CABINET

Thursday, 22nd October 2020

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

THE COUNCILS RECOVERY & RESET PLAN ARISING FROM COVID-19

Non-Confidential

1. PURPOSE

1.1.   The purpose of the report is to: -

- Reflect on the Council's emergency response to the pandemic, noting the continuation of key front-line services
- Outline the Council's proposed approach to recovery and reset in response to the pandemic
- Share the Programme structure, including governance and scrutiny arrangements as well as describing the approach, methodology and resourcing
- Detail the programme structure and headline key projects with initial scoping of key work-streams

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are asked to: -

2.1.   Approve the proposed **Recovery and Reset framework** detailed in the report and presented in annex one and four.

2.2.   **Acknowledge the Council's continuation of critical services**, arising from the pandemic, noting the detail captured in section 7.1 & 7.2 and further illustrated at annex three.

2.3.   Establish with the Leader, members of Cabinet and Scrutiny Chairs, a **Recovery and Reset meeting** to monitor, scrutinise and support the delivery of the programme with formal recommendations back to Cabinet on progress. Draft terms of reference are set out at annex two.

2.4.   Note that the Recovery and Reset Programme has been **shared with the Council's Trade Union Liaison Group (TULG)** and this will now be a standing agenda item to ensure transparency with the service review process and projects identified.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1. The Pandemic remains a significant challenge to Councils and the Prime Minister, following an impromptu attendance at a Council Leaders & Chief Executives briefing, praised Local Authorities for their continued efforts. Whilst the National Lockdown, imposed on the 23rd March has been eased, local lock downs and significant national restrictions continue, with the Prime Minister warning of a further sanctions if infections continue to rise.

3.2. Continuing to support vulnerable people, deliver critical front line services and ensure our ability to scale-up our response to COVID19 should the Staffordshire Resilience Forum escalate to emergency levels; our Recovery and Reset plans need to be adaptable and flexible so we can manage expectations and pressures on the organisation.

3.3. This report has been informed by a range of research (see section 7) and sets out a Recovery and Reset Strategic Framework. It is proposed that within the programme there will be 8 projects[1], each with work-stream leads, which will report into a Programme Delivery Group, accountable to the Executive Leadership Team and ultimately Cabinet. Reflecting comprehensive stakeholder and enhanced scrutiny arrangements.

3.4. Each of the projects (summarised at Annex Four in the report) details the scope, objectives, and key activities - clearly key drivers will be to deliver

- financial sustainability, contributing to reducing the Councils deficit on its general fund
- accelerated digital and e-enabled services
- support cohesive and resilient communities through the third sector and 'anchor organisations'
- & role model transparent democratic structures that drive community leadership, connectivity and help navigate complex structures

3.5. One of the 8 projects is around service re-design, seeking to develop and implement an approach across the organisation to identify cost savings as well as income generation opportunities. This Service review methodology has been developed using quality management techniques' and the service review template appended to the report will check and challenge all the functions to ensure a "one council approach" and identify opportunities and impacts to improve financial and service efficiency.

3.6. The Programme and Projects within it will have regard for effective change/cultural management techniques to ensure the *Stakeholder engagement Strategy* is developed to incorporate an interactive communication plan, citizen engagement strategy and regard to relevant employment consultation where applicable.

3.7. Equally the Leader and Portfolio Holders within Cabinet together with the Executive are committed to *detailed community & equality impact assessments* as all project options

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[1] 1**. Financial management & Commerciality** 2. SMART working 3.**Building Requirements;**   4.Front Reception modelling and tailored customer service offer 5.**Organisational Wide Service Re-design Programme** 6.Third Sector & Vulnerability Strategy 7. **Economy, Business and Regeneration** 8.Heritage

and appraisals are considered to ensure this is part of the decision making; and is standard practice for Tamworth Borough Council in any event.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1.   The Council continues to scrutinise and approve its 3-year Medium Term Financial Strategy, this reflects the detailed assumptions and implications arising from COVID19. Even before the Pandemic, future arrangements for Local Government Financing were uncertain due to reforms being deferred (including a move to 75% Business rates retention and the Fairer Funding Review). On the 24/09/20 the Chancellor set out the winter economy plan as part of the emergency budget arrangements in response to the Pandemic.

