

## RECOVERY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> September, 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Corporate Recovery Objectives
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Collective Cabinet
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Type of Report</b>	Strategic

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wales, and the North Wales region, continues to be in a second phase of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. We are now managing an ongoing endemic situation.

This report provides an update on the corporate objectives adopted by the Council.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee is assured by progress in meeting the recovery objectives.
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## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	<b>RECOVERY STRATEGY AND GOVERNANCE</b>
1.01	Wales, and the North Wales region, continues to be in a second phase of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. We are now managing an ongoing endemic situation.
1.02	<p>The overall recovery aims of the organisation are</p> <p><b><u>Overall Organisational Recovery</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To ensure the financial resilience and sustainability of the organisation in budget planning for 2022/23 and the medium-term;</li><li>2. To make a managed transition to a new operating model for working arrangements for the workforce;</li><li>3. To continue to protect the health and well-being of the workforce;</li><li>4. To continue to maintain good governance;</li><li>5. To restore public access to, and participation in, democratic meetings;</li><li>6. To continue to ensure organisational business continuity, and contingency planning for unforeseen developments with the pandemic’.</li></ol> <p>Updates on progress in meeting the corporate recovery objectives which underpin these aims are given below:</p> <p><b><u>Finance</u></b></p> <p><b>To ensure the financial sustainability of the organisation</b> We were able to successfully navigate our way through the last full financial year of the pandemic due in part to the assistance received from the Welsh Government Hardship Fund. Ensuring the overall financial sustainability of the Council is a key consideration in the current work on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget 2022/23.</p> <p><b>To continue to maximise national assistance from the hardship fund and other government funding</b> We are continuing to make monthly claims for additional costs and quarterly claims for income losses from the Welsh Government Hardship Fund. It has recently been confirmed that this funding will continue until the end of the current financial year. The financial impacts of the claims are included in the monthly budget monitoring reports to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p><b>To continue to recover and restore income to target levels</b> It was previously confirmed that the Hardship Fund will continue to assist with any existing shortfalls in budgeted income in the current financial year. Portfolio Business Recovery Plans include income recovery considerations which have been made in conjunction with the annual uplift arising from the corporate fees and charges policy.</p>

**To continue to recover and restore debt to target levels**

Income collection continues and we actively engaging with tax-payers, tenants, customers and businesses to offer flexible arrangements. We are also taking steps to enforce payment against residents and businesses who have not paid nor engaged with the Council over several months

**To maintain reserves and balances at levels that meet our needs**

The Council will need to utilise its reserves to meet the additional costs of any elements not claimable from the Hardship Fund and also to deal with any overall in-year overspend. The level of reserves held will be a key consideration of the current work on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget 2022/23.

**Workforce****To ensure that the legal and ethical duties of the employer continue to be met in recovery**

We continue to navigate new legislation and provide guidance for complex situational questions, to tackle the short and long-term obstacles from the impact of the pandemic e.g. overseas travel, annual leave, working from home, quarantine and self-isolation. Working with Public Health Wales (PHW) and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) we have provided the workforce with an opportunity to undertake a supervised lateral flow device (LFD) test. Those who have participated have returned a negative test which gives assurance over the safety measures in place in the workplace and the levels of compliance with those measures among the workforce. We will continue to provide revised guidance as the position changes.

**To continue to restore and protect the well-being of the workforce over time**

The Council continues to review its policies and practices with a view to establishing new ways of working which achieves a range of benefits for both the organisation and our employees, including a better work-life balance, saved commuting time and costs, IT upskilling and higher levels of motivation whilst maintaining service levels. As part of our ongoing review of Occupational Health capacity we have identified a need/opportunity for internal provision of Physiotherapy as a more cost effective alternative to present arrangements, enabling greater control for the organisation to support employees based on clinical need. Occupational Health colleagues are in the final stages of developing a proposal that better meets employee and service needs.

**To agree and implement a new operating model and working arrangements which maximise the use of technology and digital workplace solutions**

We have implemented a number of technology solutions to enable those who are able, to work remotely and maintain contact with service users. The Council needs to determine the optimum operating model for its workforce which delivers the strategic objectives of the Digital Strategy and achieves a content, productive, safe and effective hybrid workforce.

**To continue to review opportunities for organisational re-design based on the learning from the emergency response and recovery phases**

Changes in working practices and patterns of our front-line services, and the effectiveness of technological solutions in supporting home working has demonstrated that services can operate successfully without the need to be physically co-located. It is important that where feasible to do so, we capitalise on these changes and build on them where it is right to do so. Whilst we have no plans to return everyone to the workplace full-time we recognise that some services and employees are keen to return on a part-time or ad-hoc basis. Risk assessments and business cases for all principle offices are being reviewed to support a partial return to work and in recognition of Welsh Government's aspirational target for 30% of the Welsh workforce to work remotely, we are developing a hybrid approach to working remotely and work-based. This will be planned on a team by team and building by building basis; to meet service and workforce needs.

**Governance**

**To restore collection rates of Council Tax, NNDR, Sundry Debt and housing rents to target levels**

Recovery rates are still slightly below target for this stage of the year for council tax and National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR). Efforts are in place to increase recovery levels. Rent arrears are currently low. There is considerable uncertainty around the potential impact arising from the end of furlough.

**To complete the transition to a settled model for modern meetings**

The Council has agreed that a working group reporting to the Constitution and Democratic Services Committee will look at the format for meetings in the medium to long term and also the requirements of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The detailed terms of reference will be set at that Committee's meeting in September.

