



## Community Leadership and Libraries Committee

16 September 2020

<b>Title</b>	Recovery Plan Report
<b>Report of</b>	Councillor Reuben Thompstone
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Key</b>	No
<b>Enclosures</b>	None
<b>Officer Contact Details</b>	Clair Green, Director of Assurance, 020 8359 7791, <a href="mailto:Clair.Green@Barnet.gov.uk">Clair.Green@Barnet.gov.uk</a>

### Summary

This report provides an update on the council's Recovery Planning Programme in response to the Covid-19 pandemic for the areas that this committee is responsible for. These are community engagement, community safety and libraries, which each feed into different workstreams as part of the overall programme.

### Officers Recommendations

1. That the committee note the work already undertaken in regard to the council's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic for the service areas that the committee is responsible.
2. That the committee note the continuing work on recovery planning for the service areas that it is responsible for, including any next steps outlined within the report.

# 1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

## Background context

- 1.1 The Covid-19 pandemic provides an extremely challenging situation for Barnet, its residents and the wider borough. The pandemic itself has been responsible for over 330,000 cases and 41,000 deaths nationally, while the subsequent lockdown that was required to save lives has led to challenges relating to the economy and mental health.
- 1.2 In response to the pandemic, the council had to focus on critical services, including a number of new services to directly respond to the needs of residents. As lockdown restrictions eased, the council then moved to focusing on recovery, initially around a framework of deciding which services to restore in their previous form, which to retain from the lockdown and which to re-invent by bringing back in a new way. A programme of recovery planning has been set up to co-ordinate this process and deal with the challenges that recovery will bring for the council, the borough and its residents. The programme is split into 4 workstreams which are based around the cross-cutting themes of our emerging Corporate Plan and 2 additional cross-cutting workstreams. Each theme has at least one sponsor from the Council's Management Team and at least one workstream lead, a senior officer responsible for the day-to-day delivery of the workstream. The themes are:
1. Thriving
  2. Family Friendly
  3. Healthy
  4. Clean, Safe and Well Run
  5. Prevention
  6. The Way We Work
- 1.3 This committee will contribute to a number of these workstreams. Community Safety contributes to the Clean, Safe and Well Run workstream, while work on libraries will feed into the Family Friendly workstream. Work on community engagement and engagement with voluntary and community sector partners feeds into The Way We Work Programme.
- 1.4 There will also be a focus on equalities within each workstream in line with the public-sector equality duty as outlined below at paragraph 5.6. – 5.8. This will look at inequalities across the council, its services and its communities. Each workstream will outline its approach to equalities, seeking to identify and address any impacts on equality groups.
- 1.5 The following sections provide updates on each of the services that the committee is responsible for, in the context of the programme workstream that they feed into:

## **The Way We Work – Community Engagement**

- 1.6 The community response to Covid-19 saw some highly effective models of partnership working between the council, VCS and health partners. It also generated an increase in resident involvement through formal and informal volunteering. The council is now working to consolidate some of these approaches and increase opportunities for residents to get involved in their local communities. This will be set out in the forthcoming update to the Community Participation Strategy.

## **Clean, Safe and Well Run – Community Safety**

- 1.7 Covid-19 has seen a rise in the volume of Domestic Abuse (DA) reports. Financial stress and unemployment are likely to have exacerbated this. Tackling DA presents demand on other services, e.g. children's social services and homelessness. In response we have implemented a four-fold increase in the frequency of our Domestic Abuse Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) Panel Meetings. As a result, there is now a faster turnaround between referral of complex DA cases and multi-agency risk review and actions at the MARAC. The DA MARAC carries out a multi-agency risk assessment and puts risk reduction plans in place. Over the last three months approximately 10 cases are being referred into the DA MARAC each week.
- 1.8 Unlike some crime types, the volume of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) calls to police did not reduce during the lockdown. While a substantial proportion of the ASB calls received during this period were related to allegations of breaches of the Covid-19 social distancing regulations, the calls also included matters such as neighbour disputes. The Community Safety MARAC panel has been working to deliver a co-ordinated multi-agency response for victims of repeat and high risk ASB. The panel is implementing action plans for approximately 6 to 10 such cases per month.
- 1.9 We have introduced a Serious Adult Violence Panel to help enhance the multi-agency response and set of interventions available for adults (18+) considered at risk of involvement in serious violence. Since the commencing in May 2020 the panel has coordinated the delivery of enhanced interventions in over 30 cases.
- 1.10 Our Integrated Offender Management Programme is working delivering bespoke interventions to reduce re-offending – this has worked with over 100 of Barnet's most prolific offenders in last 12 months.
- 1.11 The Barnet Prevent Strategy continues to provide early intervention to protect and divert people away from violent extremism. This includes coordinating the multi-agency Barnet Channel Panel. Channel is a voluntary programme which focuses on providing support and early intervention to safeguard children and adults identified as being at risk of being drawn into terrorism or extremism. This acts by identifying the individuals at risk, assessing the nature and extent of that risk, and developing the most appropriate support

plan for the individuals concerned. In addition, the Prevent Action Plan outlines the statutory duty to provide training to ensure that Barnet Safeguarding and Partnership staff can recognise signs that an individual may be vulnerable to being radicalised, and able to respond appropriately to reduce that risk.