4.2.   The extra-ordinary events surrounding the Pandemic follows a decade of austerity as well as considerable financial strain and pressures already on Councils. The financial context for Recovery and Reset will mean continued financial uncertainty, rising citizen expectations and an inevitable pressure on services designed to support vulnerable people and households. It is therefore vital that there is clarity and transparency around the levels of services likely to be affordable.

4.3.   Government has allocated Tamworth additional COVID funding of £0.93m, like others Tamworth continues to lobby for additional support in relation to its income and expenditure pressures. No-one can know, at this stage, the full extent of the financial impact of COVID; especially as *local lock downs* and *interventions* continue to be a significant threat. The latest financial projections identify a **shortfall in the General Fund** of £6.9m over 5 years, forecast to increase to **£8m** (based on the central worst case scenario around COVID) and therefore savings are required of **c£2m p.a. commencing immediately**. The Recovery and Reset programme is designed to accelerate and maximise income and savings to the Council to ensure it remains *fit for the future.*

4.4.   At this stage it is difficult to predict overall savings from the Recovery and Reset Programme, however the programme has been informed by an exercise designed to look at where there is an opportunity for efficiency. Inevitably the service design options, and decisions around them, will determine the level of savings. The drivers will be on balancing financial sustainability with clarity and management of the Council's service offer.

5. LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS

5.1.   Section 1 of the Localism Act affords the council flexibilities and freedoms to deliver services for the benefit of its citizens. The Coronavirus Act 2020 and associated regulations are also extremely relevant, and has (and will continue to) inform plans outlined in this report.

5.2.   Each of the projects detailed in the Recovery Programme will have their own legal and risk map detailed and this will be reported as part of the usual decision making process. Specific to the programme itself, the following risks have been considered and it is anticipated that this will be kept under review: -

Risk	Mitigation	Risk Level
A second wave of Coronavirus &/or spike in infections in Tamworth leading to restrictions and interventions. This would set back recovery and delay the programme	SCC are the lead authority for monitoring infection rates and cases per 100,000. Our local Environmental Health team support this process and the Council is pro-active in its management of Covid-secure arrangements. Latest statistics' can be seen by clicking on the link	High
Limited capacity to deliver the programme	The Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods has been given additional duties to lead the delivery of the Councils COVID19 transformation agenda as detailed in this report A programme resourcing plan has been considered by the Executive Leadership Team and proportionate resources agreed which will remain under review. This has included the procurement of external and specialist programme management resources to map the interdependencies and requirements on support functions as the plan is progressed Where individual projects require further resourcing, this will be part of the PID and funding identified. Tamworth was allocated £0.93m in COVID19 funding from Government and this can be used where appropriate along with funding streams such as the Transformation Reserve	Medium
Significant resistance to change as the transformation agenda is progressed	The management of change will be integral to the Programme management with a clear communication plan, transparency of outcome and consultation and engagement in service review processes	High
Continued pressures on the Councils finances seeing a greater deficit on the MTFP	This is subject to rigorous stress testing and is the subject of detailed and separate reporting to members	High
Citizen challenge, disappointment, and differing expectations in relation to the councils' service offer going forward	The financial challenges are well documented, and the Council will seek to balance this with it wider corporate social responsibility vis service delivery. It is inevitable that front line service will be impacted. Where this is the case there will be project specific consultation and engagement, along with a **detailed community impact assessment** to inform political scrutiny and decision making.	High
Accelerated Government agenda around Devolution and	The Council's Executive and Cabinet are following this closely and await the	Low

progressing of Unitary Authorities	Governments imminent white paper. At this stage there is no proposal and Tamworth, will collaborate with other Staffordshire districts CEXs to respond to the proposals as they emerge	
Changing landscape which demands a programme change	This is inevitable and with a robust programme framework it is capable of being adapted to suit changing and demanding circumstances	High

6. EQUALITY & HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Tailoring services to ensure equality of service access is fundamental to the Councils policy in this area. As each project is progressed it is accepted practice that a full community and equality impact assessment will be completed.