**To restore accessibility to, and participation by, the public in member meetings**

The Council continues to live stream meetings. Public participation at Planning Committee meetings began in July and has gone smoothly.

**To continue to support and expand digital means of service delivery**

The Council has launched its digital hub to ensure that no one is excluded by reason of not having access to the skills. This is a website that enables people to help others to get online or to build their own skills and confidence. Importantly, it is supported in person by Connects employees and partners, such as Aura, who will also provide access to devices and connectivity.

**Service Recovery**

**To ensure the business continuity of all services**

All five service portfolios are operating their recovery business plans. The plans have been reported to this Committee in sequence. A summary report on all five plans is included on this same agenda.

**To meet the specific recovery objectives for each portfolio as set out in their respective business recovery plans**

All five service portfolios are operating their recovery business plans effectively (see above).

**To plan the full recovery of services against any backlogs and temporarily reduced performance standards**

All five service portfolios are operating their recovery business plans effectively (see above).

**To ensure that contingency planning is in place should there be a return to a third phase of response**

We have learnt much from the experience of two significant ‘lockdowns’ during the pandemic. We have contingency plans in place should there be any future response phase and the imposition of restrictions by Governments e.g. assignment of employees in non-critical roles for other work, blended/remote learning in schools, restricted visitor access to care homes etc. Should there be a future phase of response then the Emergency Management Response Team (EMRT) would be reconvened and the response command structure resumed. This command structure was highly effective in the two response phases as recognised by members and external partners and regulators. The regional Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG) oversees the management of risks and issues by the public sector partners. The emergent risk is the capacity of the social care sector to meet new and changing demand due to workforce availability. This risk is being managed by the regional tactical group for health and social care.

**Community Recovery**

**To protect the health and well-being of local communities**

Refer to the report made to the previous two meetings of this Committee. There are no changes of significance to report.

**To support and protect the most vulnerable in society**

Refer to the report made to the previous two meetings of this Committee. There are no changes of significance to report.

**To support the recovery of communities and build their resilience**

This work is coordinated at the sub-regional level by the combined Public Service Board (PSB) of Wrexham and Flintshire. The joint PSB have identified four themes as priorities:

- Mental Health
- Environment
- Poverty and Inequality
- Children and Young People

A full report on the work of the joint PSB will be made at a future meeting of the Committee.

**To support the economic recovery of communities and local business sectors**

Refer to the report made to the previous two meetings of this Committee. There are no changes of significance to report.

### **Regional Recovery**

#### **To fully engage with the regional recovery strategy and as a member of the regional Recovery Co-ordinating Group**

The Council is a category one member of the regional Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG) and is an ever-present attendee. Our Chief Executive is the chair. We fully engage in both the development of regional recovery strategy and the implementation of agreed strategy and plans at a local level. There are no new issues to report beyond the emergent risk of capacity in the social care sector. This was covered verbally at the last meeting and a verbal update will be given at this meeting.

#### **To effectively manage the local implementation of the regional *Prevention and Response* strategy for the pandemic**

The regional Prevention and Response strategy – which covers containment of the virus through a number of plans and enforcement powers – was adopted by all partners including the Council and has recently been revised (the strategy is available on request). The Council implements the strategy, which includes Test, Trace and Protect and the Vaccination Programme, through our local partnership structures. Our local multi-agency Prevention and Surveillance Group (which is currently meeting weekly) oversees and directs all local activity. Work across all six county-level Prevention and Surveillance groups is coordinated by the six respective chairs.

#### **To effectively manage the local operation of the *Test, Trace and Protect* programme**

Flintshire is the lead local authority for this programme in partnership with the Health Board, and is the employing body for the tracing workforce for the whole region. This service performs well. We are completing the latest phase of recruitment for the resilience of the tracing services through until the end of March, and have recently appointed a new Operations Manager to increase management capacity for the extended period of this service. The Council also plans the local testing services in partnership with the Health Board, the Ambulance Services Trust and other partners, and has finalised a contingency plan for mass community testing – known as ‘surge’ – should this be required. The way in which the Council has supported vulnerable people who have previously been ‘shielding’ is a working example of the ‘protect’ plan in action. We are active in promoting local take-up of testing including through the rotation of Mobile Testing Units (MTUs). We are now developing the Protect strategy with the communities of Shotton being a first priority for specialist local support through a partnership ‘hub’. A presentation was made to the Committee two meetings ago,

#### **To play a full part in the planning and delivery of partnership programmes e.g. the vaccination programme**

Flintshire plays a full part in the development and local implementation of all regional programmes. Through the Chief Executive the Council is represented on the strategic group that has designed and oversees the vaccination programme which is delivered by the Health Board as the

	responsible executive agency. The Council has played a major role in the planning and operation of the Mass Vaccination Centre at Deeside Leisure Centre and in promoting access to vaccinations amongst the community and our workforce. We also play a role in planning mobile vaccination units in areas of lower take-up. The current priority is the regional planning of the vaccination booster programme which is planned to begin in September for priority cohorts 1-4 (as defined by the UK Joint Committee for Vaccination and Immunisation). A presentation was made to the Committee two meetings and a verbal update will be given at this meeting.
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	None specific

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	Consultation on the second phase recovery strategy and governance arrangements has taken place with Chief Officers, the internal Emergency Management Response Team, Cabinet Members, and Group Leaders.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	None specific.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	None.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Colin Everett <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702101 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:chief.executive@flintshire.gov.uk">chief.executive@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	None.