a third of local charities will be forced to close this calendar year, and this represents a risk to residents and public services, who are likely to experience increased demand. It is therefore vital that the public and voluntary sector support each other where possible.
- 6.42 Medway recovery cell leads also attend the KRF community and voluntary sector cell, in order to build closer relationships, learn from their experiences, share plans and maximise any available resource.
- 6.43 An action plan will be developed by the strategy group and ongoing consultation will take place with the voluntary sector and NHS partners to ensure it is regularly updated and reflects the changing priorities, risks and opportunities for both the community and public sector.

7. Test and Trace

- 7.1 The NHS Test and Trace service is key to helping our community return to a more normal way of living. The aim of the service is to trace the spread of the virus, isolate new infections and provide an early warning should we there be an increase in virus transmission and uncontrolled spread within the community.

- 7.2 NHS Test and Trace works across 3 tiers. Each tier involves dedicated public health staff (clinical and non-clinical) who work at national level under the supervision of Public Health England (PHE). Local authority public health professionals work with test and trace to manage complex issues at a local level. For example, confirmed cases of COVID-19 in schools, hospitals or certain businesses.
- 7.3 The opening up of the UK and local Medway economy following the COVID-19 pandemic is being supported by NHS Test and Trace. All businesses are required to assist the service by keeping a temporary record of any customers and visitors for up to 21 days. This helps to assist NHS Test and Trace with the follow up of cases and manage any clusters or outbreaks should the need arise.
- 7.4 The types of businesses that have a higher risk of COVID-19 transmission are those with potential for people to come into close contact with others outside their household for a prolonged period. These include hospitality venues, pubs, bars restaurants, cafes, museums, places of worship etc. Risk management includes the use of social distancing, ensuring people ventilation if these are indoor facilities and promotion of hand hygiene and enhanced cleaning of the environment
- 7.5 Members should also note Medway Council has now published its Local Outbreak Control Plan. This plan provides the framework through which Medway Council will work with its local community and partners to manage any future challenges presented by COVID-19.

8. HR update

- 8.1 New Risk Assessments have been designed to capture high risk areas including age, ethnicity, gender etc. There is an additional checklist to support managers holding conversations with colleagues who have concerns but do not need a full risk assessment.
- 8.2 HR continues to capture cases on suspected Covid-19 and signpost people to have tests. Additional deep dive case reviews are ongoing around absence cases of over 60 days.
- 8.3 A full staff survey is being commissioned to understand what has worked well and what we need to consider as we move to our back to better vision.
- 8.4 HR continues to support service areas on organisational change requirements as they start to mobilise services, this includes contract reviews.
- 8.5 A number of policies are being reviewed, including travel and expenses, working from home, disciplinary, grievance and whistleblowing.
- 8.6 Employment Matters Committee is due to meet in August to consider policy changes along with activity undertaken by HR since the start of the pandemic.

9. Communications update

- 9.1 Good and effective communications are a critical part of the successful resumption of our services to ensure people know and understand the important messages we need to get across and also take the action we may be asking of them. We have played an important part in a number of high-profile projects as we've got Medway open for business again.
- 9.2 We've used a huge range of communication channels as part of this work including social media, our website, posters, radio, press releases, video and infographics. Social media remains our quickest and most effective comms channel. We have reached nearly 20 million people during the coronavirus pandemic and we have developed a recovery identity, which has run through all of our marketing collateral so it starts to become known as a trusted and informative brand.
- 9.3 **Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC)**
A large-scale marketing campaign was launched to support the re-opening of two of our HWRCs and the new approach to booking slots online. We promoted across various communication channels and achieved an organic social media reach of over 50,000. The initial flurry was huge, but good communications and management meant people understood clearly they had to book before they could visit and that we've seen a reduction in wait time online and at the HWRCs. So far more than 3,000 residents have visited our sites.
- 9.4 **Getting our high streets open**
We supported the re-opening of high streets as set out in section 4 above.
- 9.5 We followed a similar process as above when the pubs and restaurants re-opened from 4 July. We issued a guidance pack for traders and ran a comprehensive campaign to remind visitors how to stay, not drinking to excess and putting extra pressure on our NHS as well as what people can expect when visiting the pubs and restaurants.
- 9.6 When the play areas and outdoor gyms re-opened, we put up posters advising how people should enjoy the areas safely. This guidance was also pushed out through various communications channels so people could plan their visit.
- 9.7 We helped support the re-opening of the hubs, some of our heritage sites and the visitor information centre. We continue to monitor the visitor numbers and will promote these services further when appropriate to do so.
- 9.8 Other campaigns have included:
- Informed the public when our country parks re-opened, as well as our tennis courts.
 - Continuing to support the register office by communicating what changes have been put in place for weddings and birth registrations.

