

Subject:	Covid-19 City Recovery Programme – Progress Update		
Date of Meeting:	29th May 2020		
Report of:	Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Nick Hibberd	Tel: 01273 292468
	Email:	nick.hibberd@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report outlines how the City Council and the city is responding locally following the publication of 'Our Plan to Rebuild' The UK Government's Covid-19 recovery strategy.
- 1.2 The report also provides a progress update on the development of the City's Recovery Programme as agreed by Policy & Resources Committee on 30th April 2020.
- 1.3 It should be noted that this report provides an update on progress up until 19th May 2020. The response to the public health crisis is fast moving so some aspects of this report may have been superseded by events by the time of the sub-committee meeting on the 28th May 2020.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the localised response to a phased recovery and the progress updates on the city's recovery programme.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 30 April, the Policy & Resources Committee agreed to establish the Covid-19 City Recovery Programme to help prepare and steer the council and our city through the recovery phase of the pandemic. The programme will require a co-ordinated effort over the next 18 months.

'Our Plan to Rebuild' – The UK Governments Covid-19 Recovery Strategy

- 3.2 The Government's Covid-19 recovery strategy 'Our Plan to Rebuild' sets out a plan to rebuild the UK for a world with COVID-19. The aim of the government's recovery plan is to *'return life to as close to normal as possible, for an many people as possible, as fast as possible... in a way that avoids a new epidemic, minimises lives lost and maximises, health, economic and social outcomes'*. The plan recognises this is unlikely to be a quick return to 'normality' and that inevitably, parts of this plan will adapt as more is learnt about the virus.

- 3.3 The Government's recovery strategy follows the phase 1 'Coronavirus Action Plan' that was released on 03 March. This plan focused upon contain, delay, and mitigate any outbreak, and use research to inform policy development. The Coronavirus action plan was the first phase of the Government's response. On 7 March those with symptoms were asked to self-isolate for 7 days. On 16 March, the Government introduced shielding for the most vulnerable and called on the British public to cease non-essential contact and travel. On 18 March, the Government announced the closure of schools. On 20 March entertainment, hospitality and indoor leisure venues were closed. And on 23 March the Government introduced the Stay at Home guidance.
- 3.4 The launch of the government's Recovery Plan on the 11th May signalled the start of the next phase in which the government are advising the public of the following:
Stay alert. We can all help control the virus if we all stay alert.
This means that you must:
- *Stay at home as much as possible*
 - *Work from home if you can*
 - *Limit contact with other people*
 - *Keep your distance if you go out (2 metres apart where possible)*
 - *Wash your hands regularly*
- Do not leave home if you or anyone in your household has symptoms*
- 3.5 The Government will aim to steadily redesign the current social distancing measures with new, smarter measures that reflect the level of risk at that point in time, and carefully wind down economic support schemes while people are eased back into work. As the UK exits phase one of the Government's response, where the Government has sought to contain, delay, research and mitigate, it will move through two further phases.

A localised approach to a phased recovery

- 3.6 The Council is responding locally to support the city through the next phase of the response to the public health crisis. The pandemic has had a major direct impact on our residents including ill health, loss of life, bereavement and the isolation experienced by people who are 'shielding' because they are clinically extremely vulnerable. The events have set an unprecedented challenge for the city's businesses and communities. Council staff, key workers and the partners across the public, voluntary & community and private sectors have pulled together and worked incredibly hard to respond effectively to the crisis, and the council will continue to work with its partners across Brighton & Hove and the wider region to support the city's recovery following the Covid-19 outbreak.
- 3.7 The immediate priority for the City Council is to do our best to restart lives and the local economy safely. The Council wants to be able to properly protect our residents and the people who work in Brighton & Hove from a further outbreak of Covid-19, and we want to help ensure that when shops and business in the city reopen, they stay open and flourish. We will also need to provide continued support to vulnerable people, including those 'shielding' who need help.

- 3.8 Through the newly formed Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee, the aim will be to develop a Recovery Programme which will seek to build a solid foundation for the city, so that Brighton & Hove has the best opportunity to emerge as a safer and healthier city.
- 3.9 The city recovery programme aims to enable the council, its residents and businesses to be in the best possible position to minimise losses and make best use of opportunities that emerge. This will require a co-ordinated programme over the next 18 months.

Governance

- 3.10 To ensure effective governance and decision making, a five-member Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee has been established. The sub-committee will co-ordinate the economic recovery within the city in collaboration with businesses, residents and partner organisations. It will also oversee the co-ordination of the recovery effort with local, regional and national bodies, including co-ordinating a lobbying strategy where appropriate.

