

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	15 July 2020
Subject:	COVID-19: Gloucester City Recovery Planning		
Report Of:	Jonathan Lund, Corporate Director		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
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Appendices:	A. Economic Recovery Plan		
	B. Housing Recovery Plan		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This Report seeks to introduce the Council's approach to recovery planning as a consequence of the COVID-19 Pandemic, outline the eight workstreams that are being developed and implemented and set out the lead Cabinet Members involved in each workstream and the lead officer supporting each workstream.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to **RESOLVE** that the report be noted and endorsed, to consider the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 June 2020 and to consider the action plans supporting each workstream as they become available.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The risks arising from the prevalence of the COVID-19 Virus and the national and international response to managing those risks have had a major impact on our health and our social, economic, family and community lives. As the lockdown, introduced in late March 2020, is eased and we begin to take steps to live alongside and mitigate the risks of the virus, public effort is shifting from responding to the challenges to planning the recovery.
- 3.2 Gloucester City Council has identified the need to focus in particular on eight aspects of the recovery. In terms of scale, scope and urgency each aspect will differ as will the range of partners and stakeholders that the City Council will engage with. The eight workstreams are:-

- 1) **Economic Recovery and Growth** (supporting the City and its economy out of lockdown and into safe, sustainable economic growth)
- 2) **Visitors and Cultural Recovery** (planning how to support the City's visitor economy to grow back and the role that festivals, events and other cultural activity can play in helping the City's wider recovery).
- 3) [Asset Based] **Community Development** (celebrating, protecting and building on the community development advances which have been achieved during the emergency, sustaining community safety and co-ordinating anything that ought to be stood down, paying particular attention to the needs of those who have been supported to have access to food)
- 4) **Housing Recovery** (ensuring a managed transition from the emergency response to sustainable/supported placements into housing stock for the homeless and support to help assist the recovery of the local housing market, so that the Council's targets for the supply of affordable homes are met or exceeded).
- 5) **Environmental/Climate Recovery** (developing plans which preserve, sustain and advance the positive environmental impact of the emergency and reduce any harmful consequences)
- 6) **City Council Service Recovery** (working with staff, contractors and partners to transition from lockdown in ways which keep the public and staff safe and restores the full range of public services in a sustainable way, preserving the operational and cultural benefits which emerged during the emergency)
- 7) **Democratic Governance** (the restoration of democratic governance in a safe and sustainable way)
- 8) **City Council Financial Recovery** (plans to identify, document and respond to the impact of the emergency on the City Council's finances and to develop plans and maximise opportunities to mitigate the consequences)

3.3 Work is now underway to develop pragmatic Action Plans to map out the objectives and outcomes, and deliver the work necessary to support the City's recovery.

3.4 To help shape this work the City Council's approach to recovery is being based around **four Rs**

- **Return** – what did we stop doing that we need to get back to doing
- **Retain** – what is it we have started and will be useful to continue
- **Resist** – what did we used to do that we don't want to do now
- **Reimagine** – what ideas can we pursue that will help us to get back better.

At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 June it was recommended that a **5th R – Resilience** should be added to recognise the need for resilience to be built into the recovery planning and to prepare for the possibility of future waves of the Coronavirus.

3.5 The Workstreams

- 3.6 **Economic Recovery and Growth.** (Cabinet Lead for Economic Recovery & Growth: Cllr Dawn Melvin and Officer Lead Head of Place: Ian Edwards) A Task Force has been established and its first meeting was held on 17 June 2020. Work has been divided into 4 phases (a response phase (March-June) underway since the start of the pandemic; a pre-recovery phase (June-July) tackling the pragmatic and tactical needs of the City as businesses, shops and spaces reopen; a Recovery phase (from July) shaping how the city is marketed, the evening economy and café culture and supporting businesses to adapt; and a final phase looking at transformation and renewal feeding into the work of the City Centre Commission). This workstream will also work alongside a developing network of county-wide and sector specific groups.
- 3.7 **Visitors and Cultural Recovery** (Cabinet Lead for Culture and Leisure: Cllr Steve Morgan and Officer Lead Head of Culture: Philip Walker). The City's Strategic Events Partnership will refocus and broaden its membership to plan how to support the City's visitor economy to grow back and the role that festivals, events and other cultural activity can play in helping the City's wider recovery. The first meeting took place on 11 June 2020.
- 3.8 [Asset Based] **Community Development.** (Cabinet Lead for Neighbourhoods and Communities; Cllr Jennie Watkins and Officer Lead Corporate Director Anne Brinkhoff) Work is already underway to define the scope of this workstream and ask what new work which has been created as part of the response needs to be sustained, what other new initiatives or investments are needed, what can we stop doing or do differently in the future, what's the future role of the Gloucestershire Community Help Hub and what are the ongoing food needs of the community.
- 3.9 **Housing Recovery** (Cabinet Leads for Neighbourhoods and Communities and Planning and Housing Strategy (Cllrs Jennie Watkins and Andrew Gravells) and Officer Lead for Communities Ruth Saunders). This workstream is developing three recovery phases. The short-term focus will be to find immediate solutions to support those people temporarily housed in hotels and to respond to the risk of increased homelessness when the current "no evictions" period ends. The medium term will look to develop a new "business as usual" looking at the existing stock (social and private), prevention and assessment, pathways to permanent housing and new supply. The long term will focus on strategic planning for the long term: increasing supply, maximising the effectiveness of the existing stock and reducing homelessness and rough sleeping.
- 3.10 **Environmental/Climate Recovery** (Cabinet Lead for Environment: Cllr Richard Cook and Officer Lead City Climate Change & Environment Manager Meyrick Brentnall). This workstream is being delivered on a county-wide basis through a group supported by the Local Nature Partnership to develop cross-boundary proposals to preserve, sustain and advance the positive environmental impact of the emergency and reduce the harmful consequences. The LNP brings in a range of partner organisations like the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and has established links to the LEP. The Group's first meeting was on Wednesday 4 June 2020.