- 1.12 Securing grant funding from the Home Office Safer Streets Scheme. The Council's Community Safety Team, together with the Met Police Designing Out Crime Team have been successful in bidding for and securing funding from the Home Office Safer Streets grant. As a result, a total of £301,162 has been secured to fund designing out crime prevention measures focused on reducing burglary in the vicinity of Hendon Park NW4 (including Park View Road NW4).
- 1.13 Over the short and long term, this location has suffered from a higher rate of residential burglary than average. The funding secured through this successful bid will provide an opportunity to push down the crime rate and help improve the safety and security of residents living in this area. The money will go towards measures (which will be informed by the recommendations of the Police Designing Out Crime specialists) proven to cut crime by enhancing the physical security of the built environment.

### **Family Friendly – Libraries**

- 1.14 During lockdown, the Library Service extended and developed its online offer, issuing a total of 189,014 electronic resources (e-books, e-Audiobooks, e-magazines, newspapers and comics) up to the end of August. An email homework enquiry line was established to support families educating children at home and the School Libraries Resources Service supported teachers with a regular e-newsletter containing links to key literacy and learning resources.
- 1.15 A range of online activities were developed for children and families including digital rhymetimes and craft events, attracting a total of 24,521 views. Over the summer holidays the service has delivered a digital version of the annual Summer Reading Challenge – The Silly Squad.
- 1.16 In line with the easing of lockdown restrictions, a Select and Collect service was developed through which residents could request library items to then be collected at the library door. This system was introduced on 22 June at the four Core Plus libraries (Chipping Barnet, Colindale, Edgware, Finchley Church End) and has since been rolled out to a further four libraries (Childs Hill, Hendon, North Finchley and South Friern). At the end of September the scheme will be pushed out to the remaining Core and Partnership libraries and to the Mobile Library.
- 1.17 On 15 June, the Home Library Service resumed deliveries of library resources to housebound residents.

- 1.18 Computer use has been re-introduced to the Core Plus libraries, with residents able to pre-book a PC at selected times. Computers have been re-sited to ensure social distancing is maintained and are cleaned between each use. Additional safety measures introduced to libraries include the provision of hand sanitising stations, the removal of furniture, quarantine of 72 hours for all returned items and restrictions on the numbers entering each building. It is also mandatory to wear a face covering when visiting a library and all sites are part of the NHS Test and Trace system.
- 1.19 The next phases of recovery will re-introduce controlled browsing in selected libraries and some socially distanced on-site activities and hall hire.

## **Equalities**

- 1.20 The Council has been updating its Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Policy 2020-2024, particularly in light of the Covid-19 pandemic (and disproportionate impact on BAME communities). In this, we are embedding equalities, diversity and inclusion in each of the above themes, rather than treating the issue as a separate workstream. Community Leadership and Libraries Committee is considering the draft EDI Policy and associated Action Plan at its September meeting (16 September). Consultation will begin thereafter and subject to that, we anticipate the policy coming into effect later in 2020.
- 1.21 In partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector, the Barnet Zero Tolerance to Hate Crime project has continued engaging with communities and organizations across the borough to improve access to justice for victims of Hate Crime and to make it easier for people to report Hate Crime and get the support that they need. To date over 500 residents have signed up to become Hate Crime Reporting Champions.

## **2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The outline framework for recovery has been agreed by Policy & Resources Committee on 17 June. This outlined a cross-cutting approach to recovery, where different services would input into each workstream to encourage new ways of working within the council.
- 2.2 Community Engagement (The Way We Work), Community Safety (Clean, Safe and Well Run) and Libraries (Family Friendly) each contribute directly to a different workstream, while officers in these areas may feed into other priorities on a more informal basis.
- 2.3 The actions within each service area will help the council to recover as fully as possible from the Covid-19 pandemic and meet the needs of residents. In resuming activity only where it is safe to do so, such as in libraries, recovery work will ensure that services are restored in a responsible way, in line with government guidance.

