

ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 8 th December 2020
Report Subject	Recovery Strategy (Planning, Environment & Economy Portfolio)
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Planning and Public Protection; Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside; and Cabinet Member for Economic Development
Report Author	Chief Executive and Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council has developed a corporate Recovery Strategy for the pandemic emergency situation.

This work has been led by the Chief Executive and Leader and overseen by a cross-party Member Recovery Board. The Board, which was an advisory sub-committee of Cabinet, has completed its work and has stood down. Cabinet endorsed the Recovery Strategy at a special meeting on 15th September. Cabinet has invited each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to support recovery in their respective portfolio areas, and specifically to have oversight of:-

1. The portfolio risk register and the risk mitigation actions both live and planned;
2. The objectives for recovery for the portfolio;

This report represents the second update on the above documents since its initial meeting on 21st September 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee gives oversight to the progress made with respect to recovery planning for the Planning, Environment and Economy portfolio.
2	That the Committee notes the content of the updated portfolio risk register and mitigation actions.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EMERGENCY RECOVERY
1.01	<p>The Council has developed a corporate Recovery Strategy for the pandemic emergency situation. The Strategy covers:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The chronology of the emergency response phase and transition to recovery2. The handover arrangements or recovery3. Organisational recovery of the corporate organisation4. Community recovery of the communities we serve5. Strategic priorities and performance for the remainder of 2020/216. The roles the Council will play in regional recovery7. The democratic governance of recovery
1.02	<p>The development of the Recovery Strategy been led by the Chief Executive and Leader and overseen by a cross-party Member Recovery Board. The Board, which is an advisory sub-committee of Cabinet, has completed its work and has stood down. The Board has met seven times in quick succession and has received multiple reports and presentations. Cabinet endorsed the Recovery Strategy at a special meeting on 15 September.</p>
1.03	<p>Cabinet has invited each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees to support recovery in their respective portfolio areas, and specifically to have oversight of:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The portfolio risk register and the risk mitigation actions both live and planned;2. The objectives for recovery for the portfolio;3. The immediate strategic priorities for recovery for the portfolio extracted from the draft Council Plan for 2020/21; and4. The set of revised performance indicator targets for the portfolio for 2020/21.
1.04	<p>The full latest version of the risk register and set of risk mitigation actions for the Planning, Environment and Economy portfolio within the terms of reference of this Committee is attached. In addition an update is provided below of progress against each of the portfolio's recovery objectives. Should further information on any of the recovery objectives be sought by the Committee that can be provide at a future meeting.</p>

1.05	<p>The recovery objectives for the Planning, Environment and Economy portfolio as established in July 2020 and relevant to this Committee are:-</p> <p>1. Re-instatement of Planning Strategy Group and Planning Committee</p> <p>Both Groups are now established and are operating virtually via Webex. PSG was the first Council group to operate in this way and met on seven occasions through the Spring and Summer to progress the Local Development Plan. Risk assessments continue to be completed by the Chair and Vice Chair of Planning Committee before any such visits can be arranged.</p> <p>2. Re-opening of destination sites – Wepre Park, Greenfield Valley, Waun y Llyn</p> <p>All sites were re-opened, however Wepre Visitor Centre remained closed to the public but its café is operating a take away service. The Greenfield Valley museum has closed early for the year to coincide with the two week “firebreak”.</p> <p>3. Re-instatement of maintenance regimes for sites and paths</p> <p>Countryside and Access Teams have re-established site and path maintenance regimes to ensure quality provision for public use. Any requests for further closures of footpaths are reviewed against our decision matrix. It is likely that the network would be subject to heavy use again during the “firebreak” period.</p> <p>4. Compliance with new Local Development Plan timeline</p> <p>At the Special meeting of Council on 29th September it was agreed that the LDP should be submitted to Welsh Government for examination. This accords with the timeline within our Delivery Agreement with WG. The Plan has now been formally submitted to WG. The examination is likely to take place in early 2021 and is likely to place remotely by video conferencing. The Programme Officer for the LDP will be joining the Planning Strategy Group meeting on 10th December to explain her role.</p> <p>5. Provision of business support service meeting needs of Flintshire businesses</p> <p>Financial support to our businesses, in the shape of administering grants, was a key function of the Council’s Response phase to the pandemic. Further grant schemes are being rolled out by WG with a number being delivered by the Council. We are starting to see an increase in redundancies across all sectors and our employment teams are working with employers and those seeking employment.</p> <p>6. Support for our local markets and town centres</p> <p>Promotion of our towns and markets is a key theme in our Community Recovery work. Town centre parking charges have been suspended till after the Christmas period and significant resource has been spent making our</p>
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town centres safer to shop in. A programme of longer term recovery actions is being developed.

