

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub- Committee

## Agenda Item 32

**Subject:** Covid-19 Recovery & Renewal Update

**Date of meeting:** 21 April 2022

**Report of:** Nick Hibberd, Executive Director (Economy, Environment & Culture)

**Contact Officer:** Julie Nichols, Corporate Portfolio Lead  
Tel: 01273 291656  
Email: julie.nichols@brighton-hove.gov.uk

**Ward(s) affected:** All

Note: The special circumstances for non-compliance with Council Procedure Rule 3, Access to Information Procedure Rule 5 and Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), (items not considered unless the agenda is open to inspection at least five days in advance of the meeting) were that due to a miscalculation of the date of public holidays the report was not completed when the agenda was published.

### For general release

#### 1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 The report provides an update on the progress of the Covid-19 Recovery & Renewal programme, following a previous update to the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-committee on 20 January 2022.
- 1.2 It should be noted that the report provides an update on progress to mid March 2022 and given the fast-moving nature of the pandemic, aspects of this report may have been superseded by events by the date of the committee meeting.

#### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Notes the progress updates in this report.

#### 3. Context and background information

- 3.1 The Recovery & Renewal programme was established in May 2020 to help prepare and steer the council and city through the transition from emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic towards recovery. The programme seeks opportunities for the city to emerge from the pandemic as fairer, greener and healthier
- 3.2 Circumstances with regard to the pandemic have shifted throughout this period. Whilst the focus on recovery is being maintained, it has been

managed alongside ongoing response and outbreak control activity, throughout lockdowns and restart following lockdowns, and business as usual/statutory responsibilities. Since the initiation of the Recovery & Renewal programme, its working groups have been balancing work on response, restart and recovery simultaneously.

3.3 On 24 February, a 'Living with Covid' strategy was announced, with the key changes summarised below:

**From 24 February**

- People testing positive for Covid-19 are no longer legally required to self-isolate. Advice is to stay at home if you can and avoid contact with other people.
- People no longer have to take daily tests or are legally required to self-isolate following contact with someone who has tested positive.
- The Test and Trace Support Payment Scheme has ended. Those told to self-isolate before 24 February could make a claim up to 6 April.

**From 1 April**

- The UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) published updated guidance to support the next stage of the pandemic on 1 April. As set out in the government's [Living with COVID-19 plan](#), the focus of this new phase is on protecting those who are most at risk from the virus. BHCC continues to support with managing outbreaks in close collaboration with UKHSA, this includes proactively supporting business continuity measures for situations.
- A new set of guidance from UKHSA provides important public health advice for people with symptoms of respiratory infections, such as Covid-19; people with a positive Covid-19 test and their contacts; and advice on safer behaviours for everyone. UKHSA has also published a set of public health principles for businesses, organisations and employers to consider in managing the risk to their workforce from respiratory infections, such as Covid-19. There will be some [symptomatic testing available](#) for certain high-risk groups and settings.
- Those over 75, immuno-compromised and care home residents will be offered a second Covid-19 booster and all 5-11 year olds offered vaccination.
- There will be an ongoing vaccination offer for all those who have not yet received first, second or booster doses.

Covid-19 cases in the city remain high, therefore, there is an emphasis on public health messaging advising people to do whatever they can to lower their chances of catching or spreading the virus. Advice is as follows:

- If you feel unwell or have symptoms of Covid-19, the guidance is to stay at home and avoid contact with other people and to avoid close contact with anyone [who is at higher risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19](#). You can go back to your normal activities when you feel better or do not have a high temperature.
- Covid-19 is most likely to be spread in busy places with poor ventilation. Meeting friends outside or opening windows when you are inside will help to stop that spread.
- Wearing a face covering anywhere that is crowded or enclosed will also reduce the risk. It is not difficult to keep one in your bag to use when you need to.

- Also, do not forget that face coverings continue to be required in many health and care settings. This includes hospitals, GP surgeries and pharmacies, as well as everyone who is visiting or working in care homes.
- Get vaccinated so you have the best protection against Covid-19. People 16 years old and over can [book online](#) or visit a [walk-in session](#). People aged 12 to 15 can get vaccines through schools or from Churchill Square by booking an appointment online or walking in - they must have a parents or carer with them. Find more [information about vaccinations for people aged 5 to 11](#).
- Wash your hands regularly, and cover coughs and sneezes to reduce the spread of viruses.

