ITEM   **COVID-19 Recovery Plan**

Report of the Leader

Recommended:

That the Council's COVID-19 Recovery Plan as set out in the Annex to the report be approved.

- This report sets out the council's approach to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The recovery plan provides the strategic framework to guide the work of the council in the coming months as the organisation and the communities we serve adapt to the new normal resulting from the pandemic.

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1   Introduction

1.1   Within the framework of emergency planning there are two key phases: response and recovery. As the response to the COVID-19 pandemic continues, it is important that the recovery phase is both planned for and implemented at the earliest opportunity. The aim of the recovery process is to facilitate a transition to a 'new normal' following the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.2   The purpose of this report is for cabinet to consider the proposed COVID-19 Recovery Plan for the council.

2   Background

2.1   COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

2.2   In March 2020 the Government implemented a lockdown of UK society to delay the spread of infection, including school closures and cessation of non-critical services. As a result the council put in place robust and effective measures as part of the response phase of managing the impacts of COVID-19. The council implemented arrangements for maintaining delivery of services which have been underpinned by council staff and councillors adapting and working differently during this period.

2.3   A significant part of the council's response has been down to the collective and successful approach taken to supporting residents who have been affected as a result of becoming ill or having to self-isolate or shield. Bringing together a large network of partners and community groups, the council has been able to support a community-led approach to supporting those most in need.

2.4 During the course of the last three months the council has been able to help local communities by providing some of the following support:

- Provided £325K of council tax support to more than 2000 households
- Paid out £43M of grants and rate relief to support more than 3,500 businesses
- Suspended parking charges for 89 days to support people picking up supplies
- Provided £21k to 47 community groups to help them delivery food supplies and prescriptions to residents
- Worked with 1,966 volunteers providing vital support to their local communities
- Responded to more than 21,000 customer enquiries
- Answered 1,275 calls to the Test Valley Community Helpline
- Collected 55,847 bins per week (670,164 bins since lockdown began)
- Provided accommodation to 43 households facing homelessness during the pandemic.

2.5 The impact of the pandemic has also meant that the council and its partners have had to work quite differently during the period of the lockdown which has resulted in examples of more remote working and less travel. As the council commences its recovery work there is a clear opportunity to build on the positive changes in working practices and wider opportunities to reduce carbon emissions as part of our recovery.

2.6 Recovery is a complex and long running process that involves many agencies and participants. Recovery is defined as "***the process of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating the community following an emergency. It is a complex social and developmental process rather than just a remedial process.***"

2.7 As a member of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum (LRF), the council is contributing to the wider LRF recovery programme. This is to ensure a consistent and collaborative approach which reflects not only the needs of our most local communities within Test Valley, but also reflects the wider sub-region within which our economy and communities exist. As such the council's approach to recovery will seek to align with the LRF as we deliver a local recovery plan for the council and our communities in Test Valley.

2.8 The nature of the COVID-19 pandemic means that is very difficult to predict all of the implications that will arise from the emergency. While the recovery plan will have a clear focus on restoring services and key infrastructure, it will also be about learning and evaluating what has worked well and what we could do differently in the future. It will seek to take opportunities for change that the transition to a new normal presents and, most importantly it places the recovery of the health and wellbeing of our population and workforce at the forefront of our plans.

3   TVBC COVID-19 Recovery Plan

3.1   The proposed recovery plan for the council can be found in annex one.

3.2   The purpose of the recovery plan is to provide a specific structure for the COVID-19 recovery process in Test Valley. There are a number of key principles that have shaped the development of the plan and will guide its delivery. These are:

•   The safety of our population and workforce are front and centre of the council's recovery work.

•   The council's longstanding place-based and community focused approach provides a sustainable mechanism to recover.

•   Building on what is now the new normal can present opportunities to do things differently and taking an asset-based approach will enable us to do this effectively.

•   Consistent, timely communication is critical

•   Adapt to an ever-changing situation and recognise that recovery will come in multiple phases.

3.3   The recovery plan has the strategic aim of "restoring the economic and social wellbeing of our communities in Test Valley" which will be achieved through the following priorities:

- Economic recovery
- Town centre recovery
- Community recovery
- COVID-19 secure working
- Wellbeing and mental health
- Reopening public spaces
- New ways of working
- Financial recovery
- Green recovery
- Democratic recovery
- Service recovery

3.4   The recovery plan sets out in detail the scope and key objectives of each priority. To assist in the delivery of the recovery plan, the council has established nine recovery workstreams each led by a head of service / senior manager. Each workstream has undertaken an impact assessment to identify the key recovery issues and as a result has developed an action plan.

3.5   The council's officer management team (OMT) meets specifically as a recovery programme group to review and guide the delivery of the action plans which are derived by the strategic priorities set out in the recovery plan. This will enable the timely monitoring and review of the recovery work and will

ensure that the council is responsive to the issues that the COVID-19 pandemic will present throughout the multiple phases of recovery.

3.6   The council's cabinet will act as the recovery sponsors and progress will be reported formally to cabinet on a six monthly basis for the duration of the recovery period.

4   Corporate Objectives and Priorities

4.1   The council's vision is to be an organisation of excellence committed to improving the quality of life for all the people of Test Valley. The nature and impact of the pandemic requires an approach to recovery that not only focuses on the organisation, but on the wellbeing and recovery of all of our communities. The recovery priorities set out in the plan will have an important part to play in mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on the council's strategic ambitions set out within the Corporate Plan 2019-23: Growing our Potential.

5   Consultations/Communications

5.1   The council has actively engaged a range of strategic partners and community partners throughout the pandemic as part of its response and recovery planning. As a member of the HIOW Local Resilience Forum, the council has been able to draw upon advice, planning resources and insights from other members in shaping its approach to recovery.

6   Options

6.1   The options facing the Cabinet are to approve the proposed recovery plan, make amendments or to decide not to approve.

7   Risk Management

7.1   Detailed COVID-19 risk and impact assessments have been carried out for each of the recovery workstreams and every service. The risk assessments have resulted in the development of the detailed recovery action plans and are reviewed on a regular basis as part of the recovery programme.

8   Legal Implications

8.1   There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

9   Resource Implications

9.1   There are no direct resource requirements resulting from this report.

10   Equality Issues

10.1   An EQIA has been undertaken in line with council policy. The EQIA has not identified any potential for discrimination or adverse impact and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.

11   Wards/Communities Affected – All

12 Conclusion

12.1 The nature of the COVID-19 pandemic means that is very difficult to predict all of the implications that will arise from the emergency. While the council's recovery plan will have a clear focus on restoring services and key infrastructure, it will also be about learning and evaluating what has worked well and what we could do differently in the future. It will seek to take opportunities for change that the transition to a new normal presents, and most importantly it places the recovery of the health and wellbeing of our population and workforce at the forefront of our plans.

Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)			
Confidentiality It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	One	File Ref:	N/A
(Portfolio: Leader) Councillor P North			
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Report to:	Cabinet	Date:	15 July 2020