- Continuing to communicate messages on resuming our full parking enforcement model.
- Working closely with various services and help to issue messages when events are unfortunately cancelled.

9.9 Keeping our staff safe and informed

We want to ensure our staff feel reassured and confident when they return to our buildings to work, although at the moment we continue to follow government guidance which states that people who can work from home should continue to do so. All buildings where council staff work are having to be risk assessed and declared Covid-19 compliant and as part of our preparation for this, we have designed and put up extensive signage across all our buildings reminding our teams of the action they need to take to protect themselves and their colleagues. We are also issuing information to staff, including a video, about what they can expect when they return to work. We have drawn upon the most recent staff survey to inform us on the information that remains important to our workforce as well as working closely with other teams. This work is on-going.

10. Digital update

10.1 Reopening of council services and highstreets.

The Digital team has worked with colleagues in libraries and community hubs, weddings, markets and tourism on the reopening of council services from 4 July. The content designers updated hundreds of pages to reflect the new service offer, ready for reopening from 4 July. This is now an ongoing process as more services open and the services available change.

10.2 Apply for a daily visitor voucher.

The Digital team is building an online service for 'Apply for a daily visitor voucher.' Currently an offline service, this has the potential to cause large queues/wait times at our community hubs and libraries due to high volumes and social distancing requirements. To help, a click and collect service is being created, in lieu of a mandate for full 'virtualisation'.

10.3 Test and trace online form.

The Digital team is building a test and trace online form for staff and customers to complete at our front-facing venues. This is part of the voluntary national scheme to allow individuals to be contacted if a local outbreak is identified.

10.4 Book a visit to a tip.

The Digital team built an online booking form for both Kent and Medway tips in mid-May. KCC have now created their own form which went live on 8 July. The Digital team is now investigating implementing iterations to the Medway-only version in line with new requirements e.g. allowing someone to make multiple bookings a month.

10.5 Medway.gov.uk website stats.

Total page views on Medway.gov.uk since 19 March to 1 July was 6,743,818 with unique page views up **113.06%** compared to the same period last year.

Top coronavirus pages	Page views	Unique page views
Coronavirus (home/ landing page)	160,347	104,916
Coronavirus service updates	90,534	72,642
Coronavirus (COVID-19) business support	44,853	31,180

Top site-wide pages	Page views	Unique page views
Book a vehicle into a Medway or Kent household waste and recycling centre (form)	3,409,142	2,442,051
Medway Council homepage	226,317	178,361
Medway Council vacancies	125,441	49,570

11. Financial implications

11.1 In terms of direct financial support for local authorities, Medway received an initial £6.628million of emergency un-ringfenced grant funding in March 2020 of which, a total of £1.346million was spent in 2019/20 as reported to Cabinet in the 2019/20 Revenue and Capital Outturn report. A second tranche of £7.648million emergency funding was received in April 2020.

11.2 As set out in the Covid-19 Response report to Cabinet on 7 July, though the Response is ongoing, as the nation moves into the recovery phase the government has announced some specific packages of support for local authorities:

- Adult Social Care Infection control fund: £2,091,910 to support adult social care providers to reduce the rate of Covid-19 transmission in and between care homes and support wider workforce resilience to deliver infection control.
- Test, track and trace fund: £1,592,918 to mitigate against and manage local outbreaks of Covid-19.
- Emergency Active Travel fund: £1,545,000 (indicative) to support local transport authorities with producing cycling and walking facilities.
- Reopening High Streets Safely fund: £246,396 to put in place additional measures to establish a safe trading environment for businesses and customers, particularly in high streets.

These funding streams are ring-fenced to specific, new activities and cannot therefore be used to offset any of the pressures resulting from the Covid-19 response and recovery.

11.3 However, on 2 July 2020 the Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick announced a further package of support for local authorities, stating "This government will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with councils and communities as we recover from this pandemic as we renew our commitment

to unite and level up the country". The following was announced, with detail of the schemes and allocations to follow:

- A third tranche of direct emergency funding.
- A new scheme to reimburse a proportion of income lost from sales, fees and charges.
- Proposals to allow deficits on collection of council tax and business rates to be spread over three years.
- A commitment that in the next Spending Review, the government will agree an apportionment of irrecoverable council tax and business rates losses between central and local government for 2020 to 2021.

