

<b>Cabinet Meeting</b>	
<b>Meeting Date</b>	9 <sup>th</sup> June 2021
<b>Report Title</b>	Swale Borough Council and its approach to recovery
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Roger Truelove, Leader of the Council
<b>SMT Lead</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration
<b>Head of Service</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Classification</b>	<b>Open</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	1. That Members note the update of progress on the Recovery Plan (set out in Appendix One).

## **1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Council's COVID19 Recovery Plan was first agreed by Cabinet on the 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020. It was agreed that the document would be in draft as it would evolve over time through the pandemic. The plan was discussed in a member forum on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 to help shape it and allow member involvement at that time. Feedback was taken into account when the plan was updated in September 2020 and presented as an appendix to the Corporate Plan which was adopted by Council.
- 1.2 This document provides an update and refresh of the plan given the progress and developments that have occurred since September 2020. This is set out in Appendix One.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The government's overarching approach to recovery was published in June 2020 in a 50-page recovery strategy (our Plan to Rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy).
- 2.2 Since that time, the nation has been focused on dealing with both response phases and recovery phases in respect of the pandemic. In June the council started to plan for recovery (hence this plan being developed) but come September 2020 it was clear that the country was heading into another response phase as COVID rates began to rise and as a result, tiered restrictions introduced in October 2020 and then November 2020 saw the second full national 'lockdown' until March 2021.

- 2.3 This Plan had identified that this recovery would be unique and would not be lineal and this has borne out to date with various spikes in rates and the virus mutating. This placed heavy demand on our NHS resulting in returning back to emergency/ response approaches. This has only started to ease following the lockdown when rates began to fall and when the vaccine started to roll out in February 2021.
- 2.4 This has allowed Government to look at easing restrictions which it set out in its 'roadmap' – COVID19 Response Spring 2021. This has resulted in the ability to start to plan once again for recovery – a year after the pandemic started, with new government initiatives and funding associated with it.
- 2.5 We have learnt a lot in the past year and it still remains that recovery may require some form of realignment of services and processes of the council, with short, medium and long-term choices to make.
- 2.6 This plan helps to focus those choices and determine priorities. What is clear is that we still face huge challenges both nationally and locally, and the need to be flexible and agile is still of upmost importance. Working together with our partners is crucial as is timely messaging and support to our residents when needed.

### **3 Proposals**

- 3.1 That Members note the update of progress on the Recovery Plan (set out in Appendix One).

### **4 Alternative Options**

- 4.1 The council doesn't have a Recovery Plan. This isn't recommended as we need a plan to help focus and prioritise the council's approach and ensure that is a safe, sustainable, managed recovery. In accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the County Council, along with District councils, have a statutory responsibility regarding response and recovery.

### **5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed**

- 5.1 The Recovery Plan will evolve over time as the phases of recovery roll out nationally. The intention is to regularly review and seek feedback. This started with a member forum being held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020. the intention is to utilise the Area Committees as the council moves through the recovery phase.

### **6 Implications**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>
Corporate Plan	The priorities of the Recovery Plan mirror those of the Corporate Plan and actions are aligned across all 4 priorities

Financial, Resource and Property	<p>To date the council has received significant funding support across a range of service areas to support us in delivering through Covid. This is set out in appendix one.</p> <p>The full outturn position on the Covid related funding will be included in the Finance report to cabinet in July 2021.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	There are various statutory, regulatory and licensing powers that the council can use to help rebuild the local economy and support communities.
Crime and Disorder	We are working with the Police to ensure open and public spaces stay safe as we move out of lockdown and will continue to monitor the situation throughout the recovery phases.
Environment and Climate/Ecological Emergency	Any opportunities arising from the pandemic will be explored, as will new approaches as a result of behavioural change and its impact on the environment.
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The plan looks at opportunities to promote health and wellbeing, capitalising on a new interest in walking and cycling and enjoying the outdoors that the pandemic has brought.</p> <p>It also will focus on the vulnerable groups hardest hit by the pandemic, and address health and wellbeing implications arising from it such as fuel poverty, mental health.</p> <p>This is also a focus for the work being done to get staff back to the office, where mental health issues of isolation are an issue.</p>
Risk Management and Health and Safety	<p>The council is adhering to government guidance in all areas of work and service delivery to ensure the safety of staff, members and residents.</p> <p>A risk assessment has been completed for Swale House</p> <p>Risk assessments have also been completed for outwards facing staff working in the community</p> <p>We also support staff and volunteers with PPE.</p>
Equality and Diversity	The Recovery Plan will enable our communities to be resilient and cohesive and support social change and quality of life, focusing on the vulnerable groups hardest hit by the pandemic.
Privacy and Data Protection	Consideration has been given as part of the community response project and the handling of sensitive data of the shielded cohort.

## 7 Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix One: Updated Recovery Plan

## **8 Background Papers**

None