

COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN – ROLE OF TASK & FINISH GROUPS

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 That the Cabinet approves the approach to recovery from the Coronavirus – COVID-19 pandemic as outlined within this report, including the establishment of the following four Task and Finish Groups:-

- Finances & Resources (including Health & Safety, Workforce Wellbeing & Digital Transformation)
- Local Economy
- Community Stakeholder engagement (including the Voluntary Sector)
- Council Services

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 COVID-19 has had a significant impact upon everybody and everything.

On the 4 March 2020 Cabinet approved the Council's new Corporate Plan. At that stage no one could have foreseen COVID-19 and the impact it would have on both "Our Community" and the operation of the Council's services. It will be necessary for the Cabinet to review the Council's Corporate Plan following an assessment of the impact of Covid-19. The engagement of all Councillors in the process of undertaking an impact assessment is important, as it provides the opportunity to guide Cabinet's review of the Corporate Plan.

The Council has, for the last 12 weeks, been very much in a response phase of the crisis, reacting to Government guidance and working with all parts of the community to address issues. Some services have continued, some have closed or stopped, some are being performed differently and some new services have been created. Already, we are starting to work in a new normal.

We accept some things that we previously did must be restored, but from our recent experience, it is also clear that many things we used to do no longer need to be done in the same way.

It is for these reasons that Cabinet recognised at their May meeting the need for all Councillors to have the opportunity to be involved in developing an organisation-wide recovery response and, to facilitate this, 4 Task & Finish Groups are proposed.

The approach of the Task and Finish Groups should be to consider the short (January 2021), medium (April 2022) and longer (MTFP) term impacts on the New Forest of COVID-19, both for the community and services together with appropriate intervention measures to mitigate these impacts.

In developing a recovery plan, the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Resilience Forum have asked that each Council '*Establish effective protocols for public involvement and liaison and restore public engagement and confidence in all levels of the democratic process*'. This has been built into the process outlined.

2.2 Task & Finish Group Structure

Cabinet identified that four Task and Finish Groups would be established to support the development of a recovery plan to help guide the Council forward from the pandemic. These were identified as covering:

- Finances & Resources (including Health & Safety, Workforce Wellbeing & Digital Transformation)
- Local Economy
- Community Stakeholder engagement (including the Voluntary Sector)
- Council Services

2.3 Terms of Reference

- a) Each Task and Finish Group is asked to undertake its work based around an impact and opportunity assessment, that will need to be regularly updated as the short, medium and long-term phases of recovery are addressed. This assessment will provide the background support material for the Council's COVID-19 recovery action plans. Examples of both an external and internal impact and opportunity assessment documents are set out at Appendix 1.
- b) Identify from the impact and opportunity assessment the actions required for recovery.
- c) Advise Cabinet on proposals for action.

2.4 Timescales

- 2.4.1 Each Task and Finish Group will have a different timeframe to work to, due to the nature of what they will be doing. It is intended that they all start as soon as possible.
- 2.4.2 It is envisaged that there will be regular reports on any proposed actions from the Task and Finish Groups to Cabinet.
- 2.4.3 Cabinet will determine when the work of each individual Task and Finish Group finishes.

2.5 Organisation Structure

- 2.5.1 To enable all Councillors to be engaged in the development of the recovery plan, membership of each Task & Finish Group is expected to include between 10 - 14 members to each. It is not expected that members other than the Leader will be a member of more than one Task & Finish Group.
- 2.5.2 The Chairman of all Task & Finish Groups will be the Leader of the Council.
- 2.5.3 The Chief Executive will facilitate all meetings and co-ordinate support requirements.
- 2.5.4 Portfolio Holders will attend as appropriate.
- 2.5.5 Officer Support will be provided by:
 - a. Performance Team
 - b. Democratic Services
 - c. Wide Officer engagement and attendance will be as required

- d. Stakeholders engagement will be as appropriate but is expected to include either input or attendance from the following representatives/organisations: New Forest Business Partnership, LEP, HlW LRF Recovery Group, Voluntary Sector/Town & Parishes/Safer New Forest Partners Trade Unions and more.

2.6 Reporting

- 2.6.1 Update reports submitted to Cabinet will be expected to go to Overview & Scrutiny Panels, as appropriate.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are none arising directly from this report; however the output of the Task and Finish Groups will have a bearing on the Council's financial setting over the Medium Term.

4. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are none.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are none.

6. EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are none

7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS – LEADER

- 7.1 I support the proposal and hope as many Councillors as possible join one of the Task & Finish groups which will support our community and help shape the Council and its services as we go through the important process of recovery from the pandemic.

For further information contact:

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Background Papers:

None