6.2. There are no direct human resource implications arising from the report. However, the Programme, if approved, will result in the need for a Change Management Strategy reflecting on the comprehensive service review timetable for each of the councils' core services. The report has therefore been presented to the Trade Union Liaison Group, and the Head of Paid Service has confirmed to them that Recovery and Reset planning will be a standing agenda item and staff will be properly consulted where service options are being considered

7. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

Reflect on the Councils emergency response to the pandemic, noting the continuation of critical front-line services

7.1. Importantly, the COVID-19 emergency, tested the Council's ability to move at pace, prioritise its service delivery and demonstrate its core values & purpose. Successfully the Council was able to: -

- Continued the **delivery of all critical front line services.** Specifically bin management, cleaning and grounds maintenance were continued and Street Scene are commended for their uninterrupted service delivery to Tamworth and its residents'

- **Increase residents' resilience** and access to information through empowering and working with 'anchor' and third sector organisations to support our most vulnerable

- **Utilise Council resources effectively**, with a significant shift to digital working solutions as well as the proactive and dynamic management of demand through deployment and combinations of home and agile working

- Re-enforce **Tamworth Communities offer** through securing an **intelligence led** and positive data sharing platform with major stakeholders to support those extremely &/or clinically vulnerable

- Continue to **improve front line service delivery** by delivering on previously agreed corporate projects such as CCTV shared service with the WMCA; de-mobilisation and mobilisation of multi-million pound repairs contract(s); implement significant policy changes, including the Councils allocation policy.

- Support our most **vulnerable** through **preventing homelessness and helping people access suitable housing** amidst major Government initiatives including the "every-one" in campaign, whilst also pausing non-essential moves

7.2. When the Government initiated the lock-down in March 2020, the Council's response has been significant and the diagram at annex three evidences the continuation of services, in summary achieving: -

People	Established COVID19 emergency response(s) via Staffordshire Resilience Forum with CMT holding daily &/or weekly virtual meetings with partners (SRF,SCC, SCG, VCSE)
	Conducted external assessment and review of vulnerability to support recovery planning going forward
	Established COVID19 emergency response CMT with daily &/or weekly virtual meetings with partners (SRF,SCC, SCG, VCSE)
	Established a 'vulnerability' task and finish group supporting those extremely and clinically vulnerable deploying a range of resources for wellbeing checks
	2922 identified as ECV, supported through the Councils Partnership arrangements with anchor organisations
	Council investment in anchor organisations to support community resilience and local volunteering
	Weekly calls to over 3000 households, identified with support requirements - via VCSE and the council's own teams
	Partnership support and bid for c£100k of lottery funding to tackle social isolation & support befriending
	>£220k of small, local grants continued to be administered to businesses in line with councils commissioning framework
	Improved customer service through moving the repairs call centre in-house
	Managed all Council social media and internet traffic with up-to-date COVID information achieving over 330,000 page views in the first quarter of the year

	Accelerated digital agenda by moving to virtual viewings, contactless signup and accelerated availability on online e-application forms for housing solutions
Place	**Instigated a small cross-party working group to 'champion' and shape the future offer of heritage within Tamworth** Payment of c£11.5m in local business grants Uninterrupted service continuation at Street Scene for bins collection, litter removal, tree services & grounds maintenance Our shared waste collection service has been maintained throughout the pandemic Increased capacity within burial services Full compliance with public open space guidance to ensure COVID Secure practices around social distancing Re-opened town centre effectively with stringent Covid-secure arrangements Between April-August processed 1300 new benefit claims compared to 500 typically received in the same period Processed 18000 change of benefit circumstances forms compared to 5000 typically received for the same period £387k hardship payments allocated to 2600 cases in the community with £180k in the process of being awarded Council Tax & rental (HRA) income exceeds benchmarking estimates for under recovery despite a doubling of those households in receipt of Universal credit from 4000 to over 8000 Submission of a compliant and ambitious Future High Street Bid on time
Organisation	Continued with excellent governance arrangements through member investment in laptops, training on virtual platforms and adopted informal and formal decision-making structures without delay Continue to hold informal twice weekly Cabinet briefings & remote Council Meetings introduced at pace to ensure effective political decision making Continued to deliver all front-line services with minimal interruption Deployed all employees in an agile way to maximise service delivery around **clean and green** priorities Moved over 70% (>200 based in Marmion) employees to work from home within hours of lock down being announced

