

# Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel

**Date:** Tuesday, 30th June, 2020

**Time:** 4.30 pm

**Venue:** Virtual Meeting - Zoom - Public Access via YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/bathnescouncil>

**Councillors:** Paul Myers, Winston Duguid, Mark Elliott, Andrew Furse, Hal MacFie, Alastair Singleton, Shaun Hughes, Karen Warrington and Lucy Hodge



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## NOTES:

1. Inspection of Papers: Papers are available for inspection as follows:

Council's website: <https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?bcr=1>

2. Details of decisions taken at this meeting can be found in the minutes which will be circulated with the agenda for the next meeting. In the meantime, details can be obtained by contacting as above.

3. Broadcasting of Meetings

The Council will broadcast the images and sounds live via the internet

<https://www.youtube.com/bathnescouncil>

The Council may also use the images/sound recordings on its social media site or share with other organisations, such as broadcasters.

4. Public Speaking at Meetings

The Council has a scheme to encourage the public to make their views known at meetings. They may make a statement relevant to what the meeting has power to do. They may also present a petition or a deputation on behalf of a group.

Advance notice is required not less than two working days before the meeting.

Further details of the scheme can be found at:

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=12942>

5. Supplementary information for meetings

Additional information and Protocols and procedures relating to meetings

<https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13505>

## Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel - Tuesday, 30th June, 2020

at 4.30 pm in the Virtual Meeting - Zoom - Public Access via YouTube  
<https://www.youtube.com/bathnescouncil>

### A G E N D A

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS
2. EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chair will draw attention to the emergency evacuation procedure as set out under Note 6.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS
4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point in the meeting declarations of interest are received from Members in any of the agenda items under consideration at the meeting. Members are asked to indicate:

- (a) The agenda item number in which they have an interest to declare.
- (b) The nature of their interest.
- (c) Whether their interest is **a disclosable pecuniary interest** or an **other interest**,  
(as defined in Part 2, A and B of the Code of Conduct and Rules for Registration of Interests)

Any Member who needs to clarify any matters relating to the declaration of interests is recommended to seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer or a member of his staff before the meeting to expedite dealing with the item during the meeting.

5. TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN
6. ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

At the time of publication no notifications had been received.

7. MINUTES - 27TH MAY 2020 (Pages 7 - 18)
8. CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

The Cabinet Member will update the Panel on any relevant issues. Panel members may ask questions on the update provided.

9. CHAIRS & VICE CHAIRS TASK & FINISH GROUP FEEDBACK - COVID-19 POSITION STATEMENT (Pages 19 - 44)

This report presents the findings of the Task & Finish Group to the Panel.

10. COVID-19 2020/21 FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN (Pages 45 - 88)

The Panel are asked to discuss this report prior to its consideration by the Cabinet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 meeting. It presents the Covid-19 2020/21 Financial Recovery Cabinet report.

11. PANEL WORKPLAN (Pages 89 - 92)

This report presents the latest workplan for the Panel. Any suggestions for further items or amendments to the current programme will be logged and scheduled in consultation with the Panel's Chair and supporting officers.

The Committee Administrator for this meeting is Mark Durnford who can be contacted on [mark\\_durnford@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:mark_durnford@bathnes.gov.uk), 01225 394458.

**BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET**

**CORPORATE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Wednesday, 27th May, 2020

**Present:-** Councillors Paul Myers (Chair), Winston Duguid (Vice-Chair), Mark Elliott, Andrew Furse, Hal MacFie, Alastair Singleton, Shaun Hughes, Karen Warrington and Lucy Hodge

**Cabinet Member for Resources:** Councillor Richard Samuel

**Policy Development Chairs & Vice-Chairs:** Councillors Vic Pritchard & Michelle O'Doherty (Chair & Vice-Chair of the Children, Adults, Health & Wellbeing Panel) and Councillors Karen Walker & Tom Davies (Chair & Vice-Chair of the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Panel).

**Also in attendance:** Maria Lucas (Director of Legal and Democratic), David Trethewey (Director of Partnerships and Corporate Services) and Andy Rothery (Director of Finance & S151 Officer)

**55 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed Panel members and officers who were attending the meeting via Zoom and members of the public viewing on YouTube.

He explained that four other councillors had been invited to attend the meeting, namely Councillors Vic Pritchard & Michelle O'Doherty (Chair & Vice-Chair of the Children, Adults, Health & Wellbeing Panel) and Councillors Karen Walker & Tom Davies (Chair & Vice-Chair of the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Panel). He added that these councillors were not eligible to vote as part of the Panel.

He added that also present were David Trethewey – Director of Partnership & Corporate Services, Andy Rothery – Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer, Maria Lucas - Director of Legal & Democratic Services and Mark Durnford – Democratic Services Officer.

He announced that the meeting was being held under The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020. He stated that the Council had agreed a protocol to cover virtual meetings and that this meeting would operate in line with that protocol. He explained that the meeting had the same status and validity as a meeting held in the Guildhall.

**56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were none.

## **57 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Lucy Hodge declared an 'other interest' in respect of agenda item 7 (COVID-19 - Update Report and Position statement) as she has a standby role for the NHS to attend the Royal United Hospital, Bath if required during the Covid-19 crisis.

Councillor Shaun Hughes declared an 'other interest' in respect of agenda item 7 (COVID-19 - Update Report and Position statement) as he has had a business receive a Business Support Grant during the Covid-19 crisis.

Councillor Michelle O'Doherty declared an 'other interest' in respect of agenda item 7 (COVID-19 - Update Report and Position statement) as she is the secretary of Lansdown Cricket Club and they have received a Business Support Grant during the Covid-19 crisis.

The Monitoring Officer issued a dispensation in relation to those Councillors that were in receipt of any grants that had been awarded by the government under the COVID-19 Regulations, such as business grants or furloughing, to allow all Members to take part in the debate. She asked members to communicate via the chat function on this matter so that the Democratic Services Officer could have a record of their declarations.

## **58 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN**

There was none.

## **59 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING**

The Chairman announced that statements had been received from David Redgewell and Councillor Robin Moss and that these had been circulated to the Panel. The Chairman read them both out, also they are attached as an online appendix to these minutes and a summary is set out below.

### Statement from David Redgewell - South West Transport Network and Railfuture Severnside

We are concerned about social distancing regulations within Bath and North East Somerset on the public transport network.

With government guidance to local authorities, Transport operators and passenger groups - we are concerned about the lack of social distancing notices on bus shelter and stops. There is no clear social distancing marking on pavements.

Realtime information displays need to explain timetables and social distancing guidance and the wearing of face masks and CONTACTLESS payments on buses.

Clear destinations need to be displayed and provide information on the front when the bus is full for passengers - DISABLED ACCESS is protected.

Hand gels are required at key interchanges and public toilets need to be reopened in the district and the block at Avon Street Coach Station.

On Railway services social distancing is required on trains with just 45 passengers allowed on a 3-car train and 60 on an intercity train - social distancing on trains and station is important. Notices and signs need to be in place at Keynsham, Oldfield Park, Bath Spa and Freshford.

Enforcement of social distancing is required by transport staff, including marshalling at key interchanges by support from the British Transport Police and the Avon and Somerset Police.

The Chairman thanked him for the statement on behalf of the Panel and asked that it be passed to the Cabinet Member for Transport and the Leader of the Council.

#### Statement from Councillor Robin Moss

I am asking that the scrutiny panel considers reviewing the current B&NES corporate outsourcing arrangements, not just in light of the Covid-19 emergency, but also that there have been concerns about the lack of flexibility, the quality of service & value for money even prior to this year.

The use of the private sector to provide home care & associated services has resulted in staff surveys showing high levels of dissatisfaction & internal monitoring reports showing service delivery being 'red flagged' as poor.

There have been consistent national & local reports that residential care providers are under severe financial strain. This is likely to get worse as the increased PPE costs as well as social distancing reducing the number who can be accommodated reduces.

Outsourcing our services does not outsource our responsibility as a local authority. Outsourcing does however make it more difficult to respond to crises, it makes it more difficult to introduce improvements when quality is deteriorating & it is increasingly a more expensive option.

I believe there needs to be a debate on how local councils provide their services, what is appropriate in the private sector, what should be in 'house' & where the co-operative & '3<sup>rd</sup> sector' should be used.

The current financial crisis does mean we have to look not only at what services we provide, but also how we provide those services. It is an opportunity to move away from the 'private profit is best' nostrum, that may have benefited shareholders in the past, but which has failed to benefit residents.

Councillor Andrew Furse commented that the outsourcing of services does make it harder for the Council to pull certain levers in times like these.

Councillor Shaun Hughes asked for the Panel to receive a summary of all services that are currently outsourced from the Council.

The Chairman agreed that it would be good to see a summary of services and then consider what further work the Panel could do in the future. He added that they could look to explore the experiences of different sectors and have feedback from those that receive these services.

Councillor Richard Samuel stated that around £90m is spent on contracts, which is a quarter of the Council's gross spend per year. He added that this is a long-term strategic issue which he is willing to look into and bring a report back in due course to the Panel for an informed discussion.

Councillor Karen Warrington said that there is a role for consultants to play within the life of the Council. She added though that it would be good to have a review to see if any could be used on a less frequent basis.

Councillor Hal MacFie said that he would welcome a presentation on this matter from the Cabinet Member.

Councillor Vic Pritchard commented that there are profound implications to the statement made by Councillor Moss. He added that the Virgin Care contract is monitored on a daily basis. He explained that one of things that the crisis has highlighted is that there is not adequate integrated care between acute care and social care and that changes regarding this are required on a national level.

The Chairman proposed that an initial briefing paper on the definition of outsourcing and how much and what is outsourced be received by the Panel from the Cabinet Member for Resources and lead financial officers. He added the Panel could try to gain experience of services that have been outsourced, review this information and then seek to form recommendations.

He suggested that the work could involve the other two Policy Development & Scrutiny Panels.

The Panel unanimously agreed with this proposal.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Moss for the statement on behalf of the Panel.

## **60 MINUTES: 3RD FEBRUARY 2020 & 10TH FEBRUARY 2020**

The Panel approved the minutes for the meetings held on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2020 & 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020 as a correct record.



## 61 COVID-19 - UPDATE REPORT AND POSITION STATEMENT

The Director of Partnership & Corporate Services introduced the report to the Panel. He explained that it contained a consolidation of the activity carried out since the crisis began and that although some information had been released through press releases it was good to share this with members of the public and Councillors.

He stated that the priorities have been to protect our most vulnerable, support local businesses and maintain Council services.

He added that there was a need to recognise the excellent work of staff for adapting their current roles, for those that have taken on additional work and those that have been redeployed.

He said that £33m of Business Grants had been distributed locally and that this had been done by a number of staff that had come together from across different departments.

He stated that the Council in partnership with Virgin Care, the CCG and 3SG have worked around the clock to set up the Compassionate Community Hub, combining resources to ensure the system can provide sustainable and appropriate responses to meet community needs.

He explained that it operated via a dedicated public phone number and that the Hub offers advice and support for those who are self-isolating, shielding or simply in need of help.

He said that the Hub is an excellent example of a strong working partnership bringing together the Council, Virgin Care and the 3SG plus other third sector partners across different organisational boundaries and making a real difference on the ground.

He added that our residents and communities also deserve praise for adapting to changes that have been put in place.