### 3.4 Recovery & Renewal Programme

The following items provide updates on each of the council's Recovery & Renewal working groups:

#### 3.4.1 Customers

##### **Aim of working group**

- Develop and deliver the Customer Experience Strategy, which includes the Customer Promise and Customer Experience Vision.
- Monitor progress in relation to the delivery of the Customer Experience Strategy.
- Promote best practice in delivering services in a fair and inclusive way.
- Consider and respond to the impact on customers of the changed customer service delivery of the council due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

##### **Key recent activities**

- Data gathering about the current structure of phone provision to inform future recommendations.
- Data gathering around initial recovery phase to understand customer needs to inform longer term recommendations.
- Analysis and presentation of data gathered at customer contact points.
- Annual promotion of customer satisfaction survey.
- Piloting Councillor Enquiries Case Management system and learning from this to strengthen the customer experience.

##### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Working with the Future Ways of Working programme on information technology skills training for staff, ensuring they are equipped to troubleshoot customer issues when using digital services.
- Working towards exploring other self-help facilities in the city.
- Preparation of the proposed Target Operating Model and proposal for future options for customer service delivery.

#### 3.4.2 Children & Young People

##### **Aim of working group**

- Provide strategic leadership to the recovery and renewal work for children and young people's services in the city.
- Focus on Black & Minority Ethnic (BME), disadvantaged, education and early years, Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND), emotional wellbeing and mental health, safeguarding and youth.

- Be a point of escalation for the task and finish groups linked to the working group and represent children and young people's matters in the Recovery & Renewal Programme.
- Link into partnerships and commissioning groups in the city.
- Highlight and mitigate risks.
- Consider equalities impacts of decisions made.

### **Key recent activities**

- Children & Young People's Working Group discussion around Covid rates remaining high and the ongoing impact of disruption across the system, particularly around various groups of the workforce supporting children's services and education.
- Supporting education settings – Public Health and Families, Children & Learning continue to support settings with higher numbers, offering bespoke advice and supporting decision making at settings. Advice and support given around the recent changes to guidance affecting all education settings.
- Supporting vulnerable children and young people – Greater numbers of staff working back in the offices is helping deliver the full relationship based practice model in social work. Full service delivery now back in place to support children with additional needs face to face. Children at risk continued to be supported to get their Covid vaccines.
- Reviewing Early Help for families and development of a Disadvantage Strategy - Work on the Early Help review continues. Workshops have taken place with a range of stakeholders to map, and identify gaps in, the current system and talk through potential new ways of working. A bid for the first round of the national Family Hubs Transformation Fund has been submitted. A 'call for assistance' has been shared with the Community & Voluntary Sector to help to develop a draft of the Disadvantage Strategy.

### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Children & Young People's Working Group - Discussions will continue about vaccinations for children and young people, including the roll out of the vaccine equity plan and the start of the wider 5-11 programme. A focus is also being taken on workforce pressures.
- Supporting education settings - Support and guidance will be provided as new and/or amended guidance comes out for April 2022 onwards. This is likely to be a further significant change in approach nationally.
- Reviewing Early Help for families and development of a Disadvantage Strategy – Coproduction workshops planned for March and April with key stakeholders regarding the development of plans for potential Family Hubs within the city as a key delivery arm of the Early Help system for families. Feedback from Community & Voluntary Sector partners to be collated and built into the emerging Disadvantage Strategy.
- Supporting vulnerable children and young people – Concerns continue regarding the availability and stability of social care placements, with the long term impact of Covid starting to be felt more with carers retiring or unable to offer placements to children with more complex needs. The SEND sufficiency workstream of the SEND Strategy has identified where some additional capacity may be needed across the city and work is being planned to develop that as needed.

### 3.4.3 Food Policy

#### **Aim of working group**

To provide an all-age citywide response to issues relating to food arising from Covid-19 crisis – emergency phase, through recovery and in readiness and response to local outbreaks/other waves.