	Flexible, dynamic and excellent ICT team worked effectively and hard to put in place infrastructure and support multiple connectivity arrangements including launch of TEAMS as the Council's Virtual platform
	Sickness & absence levels below usual levels as well as delivering 100% payroll electronically
	Street Scene, cleaning, repairs and investment arrangements continued
	Staff Survey conducted July - 92% either satisfied or very satisfied with WFH environment and 94% either satisfied or very satisfied with CMT communications
	Statement of Accounts produced on time and external sign off being progressed in line with previously agreed timescales.
	Budget Management continuing uninterrupted in line with budget setting processes and in line with Qtr1 monitoring
	Corporate Projects continued to be delivered including CCTV shared service with the WMCA; de-mobilisation and mobilisation of multi-million-pound contracts, timely submission of the Future High Street Fund bid as well as key policy developments such as Allocations Policy
	Exceptional support from the shared Health and Safety service which provided immediate advice, guidance and interpretation so that all services and staff remained fully Covid compliant

7.3. The Covid-19 outbreak has required a rapid response to an unprecedented situation, and this has been significant and challenging. In conjunction with the Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF), and supported by the Civil Contingencies Unit (CCU), a desk-top exercise is currently underway to understand what went well and what learning, if any, can be used to improve future emergency and incident responses. Details of this will be shared with Cabinet at a later date and will feed into recovery plans as they develop and evolve given the dynamic nature of the Pandemic and continued uncertainty and risks.

Outline the Councils proposed approach to recovery and reset in response to the pandemic

7.4. As we build on Tamworth's achievements and start to look to horizons and opportunities beyond the immediate crisis it is important to reflect on the challenges. A strategic analysis has informed the development of a single and coherent recovery plan that seeks to define organisational thread, synergy and how all work-streams fit together to ensure a 'strategic fit' with Tamworth own ambitions.

Challenges	
Political	▪ Brexit 2020/Transition arrangements ▪ Devolution White Paper (Autumn 2020 – now anticipated 2021) ▪ Digital Democracy ▪ Fluid and Continued COVID19 risks and restrictions

Economical	• Comprehensive Spending Review October which is likely to impact on public sector spending • Delays to the Fairer Funding Review (2021); retention of business rates (2023) and changes to the financing of New Homes Bonus means there is continued uncertainty around councils subsidy and financing arrangements • Tamworth MTFS reported position with general fund - deficit increasing from £6.9m to £9m over 5 years – reduced to c£8m based on moratorium on non-essential spending, review expenditure and £0.93m COVID LA allocation • Tamworth central case scenario is £1.1m, could rise to more than £7m under worst case assumptions • Savings of c£2m required annually • Furlough Scheme currently set to end October 2020 potentially leading to financial hardship
Social	• Risk of a Second Wave &/or local interventions and lock downs as restrictions are updated in response to infection rates • Support for Vulnerable, particularly those extremely &/or clinically shielding • Managing citizen and stakeholder expectations as resources are stretched • Compliance with Government restrictions around social distancing, shielding, hygiene and testing
Technical	• COVID19 guidance on numerous policy areas is game changing – income recovery (ban on evictions); homelessness regulations and burials
Legal	• Coronavirus Act 2020 and associated regulations remain in force with a range of commencement arrangements • Employment legislation as organisational development and review is initiated
Environmental	• Accelerated climate change opportunities around carbon deals and greener spaces

7.5.   The plan has three SMARTER[2] sections as below, the latter two detailed in full at Annex four:-

- **Restart** – getting services disrupted by COVID19 back up and running where it is safe and efficient to do so
- **Recovery** – re-alignment of corporate projects to focus on an intelligent led and sustainable programme
- **Re-Set** – cross cutting and integral themes to the delivery, improvement, and socio-economic wellbeing of our communities

7.6.   The plan draws on research and comparative reports from others which includes evidence and feedback from national reports, surveys and government guidance. Reference has been made to

