

# Covid-19 Recovery Plan

**Cabinet**

**Date: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020**

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Author: Leader of the Council

Chief Executive

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

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## **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 This report sets out the actions the Council is taking to recover from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 The majority of the Council's services have been maintained during the Response Phase with increased use of technology and flexible working practices allowing essential services to be provided. As the lockdown period eases many non-essential services will recommence and new demands addressing the negative health, wellbeing and economic consequences of the pandemic will arise. The Recovery Plan sets out the Council's approach and the steps being taken to meet these demands.
- 1.3 The Recovery Plan will also seek to learn lessons from this unprecedented event and identify opportunities to re-shape the way the Council delivers services to residents.
- 1.4 The successful recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic will be essential to ensure the Council is able to achieve its plans and priorities.

## **2. Recommendations**

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the Covid-19 Recovery Plan (attached at Appendix One), noting it will run in parallel with the formal response.
- 2.2 Authorise the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to implement the measures set out in the Recovery Plan.
- 2.3 Note that we remain in emergency response and that the Recovery Plan will run in parallel until the point of formal handover from the Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) as directed by Central Government.

## **3. Detail**

- 3.1 The Recovery Plan sets out a framework to enable the Council and its partners to change and adapt as the lockdown measures are eased.
  - 3.2 The central aim is to meet the ambition set out in the Government's roadmap to "return to life as close to normal as possible, for as many people as possible, as
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fast and fairly as possible... ..in a way that avoids a new epidemic, minimises lives lost and maximises health, economic and social outcomes.”

3.3 Working with partners and residents the objectives of the plan are:

3.3.1 To support Swindon residents to recover from the effects of Covid 19 on their health and environment as quickly as possible

3.3.2 To support Swindon businesses to recover from the effects of Covid 19 as quickly as possible

3.3.3 To ensure community resilience and partnerships are strengthened as a legacy of how we've worked through this crisis

3.3.4 To transition recovery workstreams into business as usual as soon as possible to establish the “New Normal”

3.4 As the Council begins to recover it will be essential that the approach is flexible, responsive to change and based on proactive planning

## Recovery Phase

3.5 The Recovery Plan will be split into 3 month planning periods with the initial focus on the easing of the lockdown measures, driven by the Government's guidance.

3.6 During the initial planning period many of the measures put in place to respond to the pandemic will be brought to a close and the recovery programme of work commenced. Once the immediate health crisis has passed it will be for the Council to lead the process of recovery.

3.7 The focus will be on successfully moving through the series of lockdown easing measures whilst maintaining the Council's essential services (e.g. bin collection), the new Covid19 related services (e.g. shielded residents), and re-commencing non-essential services (e.g. re-opening of STEAM).

3.8 This initial recovery will be complete once the social distancing measures have stabilised and the Council's services are operational again in some form.

## Recovery Workstreams

3.9 The recovery activity has been split into six interrelated workstreams, which will report into the Recovery Coordination Group and Recovery Board comprising Senior Officers from across the Council. The Recovery Board will in turn provide regular updates to Cabinet.

3.10 Each workstream lead has worked with service areas to identify their key priorities, along with the actions and peaks in demand which will need to be managed to recover from the impacts of Covid-19.

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- 3.11 Workstreams have in particular focused on re-starting services, managing peaks in demand, reaching out to the vulnerable or those who may not access services, and opportunities to work with partners.
- 3.12 The six workstreams are set out below along with a summary of their key priorities:
- 3.12.1 **The Organisation** – Ensure that the workforce are supported to deliver the recovery priorities both in terms of supporting the health and wellbeing of staff and ensuring technology and buildings meet the changed needs. Continue to maximise the benefits of flexible working and new technologies.
- 3.12.2 **Economy** – Understand the impact on Swindon's businesses, rolling out Government support packages and introducing new initiatives to support business retention and growth. Identify new opportunities for inward investment and marketing Swindon as a great place for business. Review, prioritise and recommence the Council's programme of capital schemes.
- 3.12.3 **Social Care, Housing & Vulnerable Groups** – Address the impacts of lockdown including increased referrals relating to abusive relationships, alcohol and substance use, and mental health problems. Recommence day services for adults and children and work with care homes to begin to stabilise the care sector. Work with partners to support and meet the needs of vulnerable adults and children including the homeless. Re-introduce and prioritise all housing functions including lettings and work with partners to address neighbourhood tensions.
- 3.12.4 **Health & Wellbeing** – Understand the impact of Covid-19 on the health of the Swindon population, restarting or introducing new schemes to promote wellbeing. Support Covid-19 related activities such as testing and immunisation and build resilience within the community and health protection services.
- 3.12.5 **Operational Services** – Reopen facilities such as the HWRC and STEAM and re-start services such as birth registrations and school transport. Meet pent up demand for regulatory services such as planning and meet new demands such as environmental health Covid-19 compliance checks.
- 3.12.6 **Education, Skills & Learning** – Support the re-opening of education settings ensuring the educational needs of students, particularly the vulnerable are met. Managing the risk of increased unemployment amongst all ages and managing the needs of those not in education, employment or training.
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## Re-Shaping Services

- 3.13 During the Response Phase the Council has had to work completely differently to how it has worked before highlighting new opportunities to re-shape services and deliver a more modern, efficient and effective Council. These lessons will be considered and captured as part of the Recovery Phase and will determine the Council's approach to future service delivery.

## **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 The Council could decide not to implement the Covid-19 Recovery Plan. In this scenario it is likely that there will be significant impacts on the health and wellbeing of the Borough's residents along with increased negative economic and financial impacts.

## **5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management**

### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The Council's financial position will be carefully monitored. Short term Covid-19 impacts are being funded in part by Central Government but there will be medium and long term impacts in terms of increased costs of services and reduced income, which will be reported to Cabinet as part of the regular budget update reports.
- 5.2 Regular feedback will be provided to Central Government in relation to the pressures being faced by the Council in order to inform future funding settlements.

### Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 All legal and human rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention rights.

### Climate Change Impact

- 5.4 The recommendations would bring about a reduction in the Council's carbon footprint through an increased use of flexible working and technology reducing the need to travel to/during work and an increased focus on using non-motorised means of transport.
- 5.5 The Council will seek to maximise opportunities to access new funding streams to support sustainable transport and minimise climate change impacts during the recovery period.

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## All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.6 The measures set out in the Recovery Plan seek to mitigate the negative health impacts associated with the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 5.7 In order to meet the peaks in demand for services and deliver the programme of actions, staff redeployment will continue to be required in the short term. The volunteer workforce will be retained where possible and will in particular play an important role in continuing to support shielded individuals.

## Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.8 The measures set out in the Recovery Plan seek to identify and mitigate the impacts felt by all the Borough's residents as a result of Covid-19.
- 5.9 No Diversity Impact assessment (DIA) has been undertaken as the individual schemes will have individual risk assessments and DIAs when they are brought forward for Members' approval. The DIAs will address the needs of the nine statutory protected categories as well as Cabinet's additional category of children in care and care leavers.

## Risk Management

- 5.10 There continues to be a risk of further virus peaks and the plan will need to be flexible and react to these if they occur. Further peaks are likely to increase the negative impacts associated with the initial lockdown.
- 5.11 Individual schemes will have individual risk assessments and DIA's.

## **6. Consultees**

- 6.1 The Corporate Director of Finance and Assets (s151 officer) and Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

## **7. Background Papers**

- 7.1 None

## **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Covid-19 Recovery Plan June 2020

## **9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan**

- 9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme and Forward Plan for June 2020.