

North Tyneside Council

Report to Cabinet

Date: 29 June 2020

Title: Covid-19 – A Framework for Recovery in North Tyneside

Portfolio(s): Elected Mayor	Cabinet Member(s): Elected Mayor
------------------------------------	---

Report from Service Area(s):	Corporate Strategy and Customer Service/Environment Housing and Leisure
Responsible Officer:	Jackie Laughton (Tel: (0191) 643 5724) Phil Scott (Tel: (0191) 643 7295)
Wards affected:	All

PART 1

1.1 Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to set out how work will be taken forward within the Authority and across the Borough to move from the Covid-19 crisis response phase to the recovery phase.

1.2 Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet agree the proposed framework for Covid-19 Recovery in North Tyneside.

1.3 Forward Plan:

Twenty-eight days' notice of this report was not able to be given due to the nature of the Covid-19 pandemic. The report first appeared on the Forward Plan that was published on 4 June 2020.

1.4 Council Plan and Policy Framework

This report relates to all of the priorities in the 2018-2021 Our North Tyneside Plan. All recovery planning and activity will be shaped by the Our North Tyneside Plan the Authority's core values as set out below:

We listen – our detailed plans will be informed through engagement with council staff, residents, businesses, community/voluntary sector and other partners

We care – the health and safety of our teams and residents will be our top priority at all times and our Customer Service Programme vision will continue throughout

We are ambitious – we will take this opportunity to be flexible, innovative and to stop doing what we no longer need; to keep and nurture what we value and to hold on to the new things we do (“build back better”)

We are good value for money – tight financial control, planning and risk management will continue to be a priority

1.5 Information:

Planning Assumptions

1.5.1 In drawing up this framework for recovery, the Authority’s planning assumptions for the recovery phase are as set out below. In line with the Government’s Covid-19 Recovery Strategy:

- the Authority must adapt to live with the virus in the community for the foreseeable future;
- any further easements to lockdown and the restart of businesses and services set by Government will be very gradual and on a phased basis;
- the “test, track and trace” arrangements will slow the spread of the virus and the Authority will work with partners on local outbreak control measures;
- shielding for the most medically critically vulnerable will remain for some time and the Authority will need to retain its support arrangements for those people;
- the Authority will see a changing nature of demand for some services such as Adult Social Care;
- social distancing and good respiratory hygiene will be key to manage the spread of infection and all work places, schools and other education facilities, retail settings and public spaces will need to be Covid-Secure;
- PPE will still be required where appropriate and the Authority will follow and promote Government guidance on its use such as the use of face coverings on public transport and in some other settings;
- there will be a significant financial impact for the Authority;
- the economic impact across the Borough as a whole will be substantial – nationally the forecast is for 14% GDP down this year and 15% GDP up next

Context in North Tyneside

1.5.2 It is still relatively early to be able to fully assess the impact which the pandemic has had and continues to have across North Tyneside. But as is already known, just like all other areas across the UK, it already looks and feels very different as a place. This will continue to be the case as the Borough adapts to live with the virus for example by re-shaping public spaces to ensure that they are Covid-Secure and safe for people to get around or spend time and for businesses to operate. Schools and other education facilities in North Tyneside are adapting so that they can gradually get back to places where more children, young people and others can safely attend.

1.5.3 The pandemic is creating a profound economic and social shock that will not be straightforward or quick to recover from. Local government has a key role to play in that, working with all other key partners. Economically the crisis will shift patterns of investment, activity and consumption and it will be important not to assume that things will either be able to, or be desired to, revert back to the pre-pandemic situation. The social impact is also great with differential impacts on different groups of people in the Borough from a health and social inequalities point of view. It is likely that the pandemic will have exacerbated already existing inequalities across the Borough and in relation to the numbers of people living in poverty. In addition, the health impact goes way beyond those directly impacted by having the virus including mental health and well-being.