Scenario planning – from Response to recovery

- 3.11 The pandemic forces the City to think beyond typical emergency management structures. There is unlikely to be a smooth, linear transition to full-scale recovery, instead, a rebound from recovery to response phase is expected for a certain period until treatment and/or vaccination is place. This means that the city will need to be working on recovery and response concurrently, and that transitioning from pandemic response to recovery is likely to happen in a spiral fashion, with the possibility of a second or third wave of a pandemic if there is no vaccine, and the risk of infection increases, each new wave pushing the risk reduction cycle from the recovery back to response phase.
- 3.12 As a result, some working groups (such as those overseeing Personal Protective Equipment supply and distribution or community food hub provision) will still be focusing on the response to the public health crisis and the Council will continue to have a key public health role in the prevention and control of further outbreaks. Other groups (such as events and economy) are now able to start considering the recovery. The report focuses on updating the sub-committee on the work that has begun on recovery. Future reports will focus upon areas such as community recovery, as the transition from response to recovery phase progresses.
- 3.13 To support the recovery planning process, four parallel scenario planning exercises will be undertaken across the council and city, in order to plan the transition from emergency response to the Covid pandemic, through to recovery. These exercises will be structured as follows:
- *Citywide*: Being undertaken with the city's thematic partnerships.
 - *Existing response phase working groups or 'cells'*: Being undertaken with the cells formed to respond to the pandemic. Planning will take into account whether the cell's work will end and return to 'business as usual' for services following the response phase or whether it will transition into a recovery workstream.
 - *New workstreams*: Being undertaken with workstreams that are being created specifically to manage the pandemic recovery phase.

- *Directorate level workstreams:* Being undertaken with each Directorate Management Team to help it plan its service delivery in light of the pandemic, taking into account the budget, and need to produce revised Directorate Plans and Service Plans.
- 3.14 Various criteria will be applied to each planning process to take into account the national backdrop, assumptions taking into account the likely spiral nature of the exit from lockdown, environmental factors specific to the workstream under review, and consideration of what will return to (a new) normal following the pandemic and what opportunities exist to do some things differently. Planning will be to short, medium and longer term timescales, resulting in a set of plans with performance indicators to demonstrate outcomes have been achieved. The planning exercise will run through May and June but as the national picture is still unfolding, it will need to be an iterative process with plans reviewed throughout the year.

Events & Economy

- 3.15 The impact of the Covid-19 public health crisis on people's jobs and livelihoods has been severe: economic activity has been brought to a stop across large swathes of the City's economy. The Government has outlined a significant package of support for businesses but cannot protect every job and every business.
- 3.16 Workers in those sectors most affected, including hospitality and retail, are more likely to be low paid, younger and female. Younger households are also likely to be disproportionately hit in the longer term, as evidence suggests that, following recessions, lost future earnings potential is greater for young people. The longer the virus affects the economy, the greater the risks of long-term scarring and permanently lower economic activity, with business failures, persistently higher unemployment and lower earnings.
- 3.17 Events, and the cultural industries which support them, are part of the fabric of the city and draw millions of people into the city each year. They will therefore be critical to the recovery and long term reputation of the city. The Events and Cultural Industries sectors have been badly affected by the Covid-19 crisis because they rely heavily on ticket sales generated between April and October.
- 3.18 A separate report on this committee's agenda sets out the programme of business support work being undertaken by the Economy and Events working group, which has been set up to respond to the Covid-19 Crisis. This includes responding to and delivering the government support programme. The report also proposes a package of discretionary business support grants to help businesses through this difficult time.

Working with Greater Brighton and Coast to Capital LEP

- 3.19 On 21st April 2020, the Greater Brighton Economic Board agreed to develop an economic recovery plan for the Greater Brighton city region. The plan will build upon the strategic priorities agreed by the Greater Brighton Economic Board, with a focus on identifying the investment plan for infrastructure projects that will support economic recovery. The draft plan will be presented to the Economic Board in June 2020.

- 3.20 Officers are also supporting Coast to Capital LEP with the development of the Local Industrial Strategy which will become economic recovery plan for the wider Coast to Capital regional area.