He concluded by saying that the report gives the Panel an opportunity to consider what they wish to look at further as we move into different phases of crisis.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer addressed the Panel. He said that early on in this process it became apparent that the Council would be exposed to a big loss to its income due to how the crisis would affect Heritage and Parking Services in particular.

He explained that the report showed that the financial impact of coronavirus due to the extra expense and income loss added together was currently predicted to lead to a circa £43m shortfall in revenue funding for Council services this year.

He stated that a pragmatic approach was required by the Council and that the next cycle of reporting would focus on how we can look to deliver recovery measures.

He highlighted the funding measures from within the report.

<b>COVID-19 Emergency Funding Initial allocation (19 March)</b>	<b>£1.6bn</b>	<b>£4.64m</b>
<b>COVID-19 Emergency Funding Second allocation (18 April)</b>	<b>£1.6bn</b>	<b>£5.36m</b>
<b>Hardship Fund</b>	<b>£0.50 bn</b>	<b>£1.29m</b>
<b>Business Support Grants</b>	<b>£12.33 bn</b>	<b>£46.1m</b>

He informed the Panel that the B&NES allocation of the £3.2bn of Government grant funding had given the Council £10m to meet new expenditure pressures, however this would not mitigate the projected reductions in income and further support from government would be essential to enable the Council to manage its 2020/21 budget.

He stated that a further grant of just over £2m had recently been released to B&NES to address the pressure to deliver safe practice in care homes.

The Chairman referred to section 4 of the appendix and asked if the loss of income could be broken down by service department and asked when levels of activity might return.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer replied that our income modelling remains consistent in that we expect a period of low income from Heritage & Parking Services until September. He added that the recovery period was likely to at least last until April 2021.

The Chairman asked if there has been any consideration given to reducing the costs associated with Heritage Services given the fact that a lot of the cost are related to activity. He added that tourism may not return as we know it until 2021 and asked will the Council be able to carry on covering the large overhead associated with this service.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer replied that cost recovery work was well progressed and would feature in the report to Cabinet on June 24<sup>th</sup>.

Councillor Hal MacFie asked if the Government had requested certain services to continue without allowing for any grants or funding from them.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer replied that the Council has been given a £10m revenue grant which has not been specifically ring fenced and this therefore is covering some new areas of work.

Councillor Hal MacFie asked if particular services were forecast to go high over their current budget.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer replied that he didn't expect many to do so. He added that as the profile of the Council changes again in the coming months it will likely begin to do less of the things it is has been doing more of recently. He added that the Council was assuring as much as possible that it was receiving the services it has paid for through its contracts.

Councillor Hal MacFie asked if a budget had been set aside for housing the number of homeless people that had been given accommodation as a result of the crisis.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer replied that funding had been earmarked and that he would find the exact figure for the Panel.

Councillor Lucy Hodge said that she welcomed the position statement report and thanked all staff for their work so far during the crisis. She asked if whether the reduction in planning applications had led to staff in that department being redeployed.

The Director of Partnership & Corporate Services replied that he did not have those figures to hand but could find out for the Panel.

Councillor Lucy Hodge asked how many members of staff responded to the recent survey relating to the crisis.

The Director of Partnership & Corporate Services replied that around 900 responses were received. He added further surveys were likely as the crisis was ongoing.

Councillor Lucy Hodge asked how the £2m allocation to the Council for the Delivery of Social Care was being utilised.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer replied that the Council has advanced funded the supply of PPE to a number of Care Homes and that it would be appropriate for that cost to be met from the £2m grant and then to follow the guidance issued to allocate what remains in an appropriate way.

Councillor Tom Davies said that he welcomed the report, in particular the positive aspects surrounding the distribution of Business Grants. He asked how the Council were preparing for matters such as safe spaces for walking (social distancing) and cycling around the city centre and our local shopping areas and general governance as we move towards exiting lockdown.

The Director of Partnership & Corporate Services replied that normally you would see Councils balance the managing of the incident with preparing for recovery, but this situation is very different as the incident is ongoing. He added that the number of tactical incident meetings is now less, and recovery cells are being arranged.

He said that while announcements from Government were being received, they do not always contain funding information and that this may lead us to be initially cautious in our approach.

Councillor Andrew Furse asked if the Council was preparing for a possible increase in applications for planning permission and licensing for the use of tables & outside of restaurants and public houses. He added that he was concerned over the time this process might take.

The Director of Partnership & Corporate Services replied that he couldn't offer assurances on those matters specifically at this time as the Council was only just moving into a recovery phase.

Councillor Andrew Furse asked if the Council was confident that all grants have been issued to legitimate businesses.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer replied that a rigorous two stage identity checking process for grant applications was put in place from the outset and checked against our Business Rates records.

Councillor Michelle O'Doherty wished to thank all officers for their work in the current difficult circumstances. She asked what actions are being taken to address the poor levels of wellbeing and anxiety expressed by some members of staff in the recent survey.

The Director of Partnership & Corporate Services replied that a range of measures have been put in place, such as tools on the intranet on how to keep fit and stay safe / well and a notification system that pops up on screen to advise staff to take a break. He added that there was also a programme of direct support to advise managers on how to look after staff whilst working remotely.

Councillor Mark Elliott thanked staff for the excellent work they had done so far. He asked had any evidence been gathered to say whether productivity had increased or declined at this stage due to Working From Home or whether this was something that will be monitored.

The Director of Partnership & Corporate Services replied that there had been anecdotal data from some staff that their productivity has increased due to a lack of a daily commute and being able to organise around other commitments. He added that it is an area that will continue to be monitored as there is no plan in place as yet to bring staff back into the offices.

Councillor Mark Elliott asked how prepared the Council was for the Test & Trace process and what funding / officer resources will be received to enable it.

The Director of Partnership & Corporate Services replied that he could not give a reply at this stage although he was aware that colleagues within Public Health were working through the guidance that has been issued.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer added that he was hoping to receive some clarity on funding allocation in the coming days.

Councillor Vic Pritchard asked if the budget set by Council in February would remain in place and provide the listed 800 or so services or would some be curtailed and the funds returned centrally.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer replied that the agreed budget would be kept in place as it was too early to understand the whole financial impact of the crisis. He added that the Council will need time to form cost recovery measures to mitigate budget pressures when they are identified.

The Director of Legal & Democratic Services confirmed that a legal budget had been set by the Council and would be followed with cost recovery measures in mind.

Councillor Karen Walker thanked the officers for compiling the report. She asked whether a press release could be issued to promote to members of the public to sign up to receiving information from the Council via email to enable them to get as much up to date news as possible. She asked which of the Council's Capital Programme projects are continuing, pausing or being stopped.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer replied that a review on this matter was still ongoing and that initially it would be more a case of assessing timescales rather than pausing or stopping projects. He added that it was hoped that the outcome of the review would be part of the Cabinet report scheduled to be discussed on 24<sup>th</sup> June.

Councillor Karen Walker asked how long the Compassionate Community Hub would remain in place.

The Director of Partnership & Corporate Services replied that we will need to work with partners over the next few weeks to see what the future of the Hub will be. He added that it had been widely recognised as a huge success.

Councillor Alastair Singleton said that he welcomed the useful and informative report that had been produced for the Panel. He said that he had also been greatly impressed by the flexibility and adaptability of Council staff during this period. He asked if for those that have undertaken new roles whether their original jobs will be in place / required once the crisis has slowed down.

The Director of Partnership & Corporate Services replied that he felt it would be more a question of how the Council works as an organisation and what skills it requires and he said that this would be assessed during the business recovery phase. He added that he had felt that overall that staff that had taken on new roles had done so positively.

Councillor Alastair Singleton asked if there were any restrictions as to how businesses spent the grants that they had been issued.

Councillor Karen Warrington wished to add her admiration for staff across the Council and their work during the crisis and for the detailed report the Panel had received. She asked how many small businesses had been declined a Business Grant.

The Director of Partnership & Corporate Services replied that he was unable to answer at the present time but would find out for the Panel.

Councillor Winston Duguid asked if the Council is recharging for the PPE it has procured for Care Homes and Community Resource Centres at cost price or is it losing money as part of the current process.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer replied that the Council is required to procure PPE and fund it and has been charging against the grant that has been issued by the Government whilst stocks have been in short supply. He added that

the new Social Care Grant is intended to help Care Homes fund their own PPE purchases in the future.

The Chairman asked considering the Government grants that are in place why are our figures relating to the Collection Fund showing that we will be in such a deficit.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer replied that there is no fund to mitigate those members of the public that can't now afford to pay their Council Tax as a result of becoming a new Universal Credit claimant as a result of the crisis. He added that this was a prudent estimate and that the picture will become clearer in the coming months.

The Chairman asked for more details on the figure supplied in the report in terms of the Revenue Capitalisation costs.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer replied that as delivery has slowed down on capital projects the Council will not be able to charge 100% of the associated salary costs to those projects.

The Chairman asked if the Council was allowed to claim furlough in respect of its staff.

The Director of Finance & Section 151 Officer replied that the guidance had been reviewed and that Councils could claim on behalf of staff that work in income generating venues that have had to close due to current restrictions.

The Cabinet Member for Resources commented that he felt that the crisis had exposed a weakness in the Council's constitution in terms of governance. He said that he didn't believe that the emergency powers within it were written with an incident of this magnitude in mind.

He added that it became apparent early on that a daily briefing with senior Councillor figures was required as they felt out of the loop with decisions that were being taken on their behalf. He said that he expected a review of the constitution to take place as part of this process.

He commented that in terms of Business Grants, large organisations and those non-rate paying businesses were excluded when they were first issued, but that from today a £2m discretionary business grant scheme would be able to be applied for.

In respect of the Council's budget he said that they hoped to carry out as much as possible, but it was clear that there would be elements that will not be possible in totality. He stated that all Councils will be facing a similar challenge across the country.

He said that it had been difficult at times due to the different funding streams that had been received as he felt that this could have been coordinated better by the Government. He added that the work and connectivity between the Council, the local NHS and CCG had been extremely good and very strong.

He stated that he felt that it would take the public transport system years to recover fully from this and that it should also be noted how much reduction in car usage there has been due to the crisis.

Councillor Mark Elliott asked when would the emergency powers relating to decision making cease.

The Cabinet Member for Resources replied that the Chief Executive had informed him that he intended to bring them to a conclusion at the end of May.

The Director of Legal & Democratic Services explained the emergency powers under the Constitution came into effect as initially it was not possible to facilitate a meeting of the Cabinet or other such bodies. She said that now that meetings were able to take place, the use of these powers would reduce. She stated that the Chief Executive did not have exclusive power while operating under the emergency rules and that Cabinet Members and senior officers could also make decisions and have done so during this period.

Councillor Karen Warrington commented that she had received feedback from local residents that they had felt quite remote during this period and that some of the communications had seemed sporadic. She said that this area of the Council will become key during the recovery period and as the Test & Trace process begins to roll out.

She added that she would like to discuss further the matter of PPE for volunteers to assist in working within our communities and with local vulnerable people.

Councillor Michelle O'Doherty commented that she believed that a number of key points, in particular Social Care and PPE in Care Homes would welcome further discussion at the Children, Adults, Health & Wellbeing Panel of which she is a member.

Councillor Mark Elliott said that he felt that the communications from the Council took quite a while to get going from when the crisis began to the letter being received by all members of the public. He added that an earlier assurance to our most vulnerable and most isolated residents would have been welcomed.