#### **Key recent activities**

- Cost of living crisis planning across fuel, food and money advice organisations.
- Commission launched to support the food access needs of Black & Minority Ethnic communities, Refugees and Asylum Seekers.
- Capacity and support work outlined for Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) continues. The Trust for Developing Communities and Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP) are undertaking food development work, and one-to-one support for capacity and resilience for Emergency Food Network providers. Downview School continues to be used as a temporary food hub while BHFP's search for premises continues. The Black & Minority Ethnic Community Partnership (BMECP) centre food bank is being supported to stay open. Further allocation of COMF funding to support organisations to comply with Natasha's law.
- Children's Centres food banks have moved to vouchers only. There has been a successful start to the affordable food pilot at Roundabout Children's Centre.
- Identification and giving out of major funding to support people in poverty through the Household Support Fund, Winter grants allocated and Local Outbreak Plan funding given out to purchase extra food.

#### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Allocating food access commission and progressing recommendations from the November report.
- Strategic planning for the next financial year, including fundraising and evaluating support over 2021/22. Concern particularly around the funding shortfall in April 2022.
- Supporting/liasing around increasing central capacity for emergency food.
- Developing the Healthy Start campaign and continued donations campaign, and continued search for premises.
- A report on food in relation to the cost of living is a separate paper to this committee.

### 3.4.4 Vulnerable People

#### **Aim of working group**

Work collaboratively across the public and voluntary sector to reduce the spread and limit the morbidity and mortality from the COVID-19 pandemic in Brighton & Hove and to ensure the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people.

#### **Key recent activities**

#### **Community Hub**

- The Local Discretionary Social Fund has been distributed to many different organisations throughout the city in the hope this can reach as many household as possible. Application is also available through the Local Discretionary Social Fund for households in receipt of benefits via <https://brighton-gwa.egovhub.net/Gwa/launch>. Households not in receipt of benefits can apply via the Community Hub.
- Concerns have been raised around residents heating their homes in the city. The Covid pages on the council's website link to the government's Household Support Fund: [Request help for yourself or someone else \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/request-help-for-yourself-or-someone-else).
- Sample questions have been provided to local services that interact with those at risk of fuel poverty. These questions aim to identify those at risk of fuel poverty and refer them on appropriately for support. The Covid Testing Street Team have distributed leaflets on the government's Household Support fund.
- The government's Household Support Fund has been available to those who need extra support to pay for food, fuel and other essential expenses.
- The 2021/22 Household Support Fund of £2.1m has now been fully utilised and will be expended by the 31 March 2022 deadline, including the planned distribution of vouchers to Free School Meal families for the Easter school holidays for which funds have already been transferred to the voucher provider.

### **Equalities & Access**

- The Vaccine Equity Plan has been active from January to March 2022, aiming to tackle vaccine uptake inequality via the following methods:
  - Enhanced targeted communications and engagement.
  - Adapting vaccination delivery utilising pop-ups and non-English speaking support at sessions across the city, roving teams visiting care settings, targeted outreach sessions for the homeless community and utilising pharmacies.
  - Task groups to work across sectors to tackle specific groups effectively.

### **Communications**

- Translated communications are now available with vaccination information and are being distributed at relevant vaccination sessions.
- Social media content is being considered for the next stage of "Living with Covid".
- A communication to be produced detailing information for those eligible for Covid-19 antiviral drugs.

### **Volunteering**

- Recruitment of volunteers is increasingly difficult and numbers continue to decrease.
- Disability confidence training is to be provided for all those working in vaccination centres and pop-ups, including volunteers.

### **Key forthcoming activities**

- This working group has now closed and its activities have been mainstreamed into day to day service delivery.

## **3.4.5 Employment & Skills**

### **Aim of working group**

To come together to discuss matters relating to economy, skills and employment that cut across the Recovery & Renewal Programme.

