

# Cabinet

19 May 2021



<b>Please Enter Title</b>	<b>Summary Recovery Plan</b>
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To note
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<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Maureen Attewell
<b>Confidential</b>	No
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Housing Economic Development Clean and Safe Environment Financial Sustainability
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Cabinet is asked to:</b>  <b>Note the contents of the Summary Recovery Plan, which will form the basis of a more detailed Action Plan to follow.</b>
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>

## 1. Key issues

- 1.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has presented the biggest challenge this Council has ever faced.
- 1.2 Following the national response to the outbreak of coronavirus and the introduction of the Government's first national lockdown, Spelthorne had to provide a rapid response to protect those at most risk within our communities.
- 1.3 As the pandemic progressed, the work of the Council increased significantly, with the authority given additional responsibilities to support vulnerable people, protect public health, enforce new regulations, and support businesses, including overseeing the distribution of a range of government grants.
- 1.4 A report on the emergency response was taken to Full Council on 21 May 2020. Councillors have since received regular briefings on work undertaken by the Council in response to the pandemic and a number of infographics have been released to outline the immense response provided by this authority over the last 14 months. The latest of these can be found in **Appendix 1**.

- 1.5 It should be noted that some services remain under considerable pressure as a result of having to continue distributing grants to businesses and responding to new requirements to prevent the spread of COVID-19, e.g. Environmental Health's involvement in test and trace work.
- 1.6 Although our initial work was focused primarily on responding to the immediate and developing threats posed by COVID-19, the Council has also been planning and introducing a range of measures to assist in the borough's recovery, as the Government implements its roadmap out of the latest lockdown. This work can be categorised into two main elements:
- (a) The Council's own organisational recovery programme, including plans to return to new 'normal' modes of operation, with more staff returning to Knowle Green and other operational sites, the introduction of more 'hybrid' working arrangements and returning to on-site Council and Committee meetings.
  - (b) The development of a wider-borough recovery plan, outlining the measures the Council will be taking to assist our communities (both residential and business) to recover from the effects of the pandemic.

The attached Summary Recovery Plan (**Appendix 2**) ('the Plan') focusses on how the Council will lead and assist with the wider-borough recovery under five key areas:

- (a) Supporting Community Recovery
  - (b) Supporting Economic Recovery
  - (c) Supporting Green Recovery
  - (d) Keeping People Informed, and
  - (e) Delivering Key Services.
- 1.7 Under each of these areas the Plan outlines a range of key issues which must be tackled and the core principles and processes the Council will be pursuing to address these matters.
- 1.8 A comprehensive Action Plan is in development, which will accompany and build on the Plan. This is nearing completion and will be published shortly. It will list a range of key tasks to deliver each action, with target dates and desired outcomes.
- 1.9 It is important to note that the Plan and associated Action Plan will be 'live' documents, which will need to be adapted to take into account any future changes in the Government's recovery roadmap, any new responsibilities given to the Council and any new outbreaks of the virus which may arise.
- 1.10 Although the Plan is presented for Cabinet to note at this stage, it is proposed that future progress with the Plan will be reported to the new Policy and Resources Committee. Other committees may also wish to review relevant elements of the Plan and input into any future changes.

## **2. Options analysis and proposal**

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to note the contents of the attached Summary Recovery Plan, which has been produced following extensive work with Portfolio Holders, in particular the Deputy Leader with responsibility for Community Wellbeing.

2.2 Councillors will have an opportunity to input into the future development of the Plan through the new Committee system as outlined above.

### **3. Financial implications**

3.1 During the pandemic, significant additional expenditure has been incurred by the Council. This has included costs associated with supporting vulnerable residents, putting in place COVID-19 safe measures for service delivery, moving to home working and providing additional support to homeless residents.

3.2 The Council, like most organisations, has been significantly impacted financially by the COVID-19 pandemic and there remain ongoing risks to the Council's income streams, as outlined in **Appendix 3**. The full extent of these impacts will not become clear until at least the autumn, when we will better understand the impacts on our residents and businesses of elements such as the national furlough scheme ending, landlord evictions resuming and court debt recovery processes getting back up to speed.

3.3 Whilst Spelthorne has received a range of financial support from the Government to cover some of the costs of this additional work and loss of income, this does not fully cover the expenditure incurred by this authority. The Council previously agreed the allocation of reserves to cover any unrecoverable net costs associated with the pandemic. In implementing and further developing our recovery plans it will be important for the Council to continue to monitor and evaluate the financial impacts on the authority and, if necessary, draw on these reserves to support the essential work required.

3.4 There is strong and clear linkage between pursuing an effective economic development recovery plan for the Borough and aiding the recovery of the Borough Council's finances, as if we help our local businesses to prosper and employ residents, then the Council's own income streams, in particular business rates and council tax, will recover more quickly.

### **4. Other considerations**

4.1 Equality and diversity issues will need to be carefully considered in delivering each element of the plan to ensure that we can reach vulnerable people from all sections of our communities.

4.2 Working with faith groups, the voluntary sector and other key stakeholders, as outlined in the Plan, will help to ensure that we can reach all those most in need.

### **5. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications**

5.1 The Summary Recovery Plan makes specific reference to actions aimed at delivering a Green Recovery, thus assisting in mitigating climate change.

### **6. Timetable for implementation**

6.1 A number of actions within the Summary Recovery Plan are already in progress. The detailed Action Plan to accompany this document is well into development and will be published shortly.

6.2 Any future updates to the Plan/Action Plan will be provided to the Policy and Resources Committee once this is in operation.

**Background papers:**

None

**Appendices:**

**APPENDIX 1** – Infographic outlining the response from the Borough Council to the COVID-19 pandemic (up to February 2021)

**APPENDIX 2** – Summary Recovery Plan

**APPENDIX 3** – Risks to Council income streams