Councillor Lucy Hodge stated that she agreed that the letter took too long to be distributed and that it should have made clear that despite the crisis the NHS was open as normal for non Covid related issues.

Councillor Karen Walker asked for the statement made by David Redgewell to be passed onto her Panel as well as Transport was within their remit.

The Chairman said that it was telling by the number of questions asked how much work had been done so far and was still to do in different phases. He added that it also showed how important it is to have an ongoing scrutiny function within the Council and to provide information to the public in this forum.

He said that he expected the Panel to continue to do more work of this nature in the coming weeks and months.

Following a proposal by Councillor Paul Myers that was seconded by Councillor Karen Warrington the Panel **RESOLVED** that;

- (i) A Task & Finish Group be convened with the membership of the current Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel Chairs & Vice-Chairs to feedback in more detail on these matters to the Cabinet and lead officers of the Council.
- (ii) Members of the Corporate Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel can email further comments on the report to Democratic Services by 5.00pm on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May.

The Chairman said that feedback from the Task & Finish Group would form part of the Panel's next agenda and that they were currently due to meet on 24<sup>th</sup> July. He thanked all those present for their contributions to the meeting.

The meeting ended at 6.10 pm

Chair(person) .....

Date Confirmed and Signed .....

**Prepared by Democratic Services**



<b>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council</b>	
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>Corporate Policy Development &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>
<b>MEETING DATE:</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> June 2020</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Task &amp; Finish Group report (Scrutiny of the COVID-19 Council position statement)</b>
<b>WARD:</b>	All
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>	
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Position statement: Council Response to COVID-19</li> </ol>	

## **1 THE ISSUE**

### **1.1 BACKGROUND**

On the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020, the Corporate Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel and the Chairs & Vice Chairs of the remaining two Panels met to review the COVID-19 update report and position statement. The position statement summaries the council's local response to the COVID -19 pandemic. It sets out the interim governance arrangements that have been put in place to enable the Council to take quick and decisive action to effectively manage the impacts of the coronavirus as they arise.

Following the discussion and several questions asked, and due to the pressure of time, the Panel agreed to carry out further scrutiny. The Chair proposed that a Task and Finish group was agreed with the membership of the current Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel Chairs & Vice Chairs to discuss in more detail some of the questions raised. The findings of the Task & Finish group would then be discussed at a special Corporate Policy & Development Panel meeting and then to Cabinet at its meeting on the 2nd July.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

**The Corporate Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel is asked to;**

**2.1 Report any comments to inform Cabinet at their meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July.**

## **3 THE REPORT**

The Policy Development & Scrutiny Chairs & Vice Chairs, along with officers, met on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The Task & Finish group pulled together the following key themes as a result of its discussions.

### **3.1 Explaining the budget deficit that can be conveyed in a simple context, and clearly communicated to our local community.**

The Task & Finish group found it difficult to put the scale of the loss of income to the Council into the context of the overall budget for the year. The group would like to determine what the shortfall of income would be as a percentage of the 2020/21 budget. The group felt that unless one was completely conversant with the Council's finances, it was difficult to gauge the magnitude of the loss.

The Chair compared it to the pressures surrounding adult and young people's social care and how once the Council explained that 80% of the budget was broadly committed to this area, this put the pressures on remaining budget areas sharing the 20% into context. The 80/20 split was a broad-brush statement and so it was asked if the group could have a similar statement to illustrate the current financial situation.

The group was also concerned that the Council are not highlighting some of the ongoing pressures. It was recognised that 80% of the budget spend for Adult & Children consists of the delivery of statutory services, however not everything is defined in statute. Corporate Director Mike Bowden suggested that there are choices within the 80% about how we deliver these services and where there are areas of current delivery that maybe preventing future expansion. There is the option of looking at how we could do this differently without taking this out of the 20% remaining spend that is not designated to Adults & Children.

Finance Director, Andy Rothery reported that the majority of the Covid-19 pressure on the Council's budget is effecting commercial income, the reduced income in 2020/21 will result in a deficit on a funding source that is required to finance the expenditure budgets of the Council's services.

### **3.2 In terms of managing our financial deficient, what levers are available to our administration to tackle it.**

Bath & North East Somerset's exposure to the impact of COVID-19 is different to other local authorities due to our types of income streams and size, which have presented a different scale of challenge for us locally.

<b>B&amp;NES Position</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Loss of Income</b>	<b>35.9</b>	Our income is at risk and we are under the most pressure from commercial income including our Heritage Services (Roman Baths), Parking and Commercial Estate which makes up around £30m of this figure.
<b>Increased Expenditure</b>	<b>9.8</b>	We are anticipating increased costs in supporting our most vulnerable in Social Care and responding to COVID-19 implications such as sourcing Personal Protective Equipment

B&NES Position	£m	Comments
		(PPE) for the region and keeping services such as Waste collection operating with new demand pressures.
<b>Collection Fund</b>	<b>7.5</b>	Due to the economic impacts of COVID-19, it is anticipated that our Council Tax and Business Rates collection will fall with fewer people and business able to pay.
<b>Government Grant</b> (see <i>Emergency Funding below</i> )	<b>-10</b>	The B&NES allocation of the £3.2bn of Government grant funding has given us £10m to meet new expenditure pressures, however this will not mitigate our projected reductions in income. Further support from government will be essential to enable the Council to manage its 2020/21 Budget.
<b>Projected Deficit</b>	<b>43.2</b>	

Councillors would therefore be better informed if they were aware of the ways (levers) that the Council could use to manage this deficit. For example, how much could we meet this with cuts, delaying expenditure, utilising reserves, selling some of our assets etc. Can we identify all the things that we can do as a Council to manage the situation?

Although it was recognised that disposal of assets could generate capital receipts and mitigate capital borrowing, overall the proceeds cannot be used to fund revenue spending by law. In addition, given that the market is heavily depressed the amount received is not likely to represent a long-term value once things recover. One suggested alternative is to start to think about other areas within the Council portfolio where we could reinvest to provide us with a higher return.

Director of Finance, Andy Rothery informed the group that there are several areas where expenditure will not be at the same pace as previously but have now changed due to the COVID situation. When the Council sets the budget, contingency budgets are set up which can be used to release reserves and income generated services.

The Chair requested further information on the assumptions of future planning for tourism in 2021 considering the current pressures. It was recognised that this is a one 'off' situation, so there will be a recovery period to enable core businesses to get back on track. If the assumption is that we will gradually return to 'normal' or that in fact the world has changed so much there will be a 'new' 'normal'.

Concern was also raised over how we can make Bath & North East Somerset a safe place to visit with the current tight restrictions on social distancing, making it difficult to restart many businesses. The group recognised that there are temporary measures that can be used to test what may work in central Bath and market towns and local centres across North East Somerset.

### 3.3 Timescales

The Task & Finish group requested clarity on the timescales for delivering the different approaches as well as details of the formal process that can be used to ensure the effective scrutiny of pre plans and strategies.

Director of Finance Andy Rothery reported that the in-year budget would not be presented to Council and to take a whole new budget would be a risk to take forward now as the government may respond with further support for councils.

Our current budget reflects many of the ongoing budget pressures and reflects the Corporate Strategy/Financial Strategies that are already assigned. The process will be to take forward the 20/21 mitigation plans and to set out how the overspend can be managed. A financial recovery report will be presented to the Corporate Scrutiny Panel and then considered at Cabinet. The report will define the recovery measures and explain how expenditure can be managed within our financial year.

### 3.4 Conclusion

The Task & Finish group concluded that without being able to understand all of the assumptions it was difficult to conclude whether more needed to be done now to avert a deepening of the financial crisis, or whether it is justified to take time to see how the situation develops in the coming months.

## 4 CONSULTATION

5.1 This report has been cleared by the S151 Officer and Monitoring Officer

<b>Contact person</b>	Councillor Paul Myers (Chair & of the Chairs & Vice Chairs Group)
<b>Background papers</b>	Minutes from the Corporate Panel meeting 27 <sup>th</sup> May <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=5755&amp;x=1">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MId=5755&amp;x=1</a>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	

## Position Statement: Council Response to COVID-19

This document summaries the Council's local response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It sets out the interim Governance Arrangements that have been put in place to enable the Council to take quick and decisive action to effectively manage the impacts of the coronavirus as they arise.

### 1. Introduction and Context

As a result of the exceptional circumstances facing the country in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council has streamlined its decision-making processes to respond quickly and effectively to situations as they arise in order to meet obligations to protect life, contain and mitigate the impact of the emergency, and to create the conditions needed for an eventual recovery to a new normality.

### 2. Governance Arrangements

Whilst the Coronavirus was first identified in China in December 2019, the impacts of the pandemic were beginning to be felt within the region and our local economy in early February 2020 with fewer visitors to the region. As the virus spread across Europe during February and March, we started to mobilise our response in line with government guidance. This led on the 16<sup>th</sup> March to the instigation of our own reporting structure locally within B&NES to enable us to establish our Business Continuity arrangements to protect critical services and set up formally the links into the region through the LRF (Local Resilience Forum<sup>1</sup>).

On 23rd March 2020, Bath & North East Somerset Council then declared a Major Incident in line with guidance and delegated authority for all decision-making to the Head of Paid Service. For the duration of the COVID-19 emergency, all decisions that would normally be made by Cabinet or the Leader will be made by the Chief Executive. **Appendix 1** provides a briefing note from Democratic Services setting out the powers the Council has under the Constitution for taking urgent decisions.

An organisation-wide response to manage the COVID-19 pandemic locally was introduced with new Programme Management arrangements and these were initially guided by a revised Business Continuity framework which ensured our focus was on maintaining critical services through three key

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<sup>1</sup> A Local Resilience Forum (LRF) is a multi-agency forum formed in a police area of the UK by key emergency responders and specific supporting agencies. It is a requirement of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. It allows responders access to a forum to consult, collaborate and disclose information with each other to facilitate planning and response to emergencies, and produce a Community Risk Register. The B&NES LRF is led by Avon and Somerset Constabulary.

workstreams. These are outlined in more detail below and were set up and operational within two weeks.

- ➡ **Strategic Group (and Local Resilience Forum) - overall decision-making group**
- ➡ **Tactical Group (and Business Continuity) - focus on delivery of business-critical services**
- ➡ **Business Support Workstream - provide support to local businesses**
- ➡ **Community Support Workstream - support and help protect the area's most vulnerable residents**

These governance arrangements allowed us to focus only on supporting the community, as well as monitoring the **financial impacts** of the pandemic and providing ongoing **advice and support to Council staff**. The Council at all stages followed Public Health England (PHE) advice and guidance, having regular meetings to continually review the situation and issuing a **daily briefing** to reassure staff of the steps that are being taken.