Transport Network Management

- 3.21 As the city begins to see more people going back to work, there is need for residents to carry on cycling and incorporating active travel into their commute. With public transport capacity reduced and a government message to avoid using public transport wherever possible, the city could experience significant congestion unless an increased range of alternative sustainable options, including cycling, is facilitated.
- 3.22 As a result of these changes to how people are traveling and using public space, towns and cities in the UK and around the world are making or proposing radical changes to their highway networks to accommodate active travel. Re-allocating road space for active travel will not only help the city respond to the next phase of the pandemic, but will also promote healthy and active living to help the city become more resilient for the future
- 3.23 On 9th May 2020, government issued statutory guidance: Traffic Management Act 2004: network management in response to COVID-19. The guidance refers to a once in a generation opportunity to deliver a lasting transformative change in how we make short journeys in our towns and cities
- 3.24 The Council has been quick to respond to the change in travel patterns across Brighton & Hove, and City Transport has taken some immediate steps to ensure the continued delivery of vital services, support vulnerable people and keep the city moving. A Policy & Resources (Urgency) Sub-Committee on 14th May 2020 agreed a series of measures to improve cycling, tackle congested pavements and supporting businesses. Typical road-space reallocation measures include installing 'pop-up' cycle lanes, and widening footways along lengths of road, particularly outside shops and transport hubs where more space is needed to allow people to queue and physical distance. An interim Covid-19 Response Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan is also being developed and we be presented to June Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee.

Safer Public Spaces

- 3.25 As the country begins to move into the next phase of the pandemic and restrictions on movement are eased, there is a continued emphasis on physical distancing and infection prevention and control. This means that pedestrians will need more space and, over time, restaurants and cafes may also need more space to be able offer a service outside their premises.
- 3.26 Public Health England (PHE) has advised maintaining 2 metres (6ft) distance from others (outside of your immediate household) to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus. Where social distancing is not possible, owners and operators as well as the general public, are advised to do everything they can to reasonably reduce the risk.

- 3.27 Government has issued ‘*Coronavirus (Covid-19) Safe Public Spaces – Urban Centres and Green Spaces*’ providing guidance on identifying the key design issues and potential temporary interventions related to social distancing in our urban centres and green spaces. This will be particularly important in focal zones, which are those areas with the densest development and where high levels of footfall are expected. Common issues include managing high footfall and queues around shops and busy high streets.
- 3.28 Officers have begun to consider applying the guidance across our urban, green and seafront spaces so that they can be assessed and adapted as necessary to operate safely in line with social distancing measures. Some examples of the potential interventions that could support social distancing include:
- Footway widening to accommodate distancing between pedestrians, including the use of temporary barriers in the carriageway; changes to parking bays, loading bays and cycle lanes.
 - Reduce unnecessary obstacles, for example planters, and add markings/ tape on seating to maintain social distancing.
 - Signing and communications to remind pedestrians of distance requirements. This could be through spray markings and signage at entrances and movement intersections.
 - One-way movement of pedestrians to maintain 2m (6ft) distancing.
 - Signing to encourage pedestrians to wait and allow others to pass at entry ways or along footpaths.
 - Defined areas to indicate where pedestrians should stand when queuing using spray markings or temporary barriers.
 - Management of multiple queues for different businesses through clear signing and the use of marshals as appropriate.
 - “Do not join the queue” signs provided at popular destinations, when capacity reached.
- 3.29 When implementing temporary interventions to facilitate social distancing in the city’s public spaces, the impacts of measures on people with disabilities and other groups needs to be kept under consideration and may call for a balanced approach.

Housing & Homelessness

- 3.30 Homeless people are at increased risk of morbidity and mortality from Covid-19 for a number of reasons, including prevalence of long term health conditions and living environments that reduce the ability to socially distance or self-isolate. Work is commencing under the Housing & Homelessness Recovery Programme Sub-Group to develop plans to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping in the city with the aim of ensuring that those who are homeless are in safe accommodation.
- 3.31 In March 2020, the Minister for Homelessness wrote to local authorities requiring action to protect health and stop wider transmission, particularly for rough sleepers and those living in settings where it is difficult to socially distance or self-isolate. The Government required housing, social care, public health and NHS partners to work together to deliver action including:

- a) stop homeless people from congregating in facilities and encampments where there is a higher risk of transmission
- b) urgently procuring accommodation for people on the streets
- c) triage people into a Care and Protect model informed by NHS England and Public Health England guidance, including separate accommodation for those with symptoms of COVID19; those with pre-existing conditions but without symptoms; and lower risk without the above.
 - Ensure food, clinical and other support is provided.
 - Provision of leadership for the Care and Protect Model was identified as a priority for the NHS.

In response to this government direction to provide accommodation for all rough sleepers, a variety of hotel accommodation was procured.