### **3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED**

- 3.1 The council could pause the next steps outlined in this report within each service area. This option could harm the recovery process in the relevant service areas, while also denying residents access to services such as libraries.
- 3.2 The recovery process within the relevant services could operate on an individual basis. Enabling services to plan and deliver recovery activities independently would undermine dependencies across services and miss out on important opportunities for more effective and integrated delivery models. This would also impact the overall council Recovery Planning Programme, as it would deny opportunities for collaborative working across the organisation.

### **4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION**

- 4.1 Officers will continue to deliver activities relating to the recovery planning in line with the actions outlined in the report. This will involve continuing to resume services and re-shaping them where required. Further updates on recovery will be brought to the committee at future meetings.
- 4.2 The overall Recovery Planning Programme will continue on a cross-cutting basis, feeding into the council's Corporate Plan.

### **5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION**

#### **Corporate Priorities and Performance**

- 5.1 The Recovery Framework will directly shape the borough's emerging Corporate Plan, as a result of the cross-cutting recovery workstreams that make up the themes of the Corporate Plan.

#### **Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

- 5.2 Officers will continue to ensure the costs of Covid-19 are forecast on a robust basis. In order to regain the momentum in being a high performing organisation, financial stability must be achieved through the recovery planning process. This includes minimising the call on reserves and setting a balanced budget from 2021/22 onwards. This budget must deliver the required strategy in relation to reserves required to withstand future economic shocks.
- 5.3 Where there are financial implications or decisions associated with recovery activities, these will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. The delivery of the Recovery Framework will be undertaken within the existing capacity and resources of the council.

## **Social Value**

- 5.4 The council must take into account the requirements of the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 to try to maximise the social and local economic value it derives from its procurement spend. Social value is a core part of the Recovery Framework and will be maximised throughout.

## **Legal and Constitutional References**

- 5.5 The council's Constitution, Article 7 Committees, Forums, Working Groups and Partnerships, sets out the functions of the Community Leadership and Libraries Committee as:

- (1) Responsibility for libraries, culture, civic events, the mayoralty, community safety, registration and nationality service
- (2) To receive nominations and determine applications for buildings / land to be listed as an Asset of Community Value (Community Right to Bid)
- (3) To submit to the Policy and Resources Committee proposals on the Committee's budget for the following year in accordance with the budget timetable and make recommendations on issues relating to virements, underspends or overspends. No decisions which result in amendments to the agreed budget may be made by the Committee unless and until the amendment has been agreed by Policy and Resources Committee.
- (4) To receive reports on relevant performance information and risk on the services under the remit of the Committee.
- (5) To recommend for approval fees and charges for those areas under the remit of the Committee.

## **Risk Management**

- 5.6 The council has an established approach to risk management, which is set out in the Risk Management Framework. Strategic and operational risks have been reviewed in light of our response to Covid-19 and priorities for recovery and emerging Corporate Plan. The corporate risk register is reported quarterly to Policy and Resources Committee. Managing risk is an essential part of programme management and decision-making.

## **Equalities and Diversity**

- 5.7 The Equalities and Diversity Act, 2010 outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act, 2010;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups; and
- Foster good relations between people from different groups.

5.8 Relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

5.9 The council's Recovery Framework is intended to benefit all communities and groups who live, work and visit the borough, including those with protected characteristics. Where individual decisions are required in relation to the recovery programme, these will be considered on a case-by-case basis to ensure no group is disadvantaged or left behind. As required, officers will undertake Equalities Impact Assessments (EQIA) and review them in order to fully appraise the impacts associated with any proposed course of action.

### **Corporate Parenting**

5.10 In line with the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the council has a duty to consider Corporate Parenting Principles in all decision-making. These will continue to be considered as specific plans for recovery are further developed.

### **Consultation and Engagement**

5.11 Officers are clear that the Recovery Framework cannot be developed in isolation if it is going to be fully responsive and effective in enabling the borough to emerge stronger from the Covid-19 pandemic. Consultation with partners, service users and the wider community is critical to ensuring that our recovery activities are focused on the end user. Where required, consultation and engagement activities will be undertaken in the relevant workstream.

### **Insight**

5.12 Insight is a central part of the council's Recovery Planning Programme, with an opportunity identified to significantly improve the way in which the council uses data, insight and analysis to drive decision making and service delivery.

5.13 Insight requirements and questions of services were mapped at the start of the Recovery Planning Programme and work will continue to develop this further.

## **6 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

6.1 Urgency Committee, 27 April 2020: Approval of Emergency Decisions and Delegation to Chief Officers

<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s58641/Urgency%20Committee%20-%20Emergency%20Decisions%20Final.pdf>

- 6.2 Policy & Resources Committee, 17 June 2020: Covid-19 Recovery Planning  
<https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s58985/Covid-19%20Recovery%20Planning.pdf>