### **Immediate Service Impacts**

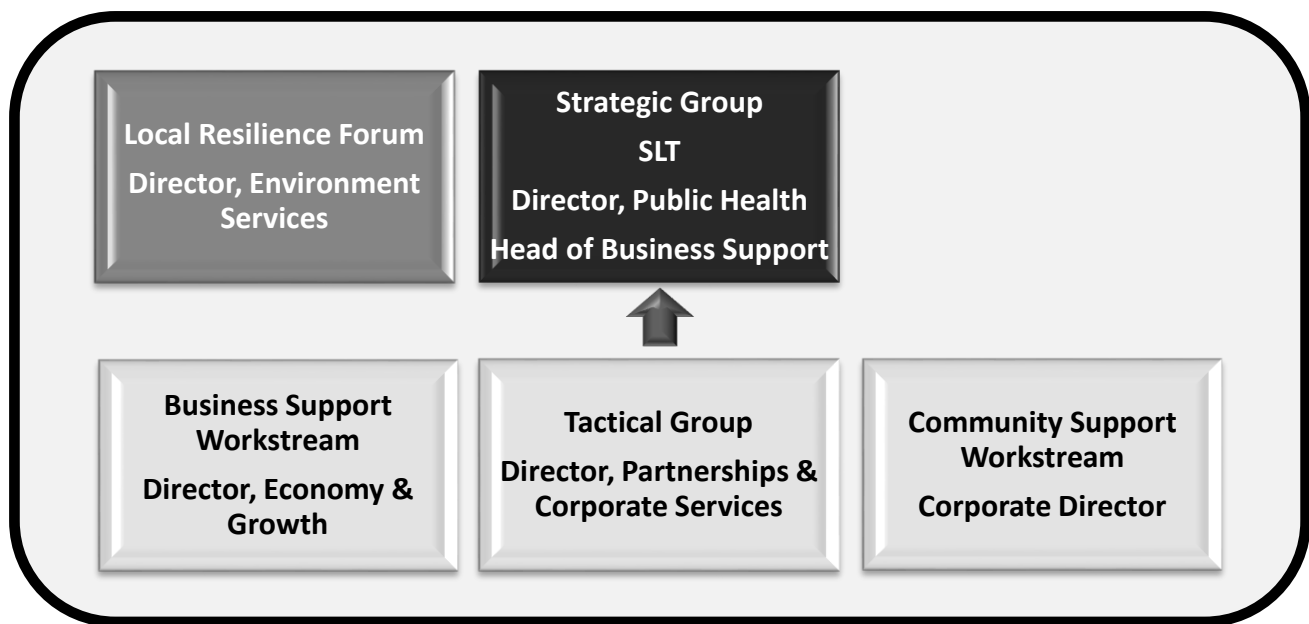
Whilst the initial governance arrangements were being set up, a series of important and significant decisions had to be taken within the first week, which had and continue to have a major impact both organisationally and financially on the Council. These included:

- ➡ Closing all Council Buildings and sending all staff to work from home (aside from a very small number of critical staff)
- ➡ Moving all services to focus on supporting only critical services
- ➡ Closing all the Council's Libraries
- ➡ Closing all our Heritage Services, Museums and Roman Baths
- ➡ Closing all Leisure Centres
- ➡ Closing all construction sites in the area including our capital schemes
- ➡ Stopping all Car Park Charges and supporting essential workers
- ➡ Stopping all Green Waste Collections
- ➡ Reducing a significant number of services to only basic levels of service provision such as our One Stop Shops

All of these decisions had to be taken at pace to ensure at all times the safety of the community, individuals and our own staff were protected. The implications both direct, indirect and financially however are likely to last for a significant period.

As these initial decisions were taken the rest of the governance structure and workstreams started to develop with extensive multi-agency and cross-service working at a pace and scale not seen before. These are detailed in more depth as follows:

## COVID-19 Governance Structure:



These groups and workstreams meet (via tele / video conference) on a regular basis, daily for the first six weeks and then less frequently as the incident changed in terms of its local impacts.

### Strategic Group

<b>Lead</b>	<b>Will Godfrey - Chief Executive</b>
<b>Role</b>	Key Decisions on Major Service Closures or Significant Changes to public facing services, Policy Changes and Headline Comms, Liaison with Leader / Cabinet

### Tactical Group (and Business Continuity)

<b>Lead</b>	<b>David Trethewey - Director, Partnerships &amp; Corporate Services</b>
<b>Role</b>	Daily updates on Critical Business Services only, decisions on operational issues, service changes, service comms, actions for Strategic and emerging issues Delivering Business Critical Services to the Community, supply chain, maintaining as much of BAU and redeployment and business recovery

### Business Support Workstream

<b>Lead</b>	<b>John Wilkinson - Director, Economy &amp; Growth</b>
<b>Role</b>	Direct and indirect support to local businesses, to include sign posting and assessments for financial relief from Government and Council and business recovery

The Business Support workstream has been divided into four distinct project areas:

Business Support	Visitor Economy Recovery	Capital Investment Strategy (including WECA)	Medium Term Place Plan
Duncan Kerr Business & Skills Manager	Stephen Bird Head of Heritage Services	Simon Martin Programme Director, Bath Enterprise Zone	Richard Long Head of Property services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First point of contact for all business enquiries via info@investinbath.co.uk</li> <li>• Provision of up to date information on Government support</li> <li>• Where further information required seamless transition to specialist team (Landlord &amp; Tenant, Business Rates)</li> <li>• Invest in Bath website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification of critical tourism needs</li> <li>• Development of future sector deal with Destination Bristol, Visit Bath &amp; Visit England</li> <li>• Oversight of Visit Bath</li> <li>• Development of recovery plan with main B&amp;NES attractions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment of all B&amp;NES capital projects against agreed criteria (stop, pause, continue)</li> <li>• Relationship Management and forward funding strategy with WECA</li> <li>• Relationship Management with other strategic grant bodies (e.g. Homes England)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Strategy</li> <li>• Strategic Asset Management Plan</li> <li>• Local Plan refresh</li> </ul>

## Community Support Workstream

Lead	Mike Bowden - Corporate Director
Role	Support to the most vulnerable, Humanitarian Centre, multi-agency support, liaison with Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) / Health & Virgin, direct issues from adults and children social care, and community recovery

## Compassionate Community Hub

Bath and North East Somerset is a **Compassionate Community** in which people are inspired and supported to look after themselves and each other. This project has taken on a new importance in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Council in partnership with Virgin Care, the CCG and **3SG**<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> 3SG is a thriving, independent membership network supporting the charity, social enterprise, faith and voluntary sector operating in Bath and North East Somerset.



have worked around the clock to set up the **Compassionate Community Hub**, combining resources to ensure the system can provide sustainable and appropriate responses to meet community needs.

Operating via a dedicated public phone number, the Hub offers advice and support for those who are self-isolating, shielding or simply in need of help. It has access to over 2,400 volunteers (recruited by 3SG), with the 3SG website acting as a virtual hub for the local response to COVID-19. A triage team match calls received to the most appropriate service (or Pod). Through working together in the Hub, we are able to get urgent food parcels to people, co-ordinate someone to pick up medication, support mental health and wellbeing, provide advice on staying active or provide people with support - such as signing up to universal credit.

Colleagues in the Hub are also proactively calling people who are shielding at home to ensure they have access to food and that they are well. The response to this from people receiving calls has been heart-warming. Often, they just want someone to talk to, and some have not spoken to anyone for some time.

The Hub is an excellent example of a strong working partnership bringing together the Council, Virgin Care and the 3SG plus other third sector partners across different organisational boundaries and making a real difference on the ground. To demonstrate the crucial role played by the Hub, the following is a summary of Compassionate Community outcomes extracted from the daily briefing to Council staff on 27th April. There have now been over 4000 calls and more than 800 tasks completed.

2,638 calls from residents requiring support	Completed <b>635</b> tasks to help individuals that contacted the Hub for food, medication and befriending	52 emergency medication pick-ups
153 food parcels	<b>Compassionate Community Hub Outcomes</b>	14 Hearing Aids delivered
2,500 surgical masks delivered to 14 organisations	40 pharmacies received a total of 240 face visors and 120 full face visors produced by University of Bath	120 goggles delivered (40 from University of Bath and 80 from the Council)

### 3. **Political Governance and Oversight**

The **Cabinet** themselves are fully involved in all issues and kept informed of all key decisions that are required in a variety of ways:

- ➡ **Informal Cabinet** meet remotely every Monday to discuss key issues and are briefed by the SLT

- ➔ **Daily Briefings** are given to the Leader, Deputy Leader and Housing, Planning and Economic Development portfolio holder by the Chief Executive
- ➔ **Group Leaders** meet remotely every Tuesday to be briefed on and discuss key issues.

The **Council Leader** is very active in co-ordinating key partners in the response to the incident and this included:

- ➔ Established regular **special COVID-19 pandemic phone conferences** with key partners such as the NHS, local voluntary sector and the Universities
- ➔ Speaking regularly through **WECA with the other local Council Leaders**
- ➔ Established a new **Economic Recovery Board** with key businesses and business groups
- ➔ Actively **lobbied local and national politicians** to make the case for the Council and its issues in relation to its financial position
- ➔ Undertook several **local and national press interviews** (see Section 6) highlighting the Council's response and its financial difficulties.

#### 4. Financial Impacts and Emergency Funding

##### Impact on the Council's 2020/21 Budget

We face a huge challenge in the scope and scale of our recovery. The financial impact of coronavirus due to the extra expense and income loss added together is currently predicted to lead to circa £43m shortfall in revenue funding for Council services this year. This is broken down as follows:

B&NES Position	£m	Comments
<b>Loss of Income</b>	<b>35.9</b>	Our income is at risk and we are under the most pressure from commercial income including our Heritage Services (Roman Baths), Parking and Commercial Estate which makes up around £30m of this figure.
<b>Increased Expenditure</b>	<b>9.8</b>	We are anticipating increased costs in supporting our most vulnerable in Social Care and responding to COVID-19 implications such as sourcing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the region and keeping services such as Waste collection operating with new demand pressures.
<b>Collection Fund</b>	<b>7.5</b>	Due to the economic impacts of COVID-19, it is anticipated that our Council Tax and Business Rates collection will fall with fewer people and business able to pay.
<b>Government Grant</b> (see <i>Emergency Funding below</i> )	<b>-10</b>	The B&NES allocation of the £3.2bn of Government grant funding has given us £10m to meet new expenditure pressures, however this will not mitigate our projected reductions in income. Further support from government will be

B&NES Position	£m	Comments
		essential to enable the Council to manage its 2020/21 Budget.
<b>Projected Deficit</b>	<b>43.2</b>	

By comparison, the overall net budget for the Council to deliver all of its services is £118 million. While we welcome the government's announcement of funding which totals £10m for our area, it will not meet the pressures we are facing. Our key messages are:

- ➔ We are being transparent about the challenge we face and the difficult decisions we will have to take. In fact, we have taken the unprecedented step of the Council Leader and Chief Executive writing to all households in the area explaining the situation.
- ➔ We are facing a "double whammy" - increased costs and drastically reduced income due to the collapse of our visitor economy. We have the highest dependency on income from things like Heritage services of any of our neighbouring councils.
- ➔ Local government is central to helping deal with this crisis and the recovery from it, but to do that government needs to honour its commitment to fund it.

We are exploring our options to reopen both the Council and Bath and North East Somerset for business however it is important to stress the fluidity of the situation. We will need to consider the impact of social distancing on any future operating in the short term, which will shape how and inform when we believe we can offer a safe environment to restore Council services and restart the economy.

## Emergency Funding

The table below summarises the emergency funding announced by Central Government to support the COVID-19 response by local authorities:

Funding / Payment on Account	National Allocation	B&NES Allocation
COVID-19 Emergency Funding Initial allocation (19 March)	£1.6bn	£4.64m
COVID-19 Emergency Funding Second allocation (18 April)	£1.6bn	£5.36m
Hardship Fund	£0.50 bn	£1.29m
Business Support Grants	£12.33 bn	£46.1m

**Emergency Response Fund:** On 19 March 2020, the government announced £1.6 billion of additional funding for local government to help them respond to coronavirus pressures across all the

services they deliver. A further £1.6 billion in funding was announced on 18 April 2020. **B&NES received a total of £10 million** (COVID-19: funding allocations).