7. Incorporation of social value into our procurement frameworks and contracts

A software package has been procured to build social value into Council contracts. Work is on-going with procurement and contract management colleagues to build social value into current and future procurement exercises.

8. Provision of employability support available to local residents

Support for residents is being provided via our employability team and is a workstream within the Council's Community Recovery Strategy. The team has received extra funding from Welsh Government in readiness for the increased numbers of individuals needing support.

9. Meeting our Community and Business Protection statutory and enforcement duties in relation to Covid 19

This is an area of significant, sustained and increasing demand for the Portfolio with the teams carrying out enforcement activity including the closure of three venues, advising businesses and the public as well as advising the regional and local Test, Track and Protect teams.

Particular pressure has been placed on Environmental Health to support Schools, Care Homes, and Work Places, where clusters of COVID-19 cases are identified, with the aim of preventing further transmission. Work programmes have had to be re-prioritised to meet current pressures and demands.

Licensing and Trading Standards continue to enforce the Health Protection Regulations. Since the last update, a further Closure Notice has been served and two additional Improvement Notices. These teams also provide advice to the public and businesses in respect of the aforementioned Regulations.

10. Work with our regional and local partners to support victims of (Violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence) VAWDASV

Flintshire is fully engaged with regional partners to address this important area of work. The regional VAWDASV Board has recently transitioned into the North Wales Vulnerability and Exploitation Board where FCC is represented by the Chief Officer, Social Services. We are the host of the regional VAWDASV team and work closely with the office of the Police and Crime commissioner to ensure that the regional strategy is aligned to the budget received from Welsh Government.

11. Reinstatement of officer site visits where appropriate

A risk assessment for officer site visits has been produced and was being applied in all cases. Greater reliance is being placed on information that may be available from other sources e.g. Google Maps, Streetview etc Officer site

visits, for all but emergencies, have been suspended for the “firebreak” period.

12. Recommencement of all grant funded capital projects

Works have re-commenced at Bailey Hill, Mold, Wepre Park and the Greenfield reservoirs.

13. Undertaking of Ash Dieback surveys

Taking advantage of quieter roads in lockdown, dashcam surveys of ash trees adjacent to the highway were completed. This enabled a high level overview of the disease so more detailed inspections can be prioritised. The detailed inspections of the priority areas are due to be completed this month to enable a winter work programme to be established. An initial report is scheduled to be delivered to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Following the completion of the survey and inspection of priority roads, a costed winter work programme has been developed to deal with Flintshire owned infected trees of the highest risk. A process has been developed to engage with landowners who own infected trees adjacent to the highway.

14. Restoration of the Development Management function

The services of the Development Management function are in great demand and our ability to deliver those services was compromised by the direct and indirect impacts of Covid 19. A similar situation is reflected across all North Wales authorities. The months from September to November have offered the opportunity to address the backlog of cases (both planning applications and enforcement issues) which could not be concluded through the lockdown period. Performance data from these months supports the theory that the restoration of the DM function is well advanced.

2.00 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

2.01 There are no specific resource implications from this report.

3.00 CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT

3.01 None specific as this report is based on documented response and recovery work.

4.00 RISK MANAGEMENT

4.01 This report specifically covers emergency situation risk management.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Updated Recovery Risk Register Appendix 2 – Updated Risk Mitigation Actions

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Andrew Farrow Telephone: 01352 703201 E-mail: andrew.farrow@flintshire.gov.uk