

Corporate Policy and Resources

Committee

5 July 2021



Title	Recovery Action Plan
Purpose of the report	To note
Report Author	Lee O'Neil, Deputy Chief Executive Sandy Muirhead, Group Head for Commissioning & Transformation
Ward(s) Affected	All Wards
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	
Corporate Priority	Housing Economic Development Clean and Safe Environment Financial Sustainability
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: Note the contents of the report
Reason for Recommendation	Not applicable

1. Key issues

- 1.1 The COVID-19 pandemic has presented the biggest challenge this Council has ever faced. 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.1 A report on the emergency response was taken to Full Council on 21 May 2020 and throughout the pandemic Councillors received regular briefings on the high volume of work undertaken by the Council, as demonstrated by the infographic shown in **Appendix 1**. Some services continue to be under considerable pressure responding to the effects of the pandemic and preventing the spread of COVID-19.

1.2 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 both the Council's organisational recovery and the recovery of the wider borough as a whole, as the Government implements its roadmap out of the latest lockdown. On 19 May 2021 the Cabinet received a report on the Council's Summary Recovery Plan ('the SR Plan') which outlined the measures the Council would be taking to assist our communities (both residential and business) to recover from the effects of the pandemic. This Plan (see **Appendix 2**) 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.

1.3 A comprehensive Action Plan document ('the Action Plan'), attached as **Appendix 3**, has now been developed to accompany and build on the SR Plan. This outlines a range of key tasks to deliver each action, with target dates and desired outcomes.

1.4 Both the SR 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.

2. Options analysis and proposal

2.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents of the Action Plan.

2.2 Progress on the Action Plan will be reported to the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee (CPRC) at future meetings.

2.3 Elements of the Action Plan are clearly relevant to other committees (e.g. progress on Economic Recovery will be of interest to the Economic Development Committee). In order to give Councillors on those committees the opportunity to comment and input into the future development of the SR Plan/Action Plan, lead officers have been asked to give regular updates to their respective committees and any comments/suggested changes will then be reported to the CPRC.

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 4**. 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 A number of actions within the Action Plan are already in progress or have been completed. These are outlined in the document.

5. Equality and Diversity

- 5.1 Equality and diversity issues will need to be carefully considered in delivering each element of the Action Plan to ensure that we can reach vulnerable people from all sections of our communities.
- 5.2 Working with faith groups, the voluntary sector and other key stakeholders, as outlined in the Action Plan, will help to ensure that we can reach all those most in need.

6. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 The Action Plan make specific reference to actions aimed at delivering a Green Recovery, thus assisting in mitigating climate change.

7. Timetable for implementation

- 7.1 Work delivering aspects of the Action Plan are already in progress and target dates for the tasks listed are outlined in the document.

Background papers:

There are 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 – Action Plan

APPENDIX 4 - Risks to Council income streams