### **Key recent activities**

- A six month progress report on the City Employment & Skills Recovery Plan is now available on the council's website: [Employment and Skills Recovery Plan Progress Review \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/employment-and-skills-recovery-plan-progress-review). The Action Plan for Year 2 has been drawn up with the Adult Learning & Skills Partnership.
- GB MET hosted a hospitality sector event at the college with local employers. The role of the local further education provider in supporting skills development was identified as being important by the Events & Economy Working Group. The council supported the event.
- In February, the Youth Employment Hub promoted National Apprenticeship Week through a series of events at Montague House. It also offered four Art Clubs, four Grub Clubs, one Dealing With Anxiety course, two Yoga Workshops, eight Recruitment Events, ten dedicated careers and employability support sessions
- The council continues to engage with Fedcap and Maximus, providers of Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) funded programmes to support people towards work.
- The council has supported the SEND Network and Work & Learning Group to identify priorities which support the City Employment & Skills Plan.
- Collaboration with the Sussex Learning Network and the council to utilise European Social Fund funding for the 'Class of Covid' to best effect in the city.
- MyBnk running an accredited Money Works programme at the Youth Employment Hub. Money Works is a financial and digital skills programme for young people to confront their money worries.
- The Adult Education Hub (AEH) will be working with Voices in Exile to assess the English language levels of adults that have recently settled in the city through the refugee resettlement initiative. Once assessed, they will be placed on an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programme either at the Adult Education Hub or with another ESOL provider.
- The AEH is working to support Hong Kong British overseas nationals with English language support through the welcome programme and are currently supporting five students at the hub.
- The Multicultural Employability Support Hub (MESH), funded by the DWP, is supported by the council. The service is run by The Trust for Developing Communities, supporting people from ethnically diverse backgrounds move towards and into employment by developing skills, volunteering and accessing training. The project has been running for six months and at end of February 2022, 85 clients had been supported.
- The AEH has achieved 517 enrolments since opening in September across a range of courses, including English, Maths and Information Technology (IT) skills, Business Enterprise, ESOL and employability courses. The hub has engaged with a number of community outreach centres, charities and other key stakeholders to help deliver adult education to residents in the city. Partners include the International Women's Network, Hangleton & Knoll Project, Trust for Developing Communities, Voices in Exile, Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) and many more.

- The Adult Education team and Pre-employment Co-ordinator continue to work closely with other services in the council to help support their recruitment needs through pre-employment training programmes. A Sector Work Based Academy (SWAP) has been delivered for CityClean and City Parks, and plans are underway to deliver pre-employment courses for Civil Enforcement Officer recruitment and Adult Social Care.

### **Business & Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) Sussex**

- Two fixed term posts (one full-time equivalent) have been appointed as BIPC Manager. The post holders will work with the British Library on a long term funding model for the BIPC network.
- The BME & Female Entrepreneur tender has been awarded by the Brighton Chamber and Always Possible who will be rolling out the programme in the coming months.
- The BIPC has hosted webinars for business to make them aware of the European Regional Development Fund Invest4 business grants.
- The BIPC is making a positive contribution to Community Wealth Building in creating and supporting local entrepreneurs and businesses. The centre provided advice and support to nearly 500 people in the first two quarters of 2021/22 (despite the lockdowns), which equals the full year target; of those supported, 50% were women, 11% were BME and 5% were disabled.

### **Brighton Living Wage Campaign**

- Raised the salaries of over 4,042 people.
- 793 employers signed up as Living Wage employers.
- The campaign continues although it slowed during the pandemic.
- Five blog posts released about the Living Wage Week event:
  - "Kingsway Care Goes Beyond the Living Wage"
  - "Why is St John's School and College a Living Wage Employer?"
  - "Brighton & Hove Businesses Celebrate Living Wage Week 2021"
  - "FareShare Sussex on the Living Wage Campaign and Future Growth"
  - "Brighton Gin's Commitment to the Living Wage"
- 141 employers participated in the annual Living Wage survey:
  - 90% of businesses with 100+ employees said that joining the Brighton Living Wage directly elevated salaries.
  - 48% of businesses said that it helped with staff retention.

### **European Regional Development Fund Invest4 Business Grants**

- 43 new grant applications have been approved for a total of £552,000 since the end of November 2021.
- A total of £2.03 million in grant funds have been awarded out of the total £2.85 million grant programme.
- The project has been officially extended to May 2023, with the grant programme closing in March 2023.
- The target for grants paid for the October to December period was exceeded with £453,000 of grant funds awarded.
- The project has exceeded its 'grants paid out' target in the last two claim periods. Since January 2021, £168,707 has been paid out and the overall project total paid out is £897,000.

