

## CORPORATE RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 12 <sup>th</sup> November, 2020
<b>Report Subject</b>	Recovery Strategy Update
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Collective Cabinet
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Corporate Finance Manager and Senior Manager, Human Resources & Organisational Development
<b>Type of Report</b>	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). A presentation will be made at the meeting on the main changes and live issues on risk and recovery within the corporate portfolios.

### **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 has developed a corporate Recovery Strategy for the pandemic emergency situation. The Strategy covers:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The chronology of the emergency response phase and transition to recovery</li><li>2. The handover arrangements or recovery</li><li>3. Organisational recovery of the corporate organisation</li><li>4. Community recovery of the communities we serve</li><li>5. Strategic priorities and performance for the remainder of 2020/21</li><li>6. The roles the Council will play in regional recovery</li><li>7. The democratic governance of recovery</li></ol>
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 was an advisory sub-committee of Cabinet, has completed its work and has stood down. Cabinet endorsed the Recovery Strategy at a special meeting on 15 September.</p>
1.03	<p>Cabinet invited 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"><li>1. The portfolio risk register(s) and the risk mitigation actions both live and planned;</li><li>2. The objectives for recovery for the portfolio(s);</li><li>3. The immediate strategic priorities for recovery for the portfolio(s) extracted from the draft Council Plan for 2020/21; and</li><li>4. The set of revised performance indicator targets for the portfolio(s) for 2020/21.</li></ol>
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>High level recovery aims for the organisation:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the stabilisation of the finances of the organisation</li><li>• assuring the financial resilience of the organisation through medium-term financial planning</li><li>• a managed transition to new ways of working as an organisation e.g. greater digitisation, and expansive home/remote working</li><li>• the protection of the health and well-being of the workforce in the resumption of services</li></ul> <p>An update on the recovery objectives for the service portfolio(s) for this Committee is shown below:</p>

## Governance

- **To restore collection rates of Council Tax, NNDR and housing rents to improve income levels**

We are continuing to engage with residents and businesses to provide advice and to set-up realistic and affordable re-payment agreements. To protect vital income streams, we have also re-commenced our debt recovery processes for those residents and businesses who fail to engage or pay. Collections have slowly started to stabilise and show signs of improvement. We are continuing to monitor income levels on a weekly basis.

- **Registrars Service**

Services have resumed including marriage and civil partnership ceremonies. The number of ceremonies scheduled for the remainder of 2020-21 is low due to the current restrictions on the number of people who can attend a ceremony, and further restrictions on wedding receptions. There are very few ceremonies scheduled to take place at approved premises (hotels) this year where the Council is able to charge more.

- **To restore full democratic oversight**

We are now holding Council meetings and all of our committees remote attendance' via Webex technology. The recordings of these meetings are available on our website. By December, we intend to have all of our remote or virtual meetings available to be watched live by the public and other interested parties.

We are currently exploring the use of additional software to enable the increased public participation in meetings such as Planning Committee, which we hope to be able to introduce before the end of December.

- **To continue to support and expand digital means of service delivery**

The Council enabled applications to be made on line for a range of services over the summer such as childcare, waste collections and key worker accommodation. It continues to add new services to My Account and will shortly be upgrading methods for online payment.

- **To restore the internal control environment and audit inspections**

A revised Internal Audit plan, with sufficient scrutiny to enable a full assurance statement to be prepared, has been approved by the Audit Committee.

## Workforce

- **To ensure that the legal and ethical duties of the employer are met in recovery**

We continue to navigate new legislation and provide guidance for complex situational questions, to tackle the short and long term obstacles associated with the impact of COVID-19 (for example, Furlough, job support scheme, annual leave, working from home, quarantine and self-isolation).

- **To return the workforce to safe and productive working environments**

We have no plans to return everyone to the workplace just yet, but we are getting our buildings ready for an eventual return. This includes the development of a variety of materials including an animation, video and guidance documents to support managers and employees in their return. All are accessible via a newly created Living and Working with COVID-19 hub on the Infonet.

- **To restore and protect the well-being of the workforce over time**

Coronavirus has had an impact on all of us, how we live, work and interact. Physical Distancing has changed our daily lives, the way we work, rest and play. In work it has impacted on how we interact and communicate with each other, as teams, with managers, colleagues and friends. We provide a range of support at an individual, manager, and team level both practical and emotional and will continue to look for alternative methods of providing help and support.

- **To recommend and implement working practices for the immediate future e.g. use of technology and digital practices, remote working, distance learning**

We have implemented a number of technology solutions to support the workforce working remotely and maintain contact with service users. Moving forward we continue to explore technologies to allow a hybrid approach to methods of working.

- **To review opportunities for organisational re-design based on learning from the emergency response phase**

Changes in working the practices and patterns of our front line services and the effectiveness of technological solutions in supporting home working during the height of the pandemic has demonstrated that services can operate successfully without the need to be physically co-located. It is important that where feasible to do so, we capitalise on these changes and build on them where it is appropriate to do so.

#### Finance

- **To ensure the liquidity of the organisation**

We are continuing to monitor our cash flow on a daily basis to ensure that we have sufficient available resources to undertake our business. Ensuring the overall financial sustainability of the Council will be a key consideration in the current work on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

- **To maximise national assistance from emergency and other government funds**

We have produced a financial tracker that details all additional costs and income losses arising from the pandemic and continue to make monthly claims for additional costs and quarterly claims for income losses from the Welsh Government Hardship Fund.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>To recover and restore income over time</b> The Income loss Hardship Fund will assist with the immediate shortfall in budgeted income. However, Portfolio Business Recovery Plans will determine the plans to assist income recovery in the relevant service areas. This is in conjunction with the specific work on debt recovery which will assist with income due to the Council being paid.</li>   <li>• <b>To recover debt over time</b> We are continuing to engage with residents and businesses to provide advice and to set-up realistic and affordable re-payment agreements for corporate debts. Invoices payable to the Council are due within 30 days of invoicing but we are adopting a pragmatic approach by setting up longer term payment plans on a case-by-case basis. We have recommended debt recovery processes and initially targeted high-debt values as a first priority.</li>   <li>• <b>To restore reserves and balances over time</b> The Council will need to utilise its reserves to meet the additional costs of any elements not claimable from the Hardship Fund and also to deal with any overall in-year overspend. The level of reserves held will be a key consideration of the current work on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget 2021/22.</li> </ul>
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	There are no specific resource implications from this report.

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

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	This report specifically covers emergency situation risk management.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Updated Corporate Recovery Risk Register Appendix 2 – Updated Corporate Risk Mitigation Actions

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	None.

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Colin Everett <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702101 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:chief.executive@flintshire.gov.uk">chief.executive@flintshire.gov.uk</a>