- Governments Next Chapter Recovery Strategy
- LGA guidance documents covering a range of Recovery & Reset areas
- District Council Network briefings
- LGA's range of documents including *The long reach of COVID* and Councillor and Opposition guidance

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[2] Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed, Evaluated and Reviewed

- LEPs (GBSLEP and SoT & Staffordshire LEP) – Getting Building Funding and devolution opportunities
- SCC recovery and reset agenda and core principles
- Other local council reports on COVID response' and preparations'
- Reference to feedback during the Pandemic captured through the usual customer engagement channels

7.7. The Programme seeks to align existing corporate projects to the new Recovery and Reset Plan, avoiding duplication and also ensuring our **"one council approach"** so all the Councils resources are focused on its core aims, notably striving for

- Transparent democratic structures that support engagement and enables members to act as **community navigators** and leaders
- Financial **sustainability**
- **Place based** and intelligence led in line with the Tamworth Community Offer
- **Digital by default** with acceleration of agile and dynamic working
- Supports community **cohesion, resilience, and independence**

Share the Programme structure, including member governance and scrutiny arrangements as well as describing the approach, methodology and timescales

7.8. Part of the resourcing plan includes for the procurement of external programme management. It is anticipated that suitably qualified specialist(s) will be engaged following Cabinets consideration of the proposals on 22nd October. By mid-December it is anticipated a full programme including Gantt chart (detailed route map), resource interdependencies and detail in annex four will be mapped; with service reviews identified for year one having commenced.

7.9. Programme Management Support is being commissioned on the basis of commonly accepted PRINCE2 concepts and will include

- PID(s) and individual resourcing documentation for each project
- Scoped and agreed work streams with clear work packages
- Check point reports with documented decision making to ELT
- Highlight reports with standard BRAG status for scrutiny and cabinet reporting
- PIR and continual learning; including upskilling of in-house teams
- Cross fertilisation with communication planning & citizen engagement strategy

7.10. The Programme structure is illustrated at annex one. Essentially Work-Stream Leads will be supported by internal and external programme and project resources and progress will be overseen by the Programme Delivery Group who will provide highlight and decision reports for Executive leadership team. Where necessary ELT will then determine, using feedback from Scrutiny and relevant stakeholder engagement items to be referred to Cabinet for formal decision and adoption.

7.11. The delivery of the Restart, Recovery and Reset Programme for **Year One** is summarised below, further details are shown at annex four. Progress will be monitored via the Programme Delivery Group and regular highlight reports shared with Scrutiny and Cabinet as part of the Councils performance management framework.

Restart
getting services disrupted by COVID19 back up and running where is safe and efficient to do so
	✓ To support SCC COVID-19 **Local outbreak planning** including TBCs arrangements for local Test and Trace Arrangements
	✓ **Re-start services safely** and efficiently seeking to keep people safe, this includes:-
	
	   o Community Wardens
	   o Sheltered
	   o Castle Toilets
	   o Supported Housing
	   o Court possession and recovery sanctions for non-payment of council debt
	   o Car Parking Arrangements
	   o PSL schemes
	
	✓ Work with all partners to **continue to open up the Town centre** – responding to latest government restrictions and arrangements
	✓ **Review emergency and incident response** arising from COVID19 to inform future recovery planning

Recovery *re-alignment of existing corporate projects to focus on a demand led and sustainable programme* *Existing Corporate projects will now be incorporated into these areas* *See Annex Four for more details*	1. **Financial Management & Commerciality** - Accelerated financial review including exploration of HRA cross subsidy and ban on non-essential spending 2. **Building Requirements** - Assessment of utilisation of Marmion House & the Councils other asset and building requirements 3. **Review of Front Reception service** including the customer service offer 4. Develop the Councils Organisational Strategy including exploration of **SMART working** for designated roles 5. An **organisational wide Service Redesign** and review programme seeking to identify short, medium term efficiencies, savings and income generation opportunities 6. **Review of Third Sector Support** and Vulnerability Strategy maximising opportunities for 'anchor organisations' 7. **Economy, Business and Regeneration** - supporting the development of Tamworth now and in the future 8. **Heritage Assets** – reviewing the onward service offer following decisions taken 2020 in relation to the Assembly rooms & Castle - specifically to scope what is meant by the term heritage asset, to undertake a review of the current heritage offer within Tamworth to establish a base line/inventory of all heritage assets (including buildings, land and collection) and then propose an effective economical business (operational, commercial and financial) model which will protect Tamworth's heritage for future generations.
Reset *cross cutting and integral*	✓ Digital by Default acceleration ✓ Climate Change and delivering on Carbon targets

themes to the delivery, improvement, and socio-economic wellbeing of our communities	✓ Affordable Housing Development – Build Back Better ✓ Devolution Planning & response to white paper