- 3.32 The Policy & Resources (Urgency) Sub-Committee on 14th May 2020 agreed the next steps for moving rough sleepers to the next phase of accommodation so that people are not at risk of returning to the street when restrictions are lifted.
- 3.33 The Housing & Homelessness Recovery Programme Sub-Group will develop the overall longer-term exit strategy in preparation for when restrictions are lifted and MHCLG may cease funding additional accommodation and associated support costs for all rough sleepers. There is agreement to explore how to avoid returning people to rough sleep and how to work with people now they are accommodated to have a longer-term option.

Community Recovery

- 3.34 The work of the recovery programme will need to focus upon how the city supports communities to recover from the public health crisis. There is a likelihood that there will be a need to respond to higher levels of some physical and mental health needs as well as unemployment and issues of financial exclusion and/or food poverty. In the next period the working groups that are currently focusing on the emergency response phase (such as those support vulnerable people and food distribution) will be undertaking the recovery scenario planning exercises to plan the transition from emergency response to recovery. Future reports will focus upon areas such as community recovery, as the transition from response to recovery phase progresses.

Internal Council Recovery

- 3.35 The internal element of the programme will also involve each directorate considering the timing and phasing of re-opening services that have been closed and reduced in line with government restrictions and guidance during the outbreak. Each directorate will also review their 2020/21 directorate plans so that milestones and priorities reflect the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak

Human Resources and Workforce – Ways of Working

- 3.36 During the response phase of lockdown over the last two months, the working arrangements for staff across all services have changed in line with the restrictions in place, including significant numbers of staff who are working from home. For the next phase, the Workforce recovery sub-group has begun planning how we use our physical office and operational buildings with the aim of

ensuring the council's work places remain as safe as possible as we respond to continuing changes to the restrictions in place. This strategic planning will include how we address the health, safety and wellbeing needs of all our staff both when working at home or physically attending our buildings.

- 3.37 The Council will follow the government guidance for employers on getting services back up and running and workplaces operating safely. The practical steps outlined in the government guidance that the council will follow are as follows:
1. Work from home, if you can
 2. Carry out a COVID-19 risk assessment, in consultation with workers or trade unions
 3. Maintain 2 metres social distancing, wherever possible
 4. Where people cannot be 2 metres apart, manage transmission risk
 5. Reinforcing cleaning processes

As a result those staff who can work from home will continue to do so for the immediate future. Discussions with Trade Union colleagues are underway corporately to manage any changes to the working arrangements that are currently in place, and to ensure we are taking a strategic approach to how we use the physical space available. In support of this corporate consultation, directorate consultation meetings will be established to address service specific issues.

Finance

- 3.38 The Council is experiencing significant financial impacts as a result of the Covid19 outbreak. The government has announced funding support for local authorities to mitigate the financial impact. However, if the funding does not match all of the additional costs and income losses experienced by the council it could impact upon financial resilience in the medium term. The Recovery Programme will include work to recover the financial resilience of the council.

Information Technology & Digital

- 3.39 In responding to the crisis and to ensure safe working, the council has already facilitated a huge shift for many of our staff to work remotely and from home. This has involved accelerating the software capacity for on-line meetings and provision of additional hardware lap top devices. This has been supported with advice and on-line training and ensuring that existing Citrix licences are being fully utilised alongside an expansion in direct access devices. Following legislation, local democratic decision-making has also been facilitated to move on line with virtual council and committee meetings now firmly established. It is evident that this way of working will be in place for many months to come and that it may also normalise new working cultures which bring with it opportunities and challenges. To ensure future service resilience and to make the most of the increased dependence on digital working, a digital strategy is being prepared with the goal of setting out a route map for strengthening digitally enabled services and information management in a Covid 19 and post-Covid 19 world. This will be reported to the Committee in the Autumn.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Recovery Programme