Strategic Objectives

1.5.4 In line with the Our North Tyneside Plan, the recovery framework for North Tyneside is designed to meet the following clear set of strategic objectives

Our People

- to provide calm and resilient leadership – both within the Authority and across the Borough as a whole – mitigating the deep impacts of the pandemic on the Authority, communities and the local economy
- to protect the vulnerable as a priority
- to restore hope and confidence in future amongst communities and creating a platform for social recovery
- to contain the spread of infection
- to protect the safety of staff, residents and visitors
- to address the impacts of the pandemic from an equalities point of view in relation to protected characteristics, health, well-being education and income

Our Places

- to ensure Covid Secure open spaces and town centres to support confidence and to keep North Tyneside a great place to live, work and visit

Our Economy

- to support local businesses to enable economic recovery and growth

Our Organisation

- to ensure clear democratic oversight is in place
- to follow national Government guidance in all that the Authority does and link in with relevant plans and initiatives at a regional level
- to reflect the current context in North Tyneside – through evidence-based decision making with the ability to react and respond to opportunities and challenges

- to evaluate and learn lessons as the Authority moves forward (“better never stops”)

A phased approach

1.5.5 The Authority’s approach to recovery for North Tyneside is a long term one, starting with three distinct phases linked to the Government’s Covid-19 Recovery Strategy as well as the regional economic recovery framework. The three phases are

- Immediate “**restart**” phase (June – September 2020):

Focus is on : putting in right arrangements to enable effective decision making; establishing good governance and full political oversight; getting right early plans and actions in place in line with national Government guidance and new public health driven Covid-Secure standards; supporting eased lockdown through Local Outbreak control; re-starting Council services in line with Government guidance; supporting businesses, town centres and schools to re-open in a safe way; launching new Poverty Intervention Fund; ongoing financial support to businesses

- Medium “**transition**” phase (October 2020 to March 2021 linked to Government’s “Smarter Controls” phase):

Focus is on : planning for further transition from lockdown and replacing social restrictions with smarter controls; actions to address social and economic recovery; plans to live with Covid-19 in the community; working with the NHS to plan for winter; setting new budget and medium term financial plan; ending of local easements on planning and licensing

- Long term “**rebuild and grow**” phase (April 2021 – July 2021 linked to Government’s “Reliable Treatment” phase) :

– Focus is on: building a strong economy ; Ambition for North Tyneside; care home sector future; future of public transport; first phase of “as normal”

A Comprehensive Plan

1.5.6 Overseen by Cabinet and working in partnership, the Authority will deliver this phased approach through a very broad and comprehensive set of activity across the following workstream areas:

Our People

- *adult social care* – evaluating the impact on clients and adult population generally; re-starting service delivery to incorporate best practice re technology; working with the provider market. A continued focus on care homes and protecting the most vulnerable residents from infection.
- *children’s services* – evaluating the impact on children, young people and families; re-starting service delivery to incorporate best practice re technology;
- *schools and childcare* – working with schools and early years providers re phased re-opening plans; develop the Education Strategy for North Tyneside (linked to work North of Tyne re Education Challenge)

- *health and well-being* –promoting health and wellbeing across communities, identifying and responding to inequalities caused by Covid 19. Evaluating the broader health and well-being impacts from the pandemic and maximising opportunities to address these Promoting infection prevention and control to reduce the spread of coronavirus. Promoting the national test, track and trace service locally.
- Establishing a Covid 19 Health Protection Board in partnership with the NHS and others a plan for local incident management and outbreak control;
- *shielding the critically vulnerable* – continuing to operate the Local Support arrangements
 - *community and voluntary sector / volunteering* - reviewing the lessons learnt by the Community and Voluntary Sector in their response to Covid 19 and working across the sector to build back better, developing new opportunity including from an increase in volunteers, the use of technology and strengthening partnerships and collaborations that focus on the needs of beneficiaries.
 - *welfare and benefit support* – providing financial support and advice to vulnerable residents including through : Hardship Fund and welfare assistance; ensuring all residents able to claim support under Government schemes or welfare benefits; reviewing debt management policies
 - *public confidence and feelings of safety*- working through the Safer North Tyneside partnership to refresh work plan in light of the Covid-19 Recovery context; engaging with communities re Covid secure public spaces and town centres

