

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ASSETS OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday 16 th December, 2020
Report Subject	Recovery Strategy Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Corporate Management and Assets and Cabinet Member for Housing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council has developed a corporate Recovery Strategy for the pandemic emergency situation which was endorsed at a special Cabinet meeting on 15 September.

Cabinet requested each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to support recovery in their respective portfolio areas, and specifically to have oversight of:-

1. The portfolio risk register(s) and the risk mitigation actions, both live and planned;
2. The objectives for recovery for the portfolio(s);
3. The immediate strategic priorities for recovery for the portfolio(s) extracted from the draft Council Plan for 2020/21; and
4. The set of revised performance indicator targets for the portfolio(s) for 2020/21.

The above were considered by the Committee at its meeting on 28 September, 2020.

This report provides the Committee with an update on the portfolio risk register and risk mitigation actions (shown at Appendix 1 and 2).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee review the latest updated risk register and risk mitigation actions within the corporate portfolios.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EMERGENCY RECOVERY
1.01	<p>The Council is developing a corporate Recovery Strategy for the pandemic emergency situation. The Strategy covers:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The chronology of the emergency response phase and transition to recovery 2. The handover arrangements or recovery 3. Organisational recovery of the corporate organisation 4. Community recovery of the communities we serve 5. Strategic priorities and performance for the remainder of 2020/21 6. The roles the Council will play in regional recovery 7. The democratic governance of recovery
1.02	<p>The development of the Recovery Strategy been led by the Chief Executive and Leader and overseen by a cross-party Member Recovery Board. The Board, which is an advisory sub-committee of Cabinet, has completed its work and has stood down. The Board has met seven times in quick succession and has received multiple reports and presentations. Cabinet is due to endorse the Recovery Strategy at a special meeting on 15 September.</p>
1.03	<p>Cabinet will be inviting each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to support recovery in their respective portfolio areas, and specifically to have oversight of:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The portfolio risk register(s) and the risk mitigation actions both live and planned; 2. The objectives for recovery for the portfolio(s); 3. The immediate strategic priorities for recovery for the portfolio(s) extracted from the draft Council Plan for 2020/21; and 4. The set of revised performance indicator targets for the portfolio(s) for 2020/21.
1.04	<p>The latest version of the risk register (Appendix 1) and table of risk mitigations (Appendix 2) for the Corporate Services portfolio are attached.</p>
1.05	<p>The recovery objectives for the service portfolio for this Committee are:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To move from emergency only to wider planned and capital programmed works (the repairs service is undertaking emergency, urgent, compliance and routine responsive repairs, the WHQS capital programme works have recommenced and are progressing well and the service has continued to work on voids which is starting to reduce the backlog of empty properties). It is worth noting that some local authorities stopped working on voids during the lockdown and only undertook emergency or urgent works so the service has performed well when compared to some other local authority landlords. • To move from the response phase which requires accommodation for all rough sleepers and establish settled housing options for those owed duties. The Phase 1 emergency

housing response saw all rough sleepers and people who became homeless during the health pandemic, offered emergency housing and support. We are now adopting a rapid rehousing approach, which seeks to move people into long term settled housing, offering people additional support to sustain their tenancies to avoid repeat homelessness. We have secured approx. £1.3m of Welsh Government funding to help with delivering Phase 2 of our response. Welsh government have a clear expectation that everyone should be rehoused and nobody should have to return to a life on the streets.

- **To understand and map out the potential impact of Covid19 so that appropriate plans can be developed to try and meet future housing and support needs for those households at increased risk of homelessness** We are liaising with a range of partners to ensure a wide range of support services are available and actively promoted to meet the needs of people in terms of housing related support. Our Support Gateway captures information on support needs and we monitor levels of referrals into our housing register and homeless team in order to monitor levels and types of needs that are developing on the back of Covid. We are due to complete a needs mapping exercise to inform next the Housing Support Grant delivery plan for 2020/2021.
- **To seek to recover rent which has been deferred due to rent holiday.** A letter will be sent to all tenants reminding them that they need to repay deferred rent this financial year and encouraging them to start repayments soon.
- **To move to a position where we do not need to provide for shielded customers.** This area is being monitored alongside the needs of our vulnerable residents who don't fall into the shielded category. A recovery group has been established to track this, identify emerging issues and risk and to ensure that there is adequate service provision in place (either from the council or partner organisations) to meet the needs of our residents.
- **To deal effectively with tenancy enforcement matters and provide assurance to local communities.** To review all housing enforcement cases where legal action has been held up by the Court restrictions to agree the appropriate way forward.
- **To recommence the new build housing programme.** To complete the construction of new build schemes already on site which are being delivered as part of the Council and NEW Homes house building programme.
- **To increase current capacity of trades on site to completed schemes already on site** To develop a pipeline of new build housing schemes for both the Council and NEW Homes.
- **To recommence recovery of overpaid Housing Benefit.** The Department for Work and Pensions has issued direction that this work

can commence. Work is ongoing with our residents to ensure that recovery recommences, but that support is available and provided to those who may be finding this difficult.

- **To reinstate the Disabled Facilities Grant function in line with legislative requirements.** Work has commenced in this area. Risk assessments are completed in all cases to determine safe practice and to ensure residents are comfortable with the process. There are some significant areas of risk around availability of contractors.
- **To complete the works on Riverside in a timely and safe manner.** All works to refurbish Riverside Traveller site were concluded in August despite the restrictions imposed by COVID. There were no issues identified during the programme and the additional safety measures to mitigate the spread of COVID were successful. HSE were aware of the works and likewise had no concerns.
- **To deliver the capital programme to time, budget and quality**
The capital programme has recommenced and contractors are currently undertaking internal as well as external works. Assurance is sought regarding the health of customers and that they are not infected by Covid 19 prior to any internal works taking place and contractors are observing strict rules in relation to social distancing and wearing PPE at all times. An extension to the deadline for completion of WHQS works has been provided by Welsh Government in recognition of the significant delays to the capital programme caused through lockdown.
- **To recover domestic housing rent.** We continue to support tenants to make rent payments by offering a range of support to those who are struggling to pay. Recovery processes are also sensitively re-commencing in appropriate cases where it is necessary to protect income streams.
- **To review our current working practices and their modification to reflect working practices.** Working practices are evolving to take account of the challenges we face. Newly developed risk assessments have been implemented and the team is now operating on a more agile and dynamic footing than was ever the case previously.
- **To ensure PPE remains available to deliver front line services.**
The repairs service has worked closely with the business performance team manager to identify and source PPE requirements to meet the needs of the service. A recent business continuity planning exercise related to Brexit has also flagged the need for further stocks of PPE to be sourced as a contingency should there be delays with supplies post January 2021.
- **To monitor capital programmes and their delivery and potential impacts on spend.** Regular meetings and discussions take place between Finance and the Housing Assets team to review capital and revenue spend and assess its impact on projects. A Finance Report is submitted to the Monthly Housing Asset Management Team Meeting

	which outlines actual spend against projected spend.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no specific resource implications from this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None specific as this report is based on documented response and recovery work.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	This report specifically covers emergency situation risk management.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Updated Recovery Risk Register Appendix 2 – Updated Risk Mitigation Actions

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Neal Cockerton Telephone: 01352 702500 E-mail: neal.cockerton@flintshire.gov.uk