- 3.40 Developing a data ecosystem and suite of indicators is critical to ensure a stable transition from the response to the recovery phase and to evaluate the delivery of the recovery programme. The Public Health Team and the Policy & Partnership have begun to develop a monitoring framework, which will be report to a future meeting of the Recovery Sub-Committee.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The consequences of the public health crisis force us to think outside of the box, or in this case, outside the typical emergency management cycle. Whilst the four phases to reduce the impact of a natural hazard or emergency (preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation) are principally linear, the response and recovery phases for a pandemic are essentially non-linear.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 There are a range of stakeholders and partners who will need to be fully engaged in the City recovery programme. Whilst Brighton & Hove City Council will have democratic oversight and decision making, the governance of the programme is designed to ensure that Brighton & Hove Connected partners from the public and private sectors, which includes stakeholders from across the city, are able to contribute. The city council has a key role to play in the overall co-ordination and oversight of the programme, whilst not always delivering every element.
- 5.2 During the Covid 19 crisis the Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership has been commissioned to provide fortnightly reporting on business issues across Brighton & Hove, including sector focused reports giving an overview of the issues and actions of the local business community. They will lead on business consultation throughout the lockdown and into the recovery phase drawing from a range of local organisations such as language schools, developers, co working spaces, charities, finance, retail, leisure, pharmaceuticals, education and others. The reports, virtual meetings, flash surveys and dedicated web portal that they have created will help to inform the city's recovery plan, assist in lobbying for support from regional and national government; and, facilitate collaborative working between the partners, the BHEP and the city council.
- 5.3 Since March 2020 officers have engaged extensively with organisations operating in the Events and Cultural Industries sector as well as with various groups representing these sectors. Officers have also engaged with other funding bodies such as Arts Council England and the Local Enterprise Partnership. In recent weeks, officers have been part of online discussions and meetings with hundreds of people working in the sector and living in the city. Individual conversations have taken place with almost every key cultural organisation that contributes to making Brighton and Hove the leading place for the events and cultural industries in the UK.
- 5.4 Internally, the council will use the established weekly Trade Union meetings to consult on the recovery programme, and specifically the impacts on our council staff. Working together we will establish the frameworks, processes and policies

that will guide decision making for service managers and ensure our staff are enabled to work safely and effectively as restrictions on us change.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The report provide the Recovery Sub-Committee with a progress update on the City Council and the city is responding locally following the publication of 'Our Plan to Rebuild' The UK Government's Covid-19 recovery strategy, and provides also provides a progress update on the development of the City's Recovery Programme as agreed by Policy & Resources Committee on 30th April 2020.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendation of this report. Regular reporting on the financial impact on the council to members has shown the significant increase in costs and reductions in income as a result of the lockdown and how this may be for a potentially prolonged period affecting the council's financial resilience. The recovery programme will therefore be important in supporting the council's longer term financial resilience.

Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld

Date: 18/05/20

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The proposals in this report align with the obligations of the Council pursuant to the Coronavirus Act, associated Regulations, National Guidance and Directions. There are no immediate legal implications arising from the recommendation in the report to note the proposals for recovery.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 180520

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 The actions and initiatives delivered as part of the recovery programme plan will be subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment as appropriate. The public sector equality duty also applies. An aspect of the work on the recovery programme will look at issues of community cohesion, protecting the most vulnerable, enhancing equalities and building on the good will generated among people of different backgrounds during the crisis.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 The coronavirus crisis has, for many people heightened our collective awareness of nature's many benefits—from the tranquillity of the outdoors to clean air and water, natural resources, disease suppression, and the capacity to help slow climate change and protect us from its impacts.
- 7.5 Cities across the UK and beyond are focusing upon putting greater equality and climate resilience at the heart of their recovery plans. The includes the need to

take steps to ensure ensure that the city's economic recovery is aligned with climate and Sustainable Development Goals

- 7.6 The implementation of initiatives to reallocate road and public space to allow people to move around the city safely in a world where physical distancing will be the norm for the foreseeable future – also helps to prevent a drastic increase in air pollution.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.7 The government has indicated that they are not minded to ask for an extension of the 31st December 2020 deadline for full implementation of Brexit. There is therefore a risk that we may be moving into the final phase with no trade and people movement agreements in place. This will accentuate the challenge posed by the Coronavirus. The Recovery programme, as part of the economic modelling and impact on businesses on the city, will consider Brexit implications.

Any Other Significant Implications:

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.8 The programme involves working with the police and our Communities Team to look and respond to crime and community safety implications

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.9 The current risk register will be updated with focus on the recovery and inform the development of the programme.

Public Health Implications:

- 7.10 The Covid-19 pandemic will have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of residents. This will include the direct effects of the virus (ill health, loss of life and bereavement), indirect health impacts, including mental ill health, and from deferred access to healthcare during the lockdown, and in the longer term the impact from wider determinants of health including income and employment. The pandemic has the potential to significantly increase health inequalities in our communities. Therefore, the goals of our Health and Wellbeing Strategy continue highly relevant throughout the recovery phase. There is also an ongoing need for a direct public health response to protect residents and visitors from further outbreaks. Public health approach will therefore be central to limiting the risk of new infections while creating an environment that supports the recovery of our communities and opening up businesses and the local economy.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.11 The City Recovery Programme aims responding locally to support the city through the next phases of the response to the public health crisis. The pandemic has had a major direct impact on our residents including ill health, loss of life, bereavement and the isolation experienced by people who are 'shielding' because they are clinically extremely vulnerable. The events have set an unprecedented challenge for the city's businesses and communities.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Background Documents

None