- Invest 4 supplied all of the information needed to satisfy the Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government 'On the Spot Audit Visit' with the University of Chichester (the Accountable Body) which occurred in January 2022.

### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Agree future priorities for the Adult Learning & Skills Partnership, SEND Network and ESFA Network.
- Contribute to the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) as it continues to evolve.
- Support working groups responding to:
  - the Levelling up White Paper (January 2022);
  - UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) (Spring 2022); and
  - Local Enterprise Partnership review and impact on Coast to Capital and the Skills Agenda.
- In April, the AEH is to start a new service for homeless individuals who need support to develop core skills in Literacy, Numeracy, IT and ESOL. This replaces the Step by Step project that ended in 2021.
- Creation of a new council virtual work experience programme to support recruitment and Gatsby benchmarks.
- The AEH is to launch Security Guard training (Security Industry Authority qualifications) in response to employer and DWP demand.
- AEH recruitment onto the new Circular Economy module (Blueprint Interreg project) to commence at the end of March.
- Planning for the citywide apprenticeship graduation on 29 June following last year's successful event supported by several stakeholders/providers.
- Meet the Construction Industry Training Board as part of a review of the council's Local Employment Scheme.

### **Business & Intellectual Property Centre Sussex**

- Continue to work with the British Library to push for a longer term funding stream from central government.
- BIPC Brighton & Hove's Confident Business Series is a business support programme delivering webinars, 121 clinics and peer-to-peer networking based around the Business Model Canvas. The programme is open to all businesses and aims to particularly engage businesses from BME communities and female entrepreneurs. It will run from March to the end of July 2022 and is being delivered by the Brighton Chamber and Always Possible.
- Official launch of the BIPC, including invitations to Members planned for May 2022.

### **Brighton Living Wage Campaign**

- Ongoing promotion of the Brighton Living Wage and aiming for the 800th sign up.
- In person event to be organised to celebrate the 800th sign up.
- Living Wage survey results will be released in the form of a two to three page report and social media infographics.

### **European Regional Development Fund Invest4 Business Grants**

- Ongoing work to achieve the target of £614,000 in grants paid out by March 2022.
- Explore setting up a Small Grant Programme to help meet the target for Small and Medium Enterprises supported.

- Gather monitoring data to show the benefits that have resulted from the grants.

### 3.4.6 Events & Economy

#### **Aim of working group**

- Understand and quantify the impact of the spread of Covid-19 on the city's events, culture programme and visitor numbers, which leads to a wider impact on the city's economy.
- Align the city's businesses and event organisations around a common set of messages and actions, minimising (where possible) the impact upon the city, in accordance with Public Health England (PHE) guidance.
- Ensure government and council support gets to as many organisations as possible so that key sectors in our economy are able to survive, retain employment and recover.

#### **Key recent activities**

##### **Tourism and Hospitality**

- National research from the Tourism Alliance shows 29% of businesses reporting cancellations of pre-booked business from January to March and 40% reporting they are likely to fail.
- Hotel occupancy rates in the city were at 59% in December 2021 (compared to 72% in 2019).
- VisitBrighton is working hard to recover membership numbers.
- The Brighton Centre diary is full but dealing with a lot of displaced business from 2020 and 2021. There is positive news around the future conference enquiries.
- Venues across the city now fully functioning but still recovering in terms of return to full revenues.

##### **Outdoor Events**

- Reports for events in parks and open spaces (45 in total) and on Madeira Drive (18 in total) have been approved. There is a buoyant events calendar but there are issues with staffing and access to hiring infrastructure. Costs have risen steeply.
- Continuing with Covid risk assessments and working with Public Health ensuring no complacency in terms of risk management as the city moves forward.
- The PCR testing site has moved from Preston Park to The Level. Plans are on target for Pride in August.
- Good progress is being made for the Women's Euros event in July, particularly around the Fanzone. The Euro Officer is now in post.
- A New Outdoor Events Manager joined in February.