MCLG also announced on the 14<sup>th</sup> May an extra £600 million to be made available for infection control in care homes, through local authorities. We are awaiting further detail on the allocation to the Council.

In response to the COVID-19 restrictions and emergency measures put in place the Council has incurred significant costs in securing PPE supplies and providing supplier relief to ensure that key services can continue to be delivered to residents. The table below shows our estimated use of the £10m COVID-19 revenue grant:

Estimated Expenditure Pressures	£'000
Adults Social Care	2,474
Children's Services	644
Environmental, Leisure and Regulatory services (including Mortuary capacity & Community hubs)	1,002
Transport Services	716
Housing (including homelessness services)	261
Contractual liabilities resulting from delayed construction	1,130
Capitalisation of revenue costs	3,773
Total Estimated Expenditure Pressures	10,000

**Hardship Fund:** £500 million funding to provide council tax relief in 2020/21 to vulnerable people and households to help those affected most by coronavirus. **B&NES received £1.29 million.**

**Business Support Grants:** The Government announced support for small businesses, and businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors in the form of two grant funding schemes in 2020/21, these were to be administrated by each local authority:

- ➡ **Small Business Grant Fund** - all businesses in England in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief will be eligible for a payment of £10,000.
- ➡ **Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund** - all businesses in England that would have been in receipt of the Expanded Retail Discount (which covers retail, hospitality and leisure) with a rateable value of less than £51,000 will be eligible for the a cash grant of either £10,000 or £25,000 dependent on the rateable value of the property.

The Council has approximately 3,062 eligible businesses in the Bath and North East Somerset area and has redeployed staff from non-critical service areas to assist with processing applications for business support grants. Latest figures (13/05/20) are as follows:

- ➔ The number of registrations received is 3,136, which is higher than the Council's estimate due to the fact not all of the claims will be eligible.
- ➔ The number of grants processed has now passed the 2,500 mark, leaving circa 500 to pay, this indicates around 83% of eligible cases have been processed.
- ➔ The grants processing team are assessing first time applications within two days of their receipt.

Type of Grant	Amount of Grant	Eligible Cases (estimate)	Grants Processed for Payment	Percentage of Grants Processed	Amount Paid
Small Business Grant	£10,000	1,858	1,752	94.3%	£17,520,000
Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant <15	£10,000	388	251	64.7%	£2,510,000
Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant >15	£25,000	816	540	66.2%	£13,500,000
<b>Overall Totals</b>	-	<b>3,062</b>	<b>2,543</b>	<b>83.05%</b>	<b>£33,530,000</b>

## 5. Performance Management

### Incident Reporting and Data Sharing

A comprehensive **COVID-19 Incident Log** was set up to record all key issues and decisions to ensure they are acted upon and a detailed account is retained for future reference, evaluation and feedback. The IT team has set up a **SharePoint<sup>3</sup> Coronavirus Co-ordination Group** to enable easy and accessible sharing of documents, information and data among key officers. All of the information regarding the Council's approach, response and key decisions relating to the pandemic can be found in this group.

**Sitreps<sup>4</sup>** provide daily or weekly updates to the Tactical Group about Business-Critical Functions, all of which are saved in SharePoint and recorded on the incident log where necessary. A summary of the COVID-19 Incident Log for March and April 2020 is shown below:

Tactical Group Incident, Issue and Decision Data		
Logs / Decisions	Mar-20	Apr-20
<b>Business Support Logs</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>103</b>

<sup>3</sup> SharePoint is a document management and collaboration tool developed by Microsoft that is used for internal purposes to assist with bringing an organisation together.

<sup>4</sup> A sitrep (Situation Report) is a form of status reporting that provides decision-makers and readers with a quick understanding of the current situation, i.e., a clear, concise understanding of the situation, focusing on meaning or context, in addition to the facts.

People's SLT Logs	18	21
Other Logs	394	280
Total Logs Recorded	474	404
Strategic Decisions	31	51
Tactical Decisions	27	56
Total Decisions Recorded	58	107

### Council Demand and Performance

Any supporting performance and intelligence data relating to the incident is held in the **COVID-19 Strategic Dashboard**, which provides up-to-date data feeds in four key areas of focus - **Corporate Health, Business Continuity & Business Support, Community Support** and **Cases & Capacity**.

The dashboard is reviewed on a weekly basis by the Strategic Group and is always available with “live” data for consideration by all key Officers to aid decision making. The table below outlines several examples of changes to service demand as a result of the COVID-19 incident and provides a snapshot of how some services have been affected.

Metric	Before COVID-19		During COVID-19		% Change
	Period	Demand	Period	Demand	
New clients - Community (Adults)	April 19	1396	April 20	1346	-4%
New clients - Residential (Adults)	April 19	804	April 20	738	-8%
Contacts to Children's Duty Team	April 19	869	April 20	468	-32%
Children's Social Care Assessments	April 19	85	April 20	89	5%
No. of children in primary and secondary provision	N/A	N/A	April 20	586	-
No. of children in early years provision	N/A	N/A	April 20	315	-
Schools open in last 7 days	N/A	N/A	29/04/2020	63	-
Early years providers open in last 7 days		203	20/04/2020	74	-64%

Metric	Before COVID-19		During COVID-19		% Change
	Period	Demand	Period	Demand	
Waste Cleansing - Fix My Street Reports	April 19	566	April 20	404	-29%
Fly Tipping - Fix My Street Requests	April 19	171	April 20	153	-11%
Building Regulation applications	April 19	99	April 20	33	-67%
Land Charges Searches	April 19	199	April 20	90	-55%
Weekly daily average Planning applications	April 19	29	01/05/2020	17	-40%
Waste Collection Tonnage	April 2019 Week 1	449	April 2020 Week 1	561	+25%

### Adult Social Care

Demand for adult social care has remained relatively constant with nearly 1,350 people supported in the community in April 2020 compared to nearly 1,400 in the same period last year. The number of people supported in residential and nursing homes has dropped from 804 to 738 over the same period.

The Council's Adult Social Care teams have been working particularly closely with all providers across the health and social care sector. In addition to its governance response to COVID-19, until recently there have been daily B&NES Compassionate Community Hub conference calls with Council and CCG officers, Virgin Care, Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP), Primary Care Networks, B&NES Enhanced Medical Services and GPs, other agencies have also joined. The Hub has received daily updates on the number of reported symptomatic and positive COVID-19 cases (including both service users and staff affected) and on the staffing capacity of each agency to ensure services are functioning effectively and are able to support vulnerable people.

There have been routine updates from the Hub about the response and support provided to shielded and vulnerable people. It has been an example of real collaboration between 3SG, Virgin Care, the CCG and the Council. The Hub has also shared the latest Government guidance and discussed issues of concern to enable all organisations to provide a joined up and united response to the needs of the population. Key areas of work range from:

- ➡ Enabling swift discharge from hospital by remodelling the way discharges are carried out in accordance with new guidance; this in turn has achieved the goal of freeing up the RUH and community hospital bed capacity in anticipation of a surge in demand
- ➡ Supporting care homes, who as we know through national reporting, have been struggling with the impact of this

- ➡ Ensuring agencies have the right PPE; this has been reported nationally as a struggle and in B&NES there has been a generous response from agencies by way of mutual aid - this being where providers share PPE between them thus ensuring staff and service users are protected.

We have devised a supplier relief offer for providers that has included a funded advance to help with cashflow and continue to assess individual claims for relief. We provide a weekly newsletter to providers with the latest updates and have held webinar sessions, as well as being in contact sometimes daily but at a minimum weekly to see how things are. We have ensured that via Virgin Care and AWP all service users have been contacted and reviewed and there has been routine contact with Direct Payment users to ensure they are still able to get the care and support they need.

The Coronavirus Act did bring in a number of easements to the Care Act 2014 however the expectation has been that we will continue with business as usual whilst observing social distancing requirements. Providers have endeavoured to do this to the best of their ability and remained in touch and undertaken assessments creatively. Inevitably a small number of services such as day services for adults with learning disabilities have not been able to open however staff have been either redeployed to support other teams or they have been in contact with the service users in other ways to ensure they are safe.

We did see a drop in safeguarding adult referrals in March however during April these rose again with 100% of planning meetings taking place on time. We have continued to raise awareness of safeguarding and have a weekly newsletter that goes out to the B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership. Whilst still ensuring we have sufficient bed and staff capacity in case of a second surge, we are also starting to plan for recovery and are mindful that more people may need care and support going forward.

### **Children's Social Care**

Although contacts to children's social care have dropped by 32% (468 in April 20, compared to 869 in April 19) the number of social care assessments has increased slightly, from 85 to 89. The Council has also held its first online child protection conferences. Up to 50 children are seen face to face on a weekly basis.

Established an alternative operating model for the lockdown period, including a virtual duty team and home visiting team, with staff rotation to maintain resilience; risk assessing children known to the service in light of lockdown measures in order to prioritise contact and school attendance, and supporting vulnerable families impacted by lockdown in a range of creative ways.

### **Education**

63 schools and 74 early years providers (down from 203 normally) in B&NES were open in the week leading up to 29 April. There were 586 children in primary and secondary schools and 315 in early years.



Working with schools and academies and early years settings to co-ordinate arrangements for access for critical workers and vulnerable children, and for preparations for re-opening; arranging distribution of government-provided laptops for vulnerable children; and establishing an online portal for delivery of music lessons; This is alongside the delivery of statutory services for vulnerable learners and children with Special Educational Needs and Disability, and all core education business functions, admissions, schools capital and finance etc.

### **Public Health**

- ➔ Liaison with PHE, advice to senior leadership team and the wider health and care community on the expected progress of the pandemic and interpretation of national statistics and guidance
- ➔ Supporting the planning for excess deaths
- ➔ Local coordination of testing, tracking and tracing system (major area of focus for coming months)
- ➔ Supporting care homes with advice and training in infection control
- ➔ Developing detailed local policies on, and advising on, use of PPE
- ➔ Supporting local response to increased risks of domestic abuse
- ➔ Running a public health rota to answer questions from the public and other stakeholders
- ➔ Major input into setting up the “food pod” element of Compassionate Communities Hub and other work on food poverty during crisis
- ➔ Advice to drug and alcohol, sexual health and children’s early help services on changing offer to meet COVID-19 challenge
- ➔ Support to Council comms team with public health content of messaging
- ➔ Liaison with LRF.

### **Environment**

- ➔ ‘Fix My Street’ requests for waste and cleansing service requests has reduced (-29%) compared to April last year. There has also been a small reduction (-11%) in service requests regarding Fly Tipping.
- ➔ On the first week in April, 561 tonnes of recycling were collected. This is a 25% increase (over 100 tonnes) compared with the same week last year.
- ➔ The April 2020 Google Mobility study suggested that residents responded to lockdown with an 87% reduction in retail and recreation travel and a 60% reduction in workplace travel.

### **Homelessness**

We have 70 households currently in temporary accommodation, of these 48 have been housed due to COVID-19.

### **Planning and Development**

There has been a 40% drop in the average number of planning applications received each day, compared to the same time last year, reductions have also been seen in Building Control Applications (-67%) and Land Charges searches (-55%).