Our Places

- *Covid secure public spaces* – in line with Government guidance providing Covid secure and accessible open spaces to support public confidence including over time : beaches, public toilets, parks, playsites and skate parks, visitor attractions, public rights of way and waggon ways; cemeteries and burial grounds; publicly accessible playing fields, green space and communal gardens
- *Covid secure workplace/public buildings* – in line with Government guidance providing Covid secure Authority workplaces and all public buildings
- *culture, sport and leisure* – in line with Government guidance, considering the re-instatement of all services and facilities in a Covid secure way
- *environmental operations* – in line with Government guidance, considering the re-instatement of all services (beyond just those essential services that have continued throughout the pandemic) across : waste and recycling collections; street cleansing and environmental operations; horticulture; fleet management and bereavement services
- *housing and construction* – ensuring that all housing and construction services can be reinstated in a Covid secure way in line with Government guidance including : advice and support for housing tenants; anti-social behaviour and

community protection; homelessness support; repairs and maintenance for council housing; planned improvements to council housing and other public buildings, schools and regeneration projects; delivery of affordable homes

- *highways* – ensuring that all highways services can be reinstated in line with Government guidance including : highways maintenance; gully cleansing; car park management; parking enforcement. Part of this will be to support the work to re-open *public spaces, town centres and shopping areas in a safe way*
- *regulatory services* – ensuring that any new legislation is incorporated into regulatory activities and supporting businesses to adapt to the new Covid secure environment including through : environmental health; licensing; trading standards; planning and building control. This also includes appropriate enforcement activity.

Our Economy

- *business support* – supporting local businesses to recover and grow through access to financial support; advice and information
- *inclusive economy strategy* – ensuring that no-one is left behind and everyone shares the benefits of growth during the recovery. From those recently made redundant, young people thinking about a career, those with poor digital or transport connectivity, residents with health issues, a budding entrepreneur with an enterprising idea, an established company looking to expand in an attractive, accessible location.
- *employability, skills and adult learning* – restarting services to support people to be able to access opportunities and develop skills through Connexions, adult learning and employability
- *transport* – supporting the work to restart businesses and to enable town centres and open spaces to be Covid-secure. Maximising the opportunity of maintaining the environmental impacts of modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport
- *digital connectivity* – ensuring that the Authority's digital infrastructure is sufficiently robust to support : increased demand for online services; sustained remote working; online security resilience; increased use of digital by businesses
- *supply chain* – ensuring that the Authority's supply chain can recover and grown in a sustainable way
- *town centres* – ensuring a co-ordinated recovery for town centres through : infrastructure changes to enable Covid-secure operation; future programmes of events and activities; communications and marketing campaigns to support Covid-secure plus to promote local consumption

Our Organisation

- *political recovery/democratic oversight* – enabling full Member engagement and meetings at all levels; ensuring readiness for future electoral events held under Covid-19 restrictions

- *finance* – understanding the impact of the pandemic on the Authority from a financial point of view re the 2020/21 budget as well as the Medium Term Financial Plan
- *HR and organisational development* – ensuring that the Authority team continue to be safe, paid, healthy, happy and capable through : health and safety (including Covid-secure workplace); workforce development plan and organisational development strategy

All of the activity workstreams will be supported by performance management (a dashboard of key information will be monitored on a twice weekly basis); comprehensive risk management; an end to end communications plan of activity to ensure clear communications with all key stakeholders; engagement with residents and other key stakeholders; equality impact assessment work; public health and hygiene advice, guidance and support.

Governance

- 1.5.7 The recovery activity will be overseen by Cabinet through both individual lead Cabinet Member oversight of the activity workstreams as well as written weekly progress reports to Cabinet on an informal basis and quarterly progress reports into full Cabinet meetings. Cabinet will provide written weekly progress updates to all Elected Members and progress reports will also be provided through the programme of Member Briefings.
- 1.5.8 At an Officer level, the activity is overseen by the Recovery Co-ordinating Group (co-chaired by the Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure and the Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service. This Group reports into the Senior Leadership Team of the Council.
- 1.5.9 In addition, the Chairs of Overview, Scrutiny, and Policy Development Committee, and the associated Sub-Committees, are meeting to consider a revised work programme of topics, intended to compliment the themes set out in the plan above, in order to provide maximum benefit for the Authority. As part of this, each Chair will be encouraged to discuss any proposed topic with their respective Head of Service, ensuring full coverage of all recovery activities. It is anticipated that this meeting will take place in mid- to late-June, with the intention of Committee and Sub-Committee activity commencing in July.