7.12. In relation to the **proposed service reviews** – the methodology proposed combines a hybrid of quality management techniques such as six sigma, vanguard and best value. The proposed template seeks to capture service data (shown at Annex five). Applying VFM principles the review will:-

o Challenge what is provided on the basis of whether it is statutory or not,
o Detail how the service is currently delivered and how performance compares
o Describe whether there are alternative options that save &/or generate income to the Council
o Explain and detail community impact of service re-engineering and transformation if being proposed

7.13. During the Pandemic, the LGA have produced a range of papers on the role of elected members, including Councillor guidance on recovery & Reset, a Leadership work-book, as well as a work-book on the role of the opposition in supporting effective democracy. They reference best practice in relation to how democracy can be being strengthened as a result of improved scrutiny and opposition arrangements.

The LGA point to case studies such as Plymouth, Dorset, Chichester, and Lichfield that have all attempted to use the Pandemic as an opportunity to reflect on the COVID19 related impact on democracy, and strengthen its response.

The LGA suggest Councils consider different mechanisms for the opposition to hold the Executive to account, whilst also ensuring a focus on influencing policy and recovery. Embracing the role of opposition members will strengthen democracy and enable all members to act as community leaders and navigators when managing critical messages. Whilst the opposition is fundamentally around challenging the controlling group and propounding alternative policy considerations', the Pandemic demands cross party collaboration on overriding principles fundamental to the future of the Council.

It is not necessary to amend the Councils constitution as the existing overview and scrutiny arrangements are already in place and will consider recovery and reset work appropriate to their remit, rather arrange informal minimum quarterly meetings of the Scrutiny Chairs and one other appointed from each scrutiny committee with the Leader, Cabinet, Executive Leadership Team and Programme Director to review, support, scrutinise the programme delivery, feeding observations back to Cabinet as is the current convention. Proposed terms of reference for this group are set out at annex two and it is suggested the arrangements for this are overseen by the Council's Monitoring Officer to ensure this does not fall outside current constitutional arrangements.

Detail the programme structure, headline key projects with initial scoping of key work-stream

7.14. Corporate Management Team undertook a detailed exercise over June and July identifying financial opportunities to maximise income to the Council. The areas identified have informed the work-streams proposed.

7.15. The plan, which is shown in full at Annex four, will be the subject of detailed scoping and development of associated PID(s) including individual resourcing plans. Proposed aims, objectives and key activities are detailed in annex four and will be the basis for the projects listed.

7.16. Where cross cutting themes have been identified, whilst lead officers have been identified, it is entirely possible that business cases will be bought forward to Cabinet outside of the Recovery and Reset framework. Some of this is captured within the recovery and Reset programme to avoid duplication, but the programme is designed to enhance and support the overall approach not act as impediment to routine service and 'usual' directorate business improvement.

8.0. NEXT STEPS

8.1. If approved the following timetable is anticipated: -

Event	Timescale
TULG update with Recovery & Reset Programme	By 22nd October 2020
Cabinet Proposals for the Councils Recovery & Reset Plan 2020-2023	22nd October 2020
Recovery & Reset Plan launched virtually with AD briefings to HoS'	End of October 2020
Engagement of external Programme Management	Mid November 2020
Adoption of Change Management Techniques informing scoping of Stakeholder Engagement Strategy	November 2020
Fully scoped Programme as the report mapped and shared with Stakeholders	Mid December 2020
Arrangements for Scrutiny and Cabinet meetings agreed and timetabled thereafter in the municipal calendar to scrutinise performance	Mid December 2020
Cabinet receive further proposals on year 1 of the programme as they are developed	2020/2021

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