##### **Sector Skills and Employment**

- The male unemployment rate is very high in the city.
- The Skills Recovery Plan six month review have been well received.
- Looking at support to the over 50s to address the skills gap. Relevant to skills shortages in tourism, hospitality and events sectors.

##### **Revenue and Benefits**

- Invited 1,400 businesses to apply for business rate grants on 18 January and 557 applications were received within five days.

- Retail was not included in the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) this time. Some businesses may fall into eligibility for new Covid additional relief if no rate relief has been received previously.
- Live events and music ARG closed on 24 January with 24 applications.

### **Wider City Economy View**

- Summary of the Cities Outlook 2022 report looking at the health of high streets by a think tank tracking the 33 largest cities in the United Kingdom, including Brighton & Hove.
- The mixed use of shops creates a unique city environment. There is a need for a balance of small businesses, independents and creatives.
- Voids in mixed use office premises due to home working.
- Current rents being paid but rents from early in the pandemic are slow to be repaid but overall, a positive recovery.

### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Licencing– need to consider how small businesses will be supported after September 2022.
- Examine the detail of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund/Levelling Up emerging policy areas and set up a working group.
- Adult social care crisis – consider a campaign to target the male workforce.
- Focus on mixed use of shops for the wider community, creative and entrepreneurial uses to protect the uniqueness of the city.

## **3.4.7 Homelessness & Housing**

### **Aim of working group**

- Covid Response amongst the homeless and rough sleeping population.
- Prevention and management of cases and outbreaks in homelessness and rough sleeping settings.
- Enabling individuals accommodated in emergency accommodation during the Covid Response ('Everyone In') to move on from rough sleeping into sustainable accommodation.
- Achieve a sustainable reduction in rough sleeping.
- Reduce use of the additional emergency accommodation acquired to meet demands of Everyone In.
- Collaboration between housing, finance, planning, development, health protection, social care and local stakeholders and partners in the development of submissions for the funding included in the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG). Now the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC).
- Delivery of both MHCLG / DLUHC Programmes - Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) and Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP).

### **Key recent activities**

#### **Move on plan**

Includes NSAP for people accommodated under Covid-19 Emergency Accommodation (hotels and longer term move on provision):

- There are 40 rooms in Houses in Multiple Occupation rooms provided for rough sleepers and single homeless people accommodated under Covid.

- 50 additional properties acquired under the Home Purchase scheme to be used as Housing First for the most entrenched rough sleepers and those with complex needs.
- 20 additional units with St Mungo's/Clarion to provide medium/high support.
- The remaining number of people that need to be moved on from those accommodated under pandemic provisions ( Covid 1 & 2) as of week commencing 21/02/22 (figures reported to Housing Committee on 16 March), has reduced to 50 clients. In total, 770 people have been moved on under this project.
- Between December 2021 and March 2022, a further eight people have been successfully moved into the private rented sector bringing the total to over 140.

### **Offenders Project**

- There is funding to assist ten offenders from July 2021 until March 2022 working with Southdown Intensive Support. Seven tenancies have been set up as at the end of January 2022.

### **Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP)**

Capital and revenue grant funding to deliver homes has been awarded under this programme. The two schemes are aimed at a Housing Led Support Model (aimed at rough sleepers with complex and multiple needs) and a Rapid Rehousing Model aimed at people with lower needs who are newer to the streets:

- Under 'Purchase & Repair', the target is to provide 30, one bedroom properties during 2021/22 and 2022/23. The target for this financial year is to ensure 20 properties are purchased and ready to let. As of 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022 (figures reported to Housing Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> March), 25 offers had been accepted. Fourteen of these properties were back in council ownership, with nine ready to let. A further five properties were under assessment.
- It is the early stages of the second scheme, which is to deliver 30 properties under 10 year leases. The properties are to house rough sleepers with lower support needs. Eight properties have been completed, with another 12 to complete by the end of March 2022 and a further nine pending consideration. The scheme is going well with very proactive engagement with local accommodation owners and a robust communication strategy via social media.
- Severe Weather Emergency Protocol provision is available and has been triggered many times this winter.
- The official street count went ahead on 2 November 2021 and numbers were at 37. In January, the intel count was undertaken which counted nine rough sleepers.