- 3.11 **City Council Service Recovery** (Cabinet Lead for Performance and Resources Cllr Hannah Norman and Officer Lead Corporate Director Jonathan Lund). A City Council Services Recovery Group comprised of Service Managers and Team Leaders from Place, Culture, Community and Policy and Resources, plus HR, H&S and County Assets is developing plans and procedures to transition from lockdown in ways which keep the public and staff safe and restores the full range of public services in a sustainable way, preserving the operational and cultural benefits which emerged during the emergency. Issues likely to include:
- ✓ Reopening/communications/staff engagement
 - ✓ Space rationing/social distancing
 - ✓ Cleaning and hygiene
 - ✓ PPE
 - ✓ Testing and vaccination
 - ✓ Face-to-face public services
 - ✓ Working hours and locations
 - ✓ Extended agile working (outstations)
 - ✓ Preserved service changes (e.g. triage)
 - ✓ Beneficial cultural changes (e.g. agile home working)
 - ✓ Potential phased return or waves of high/low level lockdown
 - ✓ Review Pandemic Emergency Plan
- 3.12 A service mapping exercise to document which services and activities have been suspended or reduced, which have continued, and which have seen an increase in demand has been completed and Risk Assessment are being undertaken for any activity or service before it returns. These Risk Assessments are being done in consultation with staff and unions and are being published. In addition, each external service partner has been tasked with developing and submitting recovery plans that reflect and complement the City's Service Recovery Plan.
- 3.13 **Democratic Governance** (Cabinet Lead for Performance and Resources; Cllr Hannah Norman and Policy and Governance Manager Tanya Davies). A City Council Democratic Governance Group comprised of Democratic Services, IT and law officers is co-ordinating the restoration of democratic governance in a safe and sustainable way, sharing information, approaches and feedback with colleagues across the County.
- 3.14 **Financial Recovery** (Cabinet Lead for Performance and Resources: Cllr Hannah Norman) and Head of Policy and Resources Jon Topping A City Council Financial Recovery Group comprised of Head of Service and Service Managers from Place, Culture, Community and Policy and Resources will identify year-end financial implications, assess potential medium to long term impact on income and expenditure, identify and review options to meet the financial implications and develop strategies to close the budget gap in year and through the Money Plan.
- 3.15 Cabinet is asked to note that all of the plans outlined above are still being scoped, discussed and developed and may change to meet changed circumstances

including emerging government guidance, lockdown regulations and the dynamic needs of the City.

- 3.16 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has resolved to consider each of the recovery workstreams and is likely to take two workstreams at each of its upcoming meetings. At its meeting held on 6 July 2020 the O&S Committee received updates in respect of the Economic Recovery and Growth workstream (Appendix A) and the Housing and Homelessness workstream (Appendix B). The emerging workplans for each workstream are attached to this report as Appendix A and Appendix B

4.0 Social Value Considerations

- 4.1 The Council's commitment to social value will be a material consideration in all of the recovery plans and will be a major focus in the Communities Workstream

5.0 Environmental Implications

- 5.1 The Council's commitment to the environment will be a material consideration in all of the recovery plans and will be a major focus in the Environment and Climate Action Workstream

6.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 None

7.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 7.1 The recommendations seek to ask the Cabinet to note the scope of the City Council's Recovery Plans and the emerging detail.

8.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 8.1 Following endorsement of the scope of the recovery plans work will be completed on the action plans for each workstream.

9.0 Financial Implications

- 9.1 The Financial Recovery Workstream will focus on the financial implications. Consideration is being given to how to effectively apply any funding made available to assist recovery. Councillors will be aware that the City Council has access to £115,000 of economic recovery funding made available by Government (but subject to restrictions and criteria)

10.0 Legal Implications

- 10.1 None arising from this report

11.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 11.1 A Recovery Risk Register is being developed but is not yet available