### One Stop Shops and Libraries

- ➔ During April, there were only 1,290 visits to the temporary spaces in OSS/Libraries - 95% down from 2019 as the building is closed other than for essential services to the vulnerable. Top 5 enquiries - Make a payment; Bulky waste; Welfare support; Curo; and Council Tax.
- ➔ During April, **180 Welfare support Retail Food Vouchers** were issued to the vulnerable in the temporary spaces in OSS / Libraries, an increase of 56% from 2019.
- ➔ Library e-books uptake **increased by 30%**, e-Audio by **11%** and e-Magazines by **22%** during April.

### Information Technology

- ➔ There were 92,629-page views to the Council website and **73,083** unique page views have been made to the Council's **COVID-19 webpage** (the second most visited page, after the homepage) - see next page.
- ➔ On average **1,500 staff** have been successfully **connected and working remotely** each day during lockdown.
- ➔ 250 additional tokens / passwords and over **230 items of kit issued** to support homeworking during lockdown.
- ➔ **4,800 contacts** have been made to the **IT helpdesk** during lockdown supporting homeworking.
- ➔ During April, **411 Zoom meetings** took place with almost **2,800 participants** lasting on average 43 minutes.
- ➔ During April, **3,131 Skype video meetings, 21,594 Skype calls** and **85,596 instant messaging conversations** took place.
- ➔ During April **4,920 calls were made to Council Connect** and **5,786 calls to Switchboard**, both almost **50% down** from April 2019.

The following news stories provide specific examples of support and activity that the Council has provided in response the COVID-19 pandemic. They are extracted from the Council's press releases to show the decisions and actions that have been taken and shared over the last few months:

#### **Council Tax Hardship Relief Scheme**

*Bath & North East Somerset Council has made an urgent decision to reduce council tax liability to lessen people's financial burden at a time when they may already be on a reduced income due to stay-at-home measures. The Council's Deputy Leader, Richard Samuel, made the decision which authorises officers to immediately reduce the council tax liability for all working age recipients of Local Council Tax Support during 2020/21 by the lower figure of their remaining liability for that year, or £150. In many cases, this will reduce the amount residents have to pay to nil.*

#### **Supplier Relief Scheme**

*The Council is thanking its suppliers for continuing their services during the coronavirus pandemic and alerting them to a scheme that will help them to continue operating during this challenging time. The supplier relief scheme, supported by Government, is being offered to companies which supply goods and services to the council to ensure that essential services for residents continue. The council is*

working with its suppliers to help them to keep operating in the normal way wherever possible and is offering support via the relief scheme on a case-by-case basis, including faster payments, contract alterations and time extensions.

### **Compassionate Community Hub (see update on p5)**

A new community hub is helping the most vulnerable people in Bath and North East Somerset access critical support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Co-ordinated by B&NES 3rd Sector Group with support from Virgin Care in B&NES, Bath & North East Somerset Council and the NHS, the hub has made hundreds of referrals to experts and volunteers from people needing help with food, mental health, wellbeing and welfare. The hub works closely with food banks and volunteers to ensure people can access direct support when they need it.

### **Temporary facilities at Haycombe Cemetery**

Work to install dignified temporary facilities is set to get under way at Haycombe Cemetery and Crematorium in Bath. In these difficult times the council has had to plan for a temporary expansion of facilities to help serve Bath's Royal United Hospital and to meet the needs of local funeral directors. Temporary units will be screened are being installed in line with national guidance.

### **Business Grants Online Form (see update on p8)**

Businesses which need to access urgent financial help from the Government due to the coronavirus can do so using an online form set up by the Council. Our Invest in Bath business support service has a dedicated team to provide targeted help to companies during the pandemic and the new online form aims to speed up the process so that most payments will be made within a few weeks.

### **Set up Virtual Library**

The Council has set up an exciting virtual library to help children and adults keep their love of literature going while libraries are closed during the Coronavirus pandemic. The virtual library launches on Monday (30 March) and will have dynamic, changing content each weekday to suit all ages via the library service's social media accounts. Mornings will be dedicated to children and will offer links to education, creative learning, fun facts, rhymes, stories and crafts. Afternoons will focus on adults by sharing a range of e-books and e-magazines alongside tips on literacy, finding reliable online information, jobs and income support and how to access help from partner services. Book groups haven't been forgotten and every Friday afternoon customers will be signposted to virtual book groups, recommendations and reviews by both staff and other readers.

### **Free e-bike Loans for Key Workers**

Bath & North East Somerset Council has loaned free e-bikes to key workers at Bath's RUH to help them travel easily on essential journeys during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. The ten bikes are part of a fleet of 35 that are being offered to employers of key workers to help them travel quickly and sustainably at a time when public transport has had to be reduced. The council is now calling for other employers of key workers to come forward and borrow the remaining 25 bikes that are available.

### **Virtual Council Meetings to start**

*The Cabinet will hold its first public meeting ‘virtually’ on May 29 as part of its response to keeping council business running during the COVID-19 outbreak. The Council’s first virtual meeting is the Planning Committee on Wednesday May 6 at 2pm. All meetings will be open to the public to watch and the Council is making sure that all necessary training and safeguards are in place so that meetings will be effective. The Council has prioritised holding the most urgent meetings remotely, for example planning and licensing and it anticipates scheduling in at least two further virtual meetings in May and then additional meetings in June and onwards. It is keeping public participation under review and assessing how members of the public and other interested parties can be involved in virtual meetings, with appropriate safeguards in place.*

### **Virtual music lessons keeping the beat going in Bath and North East Somerset**

*Hundreds of children missing out on school-based music lessons during coronavirus are carrying on playing and singing thanks to online tuition set up by Bath & North East Somerset Council in partnership with Musictutors.co.uk. The Council’s music service team has arranged a safe, bespoke online teaching platform that allows pupils to enjoy lessons virtually with their usual tutor in real time. More than 500 children have already signed up to the service with the number of applications increasing daily.*

## **6. Communication**

### **Information and Advice to Residents, Communities and Partners**

Effective communications are vital for supporting and managing sensitive and rapidly evolving situations such as Covid-19. Our aim throughout has been to be a clear, readily available and trusted information source to local people and businesses about Council services and our response, reinforcing national messages, providing reassurance and signposting to where further help is available, particularly for the most vulnerable.

A wide number of ways of getting key messages out to people has been and will continue to be used including:

- ➡ The introduction of dedicated web pages, regularly updated, have been created to help the communities of Bath and North East Somerset understand and manage the impacts of the coronavirus in their day-to-day lives. The **COVID-19 website** is accessible from the homepage on the Council website and includes the following types of information and support:
  - Latest information and advice on the coronavirus, i.e. what people need to know and where they can access help
  - Residents' letter from the Leader and Chief Executive
  - What people need to know to stop the coronavirus spreading
  - Help for vulnerable people with support and advice from the Compassionate Community Hub (see Section 8 for more details)

- Changes to Council services and how to make payments during the outbreak
- Help and support for communities, businesses, parents and carers.



A dedicated **COVID-19 email address** ([Covid19incidentcomms@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:Covid19incidentcomms@bathnes.gov.uk)) was also set up on the 14<sup>th</sup> March for people to ask questions, request updates, seek additional help etc. It is managed by the Council Connect team and by the beginning of May, it had received over 1,500 enquiries. They are all recorded where appropriate on the log and signposted for appropriate action where necessary.

- ➔ There has been a 17% increase in subscription to the Council e-connect newsletter from 3,305 subscribers to around 3,850 at end of April 2020. The weekly newsletter is now sent over 40,000 email addresses, focusing on public health messages, changes to council services and help available such as the Compassionate Communities Hub. We have received positive feedback about the usefulness and clarity of the newsletter. A dedicated stakeholder newsletter was also produced in conjunction with Public Health, which focused on providing access to NHS and government guidance.
- ➔ Early provision of “flash briefings” on key topics such as community response, business support and help for parish councils.
- ➔ Regular contact with parish and town councils to help co-ordinate the response. To provide even greater reach into localities, the Council also posts to the **Nextdoor** neighbourhoods site, which has more than 12,000 members in Bath and North East Somerset.
- ➔ Regular updates through its Newsroom web pages including to elected members and town and parish councils. Key performance information compared the 39 days pre-lockdown (13<sup>th</sup> February to 22<sup>nd</sup> March) with 39 days post lockdown (23<sup>rd</sup> March to 30<sup>th</sup> April), and there has

been 25% more traffic during the incident than previously. News items have covered a wide range of topics ranging from the Compassionate Communities Hub to updates on waste services and how to get support for your local business. We have also set out our online provision during lockdown such as our virtual library and highlighted domestic abuse services under the campaign “At Home shouldn’t be At Risk”

- ➡ Daily social media posts - Twitter following of over 19,000 and also reach into Facebook and Instagram. Our tweet on the provision of hand sanitiser from the Glastonbury Festival had a total reach of over 235,000. We have also regularly used social media to highlight the ground-breaking work of the Compassionate Communities Hub.

We have also been acutely aware that not everyone is online. Local radio has been a particularly useful outlet during this period, and we have worked closely with BBC Radio Bristol to get key messages out - for example through their “make a difference campaign”. The Compassionate Community Hub has been regularly publicised on BBC Radio Bristol and BBC Radio Somerset and the Council also secured radio advertising about the Hub on The Breeze. In addition, the Council Leader has a ten-minute slot on BBC Radio Bristol’s breakfast show every Tuesday to talk about the Council’s response to COVID-19 including public health messages. Community radio such as Somer Valley FM have also been very useful local outlets.

However, in order to ensure all households receive key information, the Leader and Chief Executive wrote to 84,336 households in Bath and North East Somerset providing information about the Compassionate Communities Hub helpline, the availability of business support and highlighting the financial challenges faced by the Council, as set out further in this statement. Highlighting this issue has increasingly become the focus of communications activity so that local people and our partners understand the scale of the financial challenge facing us.

As well as using this wide range of communications channels, Council staff have kept fully in touch with local communities and partners. Community engagement team and other council staff have worked as part of the Compassionate Communities Hub during this period, liaising with local third sector groups, parish and town councils and others, as well as providing direct practical help where needed. A newsletter setting out the latest information from the Hub is now distributed through the Interagency Network. Councillors have also been provided with information mapping out the local community activity in their area to help the most vulnerable.

Working with partners has been crucial to our response. Early on, the Leader convened a teleconference with partner agencies including the RUH, CCG, Curo and the Police to co-ordinate the local response in Bath and North East Somerset. This group has been convened regularly during this period and has recently been joined by our two Universities whose support will be crucial for our recovery.

## 7. Council Staff

Lead	Amanda George - Interim Director, HR & OD
Role	Advice and Support to Council Staff, primarily on Business Continuity Workstream

The key resource of the Council is its staff. In response to the pandemic, many changes have been required to enable staff to continue to operate as effectively as possible and to ensure they could continue to support local communities, businesses and partners.

With a few exceptions such as IT and Social Worker duty teams, all office-based staff were asked to start working remotely from home in March, in accordance with government guidance. This placed considerable pressure on the IT team to ensure that the technology infrastructure and appropriate IT resources were available to ensure the success of remote working. This was completed successfully and enabled up to 1,500 members of staff to work remotely.

The HR Service have been responsible for implementing a number of key responses including:

- ➔ Staff redeployment scheme
- ➔ Changes to pay and policy related activity (see below)
- ➔ An approach to organisational development and staff wellbeing
- ➔ A revised approach to staff communications and daily staff briefings
- ➔ A vacancy management procedure.