### **Key forthcoming activities**

- The Private Rented Sector Team continue to train and upskill landlords and other professionals to assist clients to access private rented accommodation.
- The transformation project is well underway with a focus on resetting the Housing Needs Service following the Covid pandemic. This will be progressed when the restructure of Heads of Service in Housing is in place.
- The move on plan for the remaining clients placed in emergency accommodation (hotels) under pandemic provisions (Covid 1 & 2 clients) is the key focus. The current plan projects that the remaining 50 clients

will be moved on from emergency provision into more sustainable accommodation by the end of June 2022.

- The Rough Sleeping Initiative 2022-25 grant bid has been submitted with support from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities for just under £9m. Moderation will take place late March/early April with the outcome expected around June 2022.
- Preparing to submit a bid for a further RSAP grant for 2022/23–2023/24 for capital and supporting revenue.

### 3.4.8 Future Ways of Working

#### **Aim of working group**

- To scope the Future Ways of Working for the council through service and staff engagement. From this, develop a vision for the council which will inform Our People Promise, and Digital and Accommodation strategies.
- Consolidate emerging workplace needs, and deliver the programme and model for a different return to the workplace in 2022-2023, which considers changing service delivery models and working practices

#### **Key recent activities**

- Completed analysis of 94 focus groups and identified the key future ways of working themes for engagement.
- Engagement with existing staff and management networks, trade unions and workers' fora on the themes from focus groups and the staff survey as relating to Future Ways of Working.
- Launched Collaboration Space Pilot in Bartholomew House (running January to April) for staff to trial different office set-ups for hybrid working and gather feedback.
- Agreement by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) on the service led hybrid working framework and to engage with staff and key stakeholders.

#### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Engagement on hybrid working framework with existing staff and key stakeholders to inform the programme and return to ELT and the Policy & Resources Committee to verify the model.
- In April, explore Customer Service Centre opening of self-help and assistance at Hove Town Hall.
- Scope and design a digital skills framework for the council for all staff.
- Define booking software requirements to inform the hybrid working framework.
- Continue to review interim working arrangements, including current office demand, to inform the hybrid working framework and verify the model.

### 3.4.9 Supporting Members

#### **Aim of working group**

To explore with Members:

- the role of a Member, how that is changing and what it looks like going forward;
- the relationship between a Member and their ward/communities and with officers; and

- how Members want to work; informed by experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic. This will lead to a series of actions, including the creation of a Training, Development & Improvement Plan for Members.

#### **Key recent activities**

- Charter Plus accreditation achieved in recognition of the council's work in supporting Members and Member Development.
- Performance & Development Plans (PDPs) completed the Group Leaders, Deputy Group Leaders and other Members who have requested them.
- Focus in recent weeks has been on planning for the Being a Councillor events. The events were open to anyone interested in being a Councillor as part of the lead up to the May 2023 local elections and were promoted across the city, including to under-represented groups. The events were held on 7 and 8 March and provided attendees with the opportunity to hear from Members about their experiences of being a Councillor and from officers providing an overview of the city and council, and the rules and practicalities around the role. A follow up event will be held next year closer to the elections regarding the detail of the nominations process.
- Proposals for Future Ways of Working (FWoW) in relation to Members were agreed by Leaders' Group on 9 March.
- Continuing to trial the Councillor Enquiries Case Management System, including training for officers.

#### **Key forthcoming activities**

- Obtain views from Members on FWoW during March, including an online survey, two online focus groups and two slots for Members to visit the future workspace at Bartholomew House. These activities will be in conjunction with colleagues from the FWoW and Workstyles programmes. Feedback and next steps will be presented to the Leaders' Group for approval.
- Debrief and analysis following the Being a Councillor events and completing outstanding actions.
- Scheduling future meetings of the Supporting Members Working Group and initiating Member Development reporting.