Decision options:

- 1.5.10 The following decision options are available for consideration by Cabinet

Option 1

Cabinet to agree

- (i) the proposed approach for Covid-19 recovery in North Tyneside as set out in paragraphs 1.5.4 to 1.5.6
- (ii) the proposed governance arrangements as set out in paragraphs 1.5.7 to 1.5.9

Option 2

Cabinet not to agree the proposed approach and governance arrangements and request officers to consider other options for Cabinet's consideration.

1.6 Reasons for recommended option:

Option 1 is recommended for the following reasons:

This would allow a comprehensive and structured approach to recovering from the Covid-19 pandemic, in line with relevant Government guidance and plans as well as clear governance arrangements to ensure transparency and accountability.

1.7 Appendices:

None.

1.8 Contact officers:

Jackie Laughton, Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service, tel. (0191) 643 5724

Phil Scott, Head of Environment, Housing and Leisure, tel (0191) 643 7295

1.9 Background information:

The following background papers/information have been used in the compilation of this report and are available at the office of the author:

Government guidance re Covid-19

PART 2 – COMPLIANCE WITH PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

2.1 Finance and other resources

Initial estimates of the financial impact of COVID-19 on the Authority are £24.930m for March 2020 and the 2020/21 financial year. This is made up of £14.959m of additional expenditure and £9.971m of income foregone. The support grant received from the Government is £12.531m. The current financial estimates are far in excess of the grant which are being received and as such there is a significant financial risk to the Authority.

The assumptions that form the basis for the estimated financial impact of COVID-19 are under regular review and continue to be updated as the Authority move through the different phases of the pandemic. Nationally, local government continue to report significant financial pressures relating to COVID-19, the implications of which are likely to be ongoing for the medium to long-term. for the short and medium term. The Local Government Association (LGA) and other representative organisations continue to apply pressure to the Government for additional financial support to help alleviate the significant financial pressures that each local authority is facing.

2.2 Legal

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. In managing the recovery process the Authority has to be mindful of its statutory obligations and the amendments to those duties and obligations enacted by the Coronavirus Act 2020 as well as guidance issued to local authorities by the Government.

The matter falls within the responsibility of Cabinet pursuant to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 and the Local Government Act 2000.

Whilst ordinarily emergency planning actions under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 are undertaken through delegated authority, in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, the Council has never encountered a situation such as the present one, and it is therefore appropriate that Cabinet approval is sought for the recovery plan.

Although it has not been possible to give 28 days' notice of the decision, in accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the Framework does not itself contain any Key Decisions, and subsequent decisions will be taken in accordance with the Constitution and the Scheme of Delegation, as appropriate.

2.3 Consultation/community engagement

2.3.1 Internal Consultation

Consultation with all Cabinet Members has taken place.

2.3.2 External Consultation/Engagement

Engagement with the following key stakeholders has taken place throughout the pandemic and this will continue for the recovery phase : North Tyneside Strategic Partnership; Business Forum and Chambers of Commerce; Community and Voluntary Sector groups and organisations; Headteachers; Care Providers; Trade Unions; NHS.

The Authority also works at a regional and sub-regional levels through relevant structures including : the North of Tyne Combined Authority; the North East Local Enterprise Partnership; the Local Resilience Forum; joint structures with the NHS.

2.4 Human rights

There are no human rights implications arising from the proposals in this report.

2.5 Equalities and diversity

Development of the Recovery Framework has been informed by the findings of the COVID-19 review of disparities in risks and outcomes published by Public Health England (PHE) on 2 June 2020. The PHE findings will form a key element of the equality impact assessment work that will be undertaken to support each of the activity workstreams.

2.6 Risk management

Each recovery workstream will identify and manage any risks in line with the corporate risk management approach.

2.7 Crime and disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from the proposals in this report.

2.8 Environment and sustainability

The recovery plan detailed in 1.5.6 includes a number of actions that will be taken to support the environment and key pieces of work such as developing Covid secure workplace/public buildings will consider environmental sustainability impacts. Additionally, capital projects supporting the recovery phase will also be assessed for environmental sustainability impacts.

PART 3 - SIGN OFF

- Chief Executive X
- Head(s) of Service X
- Mayor/Cabinet Member(s) X
- Chief Finance Officer X
- Monitoring Officer X
- Head of Corporate Strategy and Customer Service X