Below are some of examples of **changes to staff pay and policies** undertaken in response to the COVID-19:

- ➔ **Carers Leave** - initially extended to 19 April to cover the Government's first three-week lockdown. Staff now require people to use a mixture of annual leave / unpaid leave / flexible working to cover their caring responsibilities.
- ➔ **Annual Leave** - Request that people who are available for work but cannot work (due to service closure) to start using annual leave that they accrue each month (normally 2 days per month).
- ➔ **Enhancements** - Decision to cease paying enhancements (e.g. non-standard working rates / first aid etc) for anyone who is not working.
- ➔ **Shielded List** - Staff on the national shielded list were recorded (this was a very small number)
- ➔ **Casuals** - Pay a % retention payment to people who have worked regularly over past 12 weeks
- ➔ **Furlough** - Collating information about who is available for work / unable to work and consider putting them on furlough
- ➔ **Honoraria** - Any COVID related requests for additional payments to be put on hold so that they can be reviewed
- ➔ **Vacancy Management** - Created an approval to recruit process joined up with the finance team.

- ➔ **Employee and Manager Guidance** - Continued to be updated and provided a link from the daily communications

A lot of work has been undertaken around **staff wellbeing and engagement** to ensure staff look after themselves and are communicated with to ensure they are kept up to speed with the latest developments and messages from the leadership team. Some examples of the work include:

- ➔ **Remote Working** - Guidance and E-learning created
- ➔ **Supportive Conversations** - Organisational Development team reached out to managers down to group manager level to offer a call to provide additional support, advice, guidance or resources to help them and their teams
- ➔ **Comms Message** - Now sent 3 times a week; working with managers and staff on staff stories
- ➔ **Wellbeing Information** - Continue to develop five ways to wellbeing and promote on the intranet and via the comms messages
- ➔ **Working well from home** - information about workstation set up and risk assessments available on the intranet
- ➔ **Staff Engagement Group** - Established - first meetings, virtual coffee with the CX
- ➔ **Stress and Resilience** - First virtual course completed
- ➔ **HSWB** - The team has been in contact with managers regularly and giving bitesize briefs in terms of H&S
- ➔ **Leading together group** - Zoom call planned Monday 18 May, led by Chief Executive
- ➔ **All staff briefing** - Workplace call planned for the start of June, led by the Chief Executive.

## Staff Survey

A staff survey was commissioned in April<sup>5</sup> following the significant changes in Council working practices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Its primary purpose was to review staff health and wellbeing, and to establish how they were finding working remotely:

### Working Status

- ➔ At the point the survey was completed, 82.5% of respondents stated they were working from home. Prior to the COVID-19 lockdown, just under one third of staff worked from home at least one day a week, with a further 30% never working from home.
- ➔ Approaching 90% of the respondents have a suitable place to work from home and the necessary IT equipment to do so, however less than two thirds fully understand how to use the available communications technology.

### Support and Communication

- ➔ Most respondents agree that they feel supported by and have enough contact with their manager. This includes support to balance caring and work responsibilities.
- ➔ Daily communication messages are largely on point with regards the level of detail.

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<sup>5</sup> The survey was undertaken between 22/04/20 and 06/05/20 and received a 59% response rate (1,260 responses).



### **Physical and Mental Wellbeing**

- ➡ Only half of the respondents rated their mental wellbeing as good or better, with anxiety about the people they care for and their longer-term future the top reasons.
- ➡ Less than two thirds of respondents feel they are getting adequate levels of exercise, have an effective work / life balance or are getting enough sleep.
- ➡ More than three quarters have a plan to organise their day.

### **Internal Recovery**

We are looking at how we can start our internal recovery and are undertaking the following activities:

- ➡ Evaluating options with our buildings
- ➡ How to redesign our buildings to bring people back to work safely
- ➡ Safe working practices
- ➡ Carrying out risk assessments
- ➡ Identifying how many staff need to come back urgently (wellbeing or cannot work from home)
- ➡ All other staff remain at home for the present time
- ➡ Ensuring staff have the right equipment and workstation set up.

## **Appendix 1 - Decision-Making under Covid-19 using the Constitution**

Unless specified, these emergency processes do not require a notice period and cannot be called in (see commentary for further details).

**1. Emergency and urgent decisions outside the policy and budget:** If Council cannot meet, under the Constitution, the following can take decisions:

- i. the Chief Executive under Part 4 (G) Rule 5, using the Officer Decision process

Or

- ii. Cabinet Members or Officers, under Part 4 (C) Rule 4, using the Single Member or Officer Decision process, with agreement of relevant Chair of PDS and advice from CE, MO and CFO.

It is recommended that Group Leaders are consulted at the same time.

**2. Urgent non-executive decisions covered by the policy and budget:** If the Council or Committee cannot meet, under the Constitution:

- i. the Chief Executive or Director, under Part 4 (G) Rule 3, using the Officer Decision process, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and the Group Leaders (for Council matters)

**3. Urgent executive and key decisions covered by the policy and budget:** If Cabinet cannot meet, under the Constitution, the following can take decisions:

- i. a Single Cabinet Member, under Part 4 (G) Rule 4 and Rule 15, using the Single Member Decision process, if all councillors and the relevant Chair of PDS have been informed, 5 working days' notice has been given and advice of MO and CFO obtained.

It is recommended that Group Leaders are consulted at the same time.

Or

- ii. a Single Cabinet Member, under Part 4 (G) Rule 4 and Rule 16, using the Single Member Decision process, with agreement of the relevant PDS Chair and advice from CE, MO and CFO.

It is recommended that Group Leaders are consulted at the same time.

<b>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council</b>	
MEETING:	<b>Corporate Policy Development &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>
MEETING:	<b>30<sup>th</sup> June 2020</b>
TITLE:	<b>Covid-19 2020/21 Financial Recovery Cabinet report</b>
WARD:	All
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>	
<p><b>List of attachments to this report:</b></p> <p>Appendix 1: Covid-19 2020/21 Financial Recovery Cabinet report and supporting appendices.</p>	

## **1 THE ISSUE**

- 1.1 The report will be considered by the Cabinet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020 meeting. It presents the Covid-19 2020/21 Financial Recovery Cabinet report.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

The Panel is asked to;

- 2.1 Note and discuss the Covid-19 2020/21 Financial Recovery Cabinet report.

## **3 THE REPORT**

- 3.1 The Covid-19 2020/21 Financial Recovery Cabinet report and supporting detailed appendices are included as the appendices to this paper and for Panel consideration.

## **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 The annual medium-term financial planning process allocates resources across services with alignment of these resources towards the Council's corporate priorities. The attached report sets out the in-year recovery measures that are required to enable the Council to continue performing against the financial envelope agreed in February 2020 through the Budget setting process.

## **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 5.1 These are contained throughout the attached report and appendices.

## 6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations will be undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

## 7 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 7.1 This is an information only report about the Covid-19 2020/21 Financial Recovery Cabinet report, it therefore does not include any decisions that have a direct impact on Climate Change.

## 8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 None

## 9 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The Cabinet Member for Resources has been consulted on the drafting of this report as well as the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer.

<b>Contact person</b>	<i>Will Godfrey - Chief Executive 01225 477400,</i> <a href="mailto:Will_Godfrey@bathnes.gov.uk">Will_Godfrey@bathnes.gov.uk</a>  <i>Andy Rothery – Director of Finance (S151 Officer) 01225 477103,</i> <a href="mailto:Andy_Rothery@bathnes.gov.uk">Andy_Rothery@bathnes.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background papers</b>	COVID19 - Update report and position statement – 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2020 Cabinet  <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&amp;MId=5754">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&amp;MId=5754</a>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Cabinet	
MEETING DATE:	2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2020	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3210
TITLE:	Covid-19 2020/21 Financial Recovery plan	
WARD:	All	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
<p><b>List of attachments to this report:</b></p> <p><b>Appendix 1</b> – Revenue recovery plans</p> <p><b>Appendix 2</b> – Capital Review schemes to be rephased &amp; reviewed</p> <p><b>Appendix 3</b> – Capital Review schemes with presentational amendments</p> <p><b>Appendix 4</b> – Equality Impact Assessment</p>		

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### a) Revenue budget

As a result of Covid-19 the 2020/21 revenue budget has an unprecedented challenge from loss of commercial income resulting in a forecast deficit before mitigations and government grant of **£42.13m**. The full implementation of the financial recovery plans (**£20.7m**) and use of unrestricted Covid-19 grant (**£10m**) will result in a projected deficit of **£11.43m** which will need to be funded from the use of reserves set out in this report.

### b) Capital budget

The Capital Programme has been reviewed to revise scheme delivery timetable's considering Covid-19, alongside identifying schemes that can be rephased to create a one-off revenue saving through reduced borrowing costs. The review has been led by the Capital Strategy Group and identified **£3m** of in year revenue savings, whilst ensuring high profile and priority schemes are continued. Government have announced a £2bn five-year package for cycling and walking projects with £0.25bn to ease pressures on public transport in the recovery from Covid-19. The allocations to B&NES will be co-ordinated through the West of England Combined Authority (WECA).

### c) Council Tax and Business Rates

The initial assessment on the income from Council Tax due to the impacts of Covid-19 affecting resident's ability to pay and the increase in the number of Local Council Tax Support scheme claimants is **£6m**. There has been an increase in Universal Credit and Local Council Tax Support Scheme applications that present an ongoing financial risk to Council Tax payments. The initial assessment on the income from Business Rates due to the impacts of Covid-19 affecting businesses ability to pay is **£1.5m**. This represents a reduction of c5% on collectible income after allowing for the 100% business rate relief which has been granted for Retail, Leisure & Hospitality businesses during 2020/21. Under the collection fund accounting requirements, a 2020/21 under recovery of income will be recognised as a budget shortfall in the 2021/22 revenue budget. The Council has awarded **2,929** business grants under the government support scheme totalling **£38.14m** payments to local businesses, **97%** of the government grant has been allocated.

### d) Council Reserves

The plans set out in this paper require use of the Councils Corporate reserves held for financial planning and risk. The forecast **£11.43m** deficit after revenue mitigations and government Covid-19 revenue grants will require **£2.43m** use of Revenue Budget Contingency and **£4m** of the Financial Planning reserve. The remainder will require **£5m** drawdown of the general un-earmarked reserves leaving the Council's balance at **7.2%**, this is a satisfactory balance that is over 2% higher than the average general un-earmarked reserves held in B&NES nearest neighbours Unitary Authority group.

### e) MHCLG Financial Support

To date **£13.21m** of revenue grant has been awarded to B&NES to support the local response to Covid-19, for the financial recovery plans the **£10m** revenue grant has been included as being fully utilised as funding the reported pressures across Council, it is assumed that the other **£3.21m** Covid-19 grants will be utilised for specific purposes and not have a material benefit to the reported pressures.

In the event of a further package of unrestricted grant to be announced by MHCLG this will help reduce the Councils reliance on reserves to fund its year end deficit and may help mitigate slippage in the delivery of the proposed recovery plans.