### **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 As the democratic body of the city, the council has a role in leading the governance and delivery of the recovery phase of the pandemic. The consequences of this public health crisis force the city to respond in ways that are different from what has been considered normal. The recovery programme has been designed to ensure the city is able to respond in an agile way as it transitions through different phases of the pandemic and moves in and out of response.
- 4.2 The pandemic represents an unprecedented challenge for Brighton & Hove and a major shock to the city's economy and communities. It also presents the city with an opportunity to shape its future. The recovery programme was designed to provide the governance structure for initiating and organising a series of co-ordinated, multi-agency actions during the recovery stage(s) following the pandemic affecting the communities and/or environment of Brighton & Hove. Those leading Recovery & Renewal have worked closely

throughout with colleagues supporting outbreak control and emergency response to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

## **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 The programme has engaged with the city's partnerships and governing bodies, and the Community & Voluntary Sector (CVS) as part of the recovery process. The city's partnerships were consulted as part of the programme's initiation via a scenario planning exercise where they were asked to consider the implications of the pandemic on their sectors and a response. The CVS and Clinical Commissioning Group are represented on the Covid-19 Recovery & Renewal Group, where the leads of each working group share progress in order to identify issues, links and dependencies, and cross-cutting areas of work. Each working group has also been reviewed to determine whether it has appropriate CVS representation. The working groups undertake engagement and consultations specific to their theme, as appropriate.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The Covid-19 pandemic and the council's response to it have been fast paced, agile and in partnership with others, and this ethos is being carried forward into recovery. The programme has planned ahead as far as it has been able, adapted in line with outbreak control, emergency response and restart of the city, and each working group has reviewed its approach as circumstances changed. The organisational capacity required to respond to the crisis, restart the city, begin recovery from it, and manage business as usual and statutory responsibilities cannot be under-estimated. Officers remain committed to delivering for the city, the council and its staff, and will continue to update Members as work progresses.

## **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 The governance structure of the Recovery & Renewal Programme is provided for within the council's existing resources. The schemes, projects and programmes supported are themselves funded from various sources including the Household Support Fund, Contain Outbreak Management Funds, and other Covid grants and reliefs for businesses and individuals. Except where specific delegations have been approved by committee, actions or recommendations arising from the programme that have financial implications are reported through the council's recognised governance and decision-making routes, normally Policy & Resources Committee, or its Recovery Sub-Committee, and in accordance with Financial Regulations.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Nigel Manvell*

*Date: 28/03/22*

## **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1 This report is for information only. There are therefore no legal implications arising directly from it. The Recovery and Renewal Programme is consistent with the Council's powers and duties.

*Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert*

*Date: 23/03/22*

## **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1 Equality is fundamental to the city's and council's recovery from the pandemic, along with addressing the inequalities that it may have worsened. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) have been completed, as required, by the working groups and include actions to gain the best outcomes for all service users and staff. Each working group has considered what existing inequalities have been revealed by the pandemic and social restrictions, what inequalities have been created or worsened, and what can be done to tackle these by the council, its partners and communities. In addition, the groups have considered whether recovery from the pandemic creates any opportunities to narrow pre-existing inequalities. Progress towards delivery of each EIA has been checked regularly as part of the governance of the programme.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

- 10.1 The sustainability of its recovery plans has been a key aspect of the programme's approach. This has ranged from the plans to facilitate the movement of people around the city, to the sustainability of food provision, to the sustainability of the council's finances. As well as responding to the challenges thrown up by the pandemic, the programme has sought to optimise any opportunities that are presented to support delivery of the council's priorities. The council's Carbon Neutral programme is one of the underpinning activities of Recovery & Renewal. A representative from the council's Sustainability Team has been invited to Covid Recovery & Renewal Group meetings.

## **11. Other Implications**

### **Crime & disorder implications:**

- 11.1 The implications for crime and community safety/cohesion in relation to the pandemic are embedded within the work of the Community Safety Partnership and Strategy.

### **Public health implications:**

- 11.2 Public Health is at the heart of the council's response to, and recovery from, the pandemic and has been mainstreamed throughout the Recovery & Renewal programme. Colleagues from Public Health and the Recovery & Renewal programme have co-ordinated their responses to the pandemic and met regularly to discuss progress and any issues.

## **Supporting Documentation**

None.