It has since been confirmed that Medway will receive £2,506,451 from this source.

- 11.4 The first round of the council's budget monitoring process is underway and will be reported to the Cabinet at its meeting on 25 August 2020. This will provide the first detailed forecasts from all budget and service managers as to the impact of Covid-19 on the council's finances.
- 11.5 The process to develop the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Strategy is underway, with work to determine the extent to which pressures manifesting in 2020/21 might be estimated to continue into the coming years. These documents will be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting on 22 September 2020.

12. Legal Implications

- 12.1 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places certain legal responsibilities on public sector organisations to assist in the response and other phases of a civil emergency. Once the Covid-19 pandemic was treated as an emergency event, the Council had to comply with legal requirements as a category one responder. This has involved involvement in the Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) at strategic and tactical levels with multi-agency partners to guide and deliver the Kent and Medway response.
- 12.2 In line with best practice, KRF partners began preparing for the recovery phase as soon as a civil emergency was declared. The Council has a key role in leading the local community back to such normality as is possible after any emergency event. In this instance the response phase continues whilst the recovery phase has now also started to be implemented.

13. Risk Management

Recovery Governance Process

- 13.1 Working alongside partners across the Kent Resilience Forum, Medway Council has implemented the Strategic and Tactical command and control methodology to manage the Council's Recovery to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Subject to the provisions in the scheme of employee delegations and formal decision making rules as set out in the Council's Constitution, strategic direction and decisions are made by Medway's Gold, in consultation with the

Leader, with operational matters and decisions made by the Tactical Recovery Coordination Group.

- 13.2 To support the Recovery Command, and following the model established for the Response Command, the Council has established a network of specialist 'Cells' which lead on functional elements of the Council's Recovery including those tasked with co-ordinating the Recovery for vulnerable adults through Adult Social Care, Schools and Education and Housing, and those responsible with ensuring the Council's core functions continue to operate 'business as usual' wherever possible including Finance, HR and Customer Contact.
- 13.3 Each 'Cell' lead is responsible for maintaining a risk register detailing the impacts of Recovery from Covid-19 on their area of responsibility, following the Council's Risk Management Strategy. Cell leads are responsible for managing risks scored below CII – significant likelihood, crucial impact (as such risks would routinely be managed on service/operational risk registers) while issues arising from risks scored at CII or above are escalated to Tactical Recovery Coordination Group, and Medway's Gold command as necessary (as such risks would routinely be managed through the Council's Strategic Risk Register). In addition, financial thresholds have been agreed to ensure that where a decision being made would commit the Council to new expenditure or result in the loss of income, appropriate financial authorisation is in place.
- 13.4 Each Service Manager has been requested to complete a Service Recovery template for each of their operations and provide these to their Divisional Cell Lead. Contained within the Recovery Service Plan template will be lessons learnt for suggested new normal 'Back to Better' working practices. All suggested new normal ideas will be collated and categorised as strategic or tactical. These ideas will be screened for "Suitability, Acceptability, Feasibility" (SAF) and RAG rated. The "Suitability" screen should consider the Recovery guiding principles which will emerge over time with direction from Members.
- 13.5 A Governance Cell within the network is working to ensure the impacts of decisions made have been considered appropriately to ensure all decisions taken are sound and are in line with the councils' governance mechanisms. This Cell includes officers from Democratic Services, Legal Services, Category Management, Audit & Counter Fraud and the Council's Equalities Lead. This group has arrangements in place to collate and review all action proposed or taken through the Cell risk registers, and has access to all Cell leads to make recommendations to ensure that decisions:
- Are made in accordance with the Recovery guiding principles.
 - Are made in accordance with appropriate Member and officer decision making powers, according to the law and in line with the Council's constitution.
 - Comply with relevant legislation and regulations.
 - Are made within the Council's financial rules and are within the approved budget.

- Do not significantly weaken the Council's control environment or pose a significant fraud risk.
- Do not create adverse impacts for people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

14. Recommendations

- 14.1 The Cabinet is asked to note the approach to the Council's Covid-19 Recovery and progress to date across the various workstreams.

15. Suggested reasons for decision

- 15.1 To highlight the approach the Council is taking in managing the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and the processes in place for restarting of services post lockdown and longer-term recovery.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Recovery Schedule

Background papers

None