## **1 THE ISSUE**

- 1.1** The Council's 2020/21 budget has an unprecedented financial challenge due to the Covid-19 impacts on Council services and the revenue budget. This is a fast moving and dynamic situation which requires immediate action to manage the 2020/21 financial pressures arising from income reductions which are set out in the report. This has resulted in a high degree of uncertainty on the longer-term financial impact that Covid-19 will have on Council finances. It is important to acknowledge that the impact has been caused by events outside the Councils control. This report sets out the first step which is addressing the in-year budget impact and financial recovery measures.
- 1.2** This report sets out the financial impacts of Covid-19 on the Council's revenue budgets. The Council is anticipating a £42.13m pressure on its revenue budget and £7.5m on the Collection Fund before government grant and the proposed financial recovery measures. The report sets out the gross impact of Covid-19 restrictions and social distancing measures and the planned mitigations to present a fully funded net budget position.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

The Cabinet is asked:

- 2.1** To note the Covid-19 financial impact on the Council's revenue budget.
- 2.2** To note the planned commitments and utilisation of the £10m Covid-19 grant.
- 2.3** To note and approve the Director recovery plans, which are in line with the delegation given within the Council's Budget Management Scheme.
- 2.4** To support and approve the 2020/21 revenue budget financial recovery plans.
- 2.5** To note the changes in the capital programme as result of the capital review and approve the rephasing of the programme budgets as set out in appendix 2.
- 2.6** To note the commitment of £11.43m Council reserves to be earmarked and utilised as the deficit funding source in the event of an over budget position after revenue mitigations and government grant.

### 3 THE REPORT

- 3.1** Due to the material financial impact Covid-19 has had on the Council's revenue budget the Cabinet is required to provide assurance that the Council has robust financial recovery plans in place. This will ensure that the forecast over budget position can be managed within the delegations given within the Council's budget management scheme.

The Budget Management Scheme approved in September 2018 by Full Council sets out:

With effective budget planning and management, overspending should not occur. If, however, one occurs it must normally be recovered.

- 1) Directors are responsible for budget management.
- 2) The Director is responsible for making proposals for the recovery of any overspend to the Corporate Director and Chief Executive (or Director of Finance) in the first instance. Further reporting requirements will then be determined, depending on the size and nature of the problem.
- 3) Overspends will normally be expected to be recovered within the following year. However, a period of up to 3 years may be allowed for the recovery of overspends, depending on the level of overspend and the subsequent impact of recovery on service delivery.
- 4) All formal recovery plans will be submitted by the relevant Director as part of budget monitoring to the Cabinet for approval.
- 5) Strategic Leadership Team and Cabinet, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer, will consider the overall corporate outturn position and may consider writing off overspends.

This report sets out the financial measures required to manage the Council's financial recovery through recognising the impact of Covid-19 on the revenue budget. This includes a range of service-based Director mitigations within Cabinet Portfolios alongside Corporate mitigations to deliver a fully funded 2020/21 revenue outturn. Early decisive action and delivery at pace will enable the Council to implement the in-year recovery measures that will help mitigate the loss of income minimise further exposure to financial risk.

Robust financial management is the foundation for any organisation, this requires taking a long-term approach which is particularly important when considering how we manage our reserves. We hold reserves principally as a means of managing short term risk or to make provision for longer term commitments to deliver priority outcomes. Reserves should not be seen as a spare resource available to balance annual budgets. This is a key principle underlying ongoing financial management. This aim was fully achieved in 2019/20 with a under budget position and net transfer to reserves of £2.5m.

The extraordinary nature of the current environment should be recognised as an appropriate reason to use of reserves in a planned way for 2020/21 as set out in this paper. Ideally the need to use reserves will be reduced in the event of further allocation of unrestricted Covid-19 government grant.



## REVENUE BUDGET

**3.2** The Councils revenue budget has been adversely impacted from the Covid-19 restrictions which has resulted in a significant loss of income due to the government lockdown and social distancing measures. The adverse impact on the Council's revenue budget has arisen from the urgent actions required to comply with the government lockdown which included the closure of the Roman Baths. To give context the income from our Heritage and Parking Services for April and May was £0.259m compared to £5.866m for the same period last year, a reduction of £5.607m; this equates to a loss of £91,918 a day which is required to fund Council Services. This alongside expenditure pressures which include supplier relief such as supporting the social care market and new unplanned expenditure, for example the sourcing of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has resulted in a forecast over budget position, the Directors are required to seek compensating savings to try and bring budgets back to balance.

**3.3** A summary by Portfolio of the revenue position as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020 is shown in the table below:

<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Revised Budget £'m</b>	<b>Year End Forecast £'m</b>	<b>Expected Variance Over / (Under) £'m</b>
Leader	(0.63)	(0.63)	0
Resources	12.20	19.81	7.61
Adult Services	63.53	68.69	5.16
Children's Services	27.65	29.16	1.51
Climate Emergency & Neighbourhood Services	16.54	17.14	0.60
Transport Services	(0.09)	8.50	8.59
Housing, Planning & Economic Development	3.47	4.04	0.57
Community Services	(4.42)	13.67	18.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>118.25</b>	<b>160.38</b>	<b>42.13</b>

Note1: Some of the figures in this table are affected by rounding.

- 3.4** The current **year-end** forecast is an over budget position of £42.13m which has arisen through the significant impact of the Covid-19 restrictions on the Council income budgets. This position is before revenue mitigations which are set out in section 3.6 of the report.

### **3.5 Portfolio Commentary**

Key variances are reported by Portfolio below showing the gross budget impact before government grant and service-based mitigations, this information has been established through a detailed assessment of the Councils income budgets and arising cost pressures from Covid-19:

#### **Leader (on budget)**

Due to the good performance of the Councils housing company, Aequis the 2020/21 dividend payment to the Council is forecast to be fully paid giving an on-budget position.

#### **Resources (£7.61m over budget)**

The Resources portfolio has been materially impacted from the Covid-19 restrictions, specifically the Councils Commercial Estate income budget which has a forecast deficit of £6.13m.

This deficit is projected to the end of the year and built on the assumption that there will be new voids in the Commercial Estate due to the impact on business viability following the Covid-19 restrictions and changes in consumer behaviour. To try and help mitigate these risks the Council has offered periods of deferred rent and administered the Government grant scheme to help business with additional funding to meet fixed payments. However, rent free periods are not being proposed as this is an essential income source that funds Council services to its residents with payment required in this financial year.

The remaining £1m is due to slippage in Council saving plans such as reviewing its office accommodation and the cross-Council service efficiency savings. These will now be progressed through the Covid-19 recovery work that will look at how the Councils Corporate accommodation is utilised by its workforce responding to the changes required from Covid-19.

#### **Adult Services (£5.16m over budget)**

Due to the Covid-19 impact on the health and care sector there will be additional financial pressure on the adult social care budgets as a result of supporting the care market in responding to the changes in care delivery from social distancing.

The £5.16m over budget position is broken down across the following areas:

Additional demand above budget levels of £1.8m, this is the full year impact of new social care placements following early discharge from hospital.

Through supporting the care market, we are anticipating a further pressure of £1.9m through additional provider costs in supporting existing packages of

care. In addition to this we are estimating £0.57m relating to workforce pressures across the adult social care.

In addition, we are anticipating the annual cost for PPE for the care sector to be £0.86m to enable safe delivery of care.

### **Children's Services (£1.51m over budget)**

There is a £0.5m forecast pressure arising from children's social care. Principally due to anticipated additional expenditure being incurred on care packages that have occurred during the Covid-19 restrictions.

There is a £0.7m pressure relating to home to school transport (HST) service; primarily due to evaluation of effect of social distancing guidelines in support of school reopening. In addition, there is £0.2m arising from payments to early years providers to ensure provision was available for key workers and £0.07m potential loss of income for music service.

### **Climate Emergency & Neighbourhoods (£0.6m over budget)**

The £0.6m over budget position is due to additional demand and agency staffing costs for waste services during the Covid-19 restrictions.

### **Transport Services (£8.59m over budget)**

Parking services has been adversely impacted from the Covid-19 restrictions with a period of non-charging during the lockdown and ongoing reduced demand. This is due to the material usage drop from the impacts on the visitor economy alongside fewer regular users as people are working from home or not able to work which has led to a forecast £7.2m income deficit.

Within the Transport portfolio there is also a £1m over budget position that will be charged to the Covid-19 Grant for additional costs that Council has incurred through Emergency Planning mobilising services to deal with the pandemic. This includes funding the establishment of Community Support Hubs, sourcing PPE and providing temporary accommodation for the homeless.

There is also an anticipated pressure of £0.35m on the Public and Passenger Transport Budgets from supplier relief to ensure the continuation of services.

### **Housing, Planning & Economic Development (£0.57m over budget)**

There have been additional costs of £0.26m in Housing services as a result of providing emergency accommodation for rough sleepers as a result of the lockdown. This is temporary accommodation and the service is now exploring options for a more affordable longer-term solution.

It is forecast that there will be a £0.31m pressure during 2020/21 on the planning income budget due to an anticipated reduction in planning applications. This may improve with the recent easing of the Covid-19 restrictions allowing the construction work to resume.

### **Community Services (£18.09m over budget)**

Income budgets across the Community Services portfolio ranging from Building Control fees to registrar's income from weddings have been

adversely impacted from Covid-19. The service materially impacted is Heritage leading to £18.09m income deficit across the portfolio.

The significant income loss in Heritage Services is due to the closure of the Roman Baths, Fashion Museum and Victoria Art Gallery which under normal circumstances would generate an annual profit of £9.7m. There is now a forecast deficit in turnover ranging between £14.5m to £18.7m with the mid-point used in the forecast. Reopening of the service will need to take into account social distancing measures and anticipated reductions in demand from international visitors.

### 3.6 2020/21 Financial Recovery

Due to the early assessment of annual income loss in 2020/21, which in March was forecast to have an annual impact of over £30m early work started on the Council's in year financial recovery plans. This was prioritised to ensure responsible Directors could identify mitigations to be agreed with their portfolio holders.

With a Government Covid-19 Grant allocation of £10m and in year revenue pressures of over £40m it was apparent the grant would contribute to the new cost pressures but not mitigate the loss of income. As a result, the following scenarios were developed to identify recovery measures:

<b>Red scenario</b> = Maximum Govt support: 25% of projected additional pressures (£12.5m Grant) reducing the projected in year deficit to <b>£30m</b>
<b>Amber scenario</b> = Maximum Govt support: 50% of projected additional pressures (£25m Grant) reducing the projected in year deficit to <b>£17.8m</b>
<b>Green scenario</b> = Maximum Govt support: 75% of projected additional pressures (£37.5m Grant) reducing the projected in year deficit to <b>£5.3m</b>

*\*Note: the scenarios are based on a £43m revenue deficit (c£10m expenditure & c£33m income loss) and Council tax and Business Rates collection deficit of c£7m*

At the time of developing the above scenarios the confirmed government revenue grant allocation to B&NES was £10m from the national funding of £3.2bn to local government for dealing with Covid-19 related pressures.

Whilst it is anticipated that there may be further government funding to help manage the 2020/21 position this cannot be relied on. The Council's budget management scheme requires financial recovery plans for full mitigation of the over budget position. Our current working assumption is the adoption of the red scenario and this has guided the creation of the recovery plan. We will revisit this assumption if circumstances change.

#### Financial Recovery Plans

The financial recovery measures are detailed in Appendix 1, these total £20.7m with further recovery measures to balance the 2020/21 budget are set out in the table below:

<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Gross Pressure Over / (Under) £'m</b>	<b>Recovery measures £'m</b>	<b>Variance Over / (Under) £'m</b>
Leader	0.00	0.00	0.00
Resources	7.61	(11.64)	(4.03)
Adult Services	5.16	(3.54)	1.62
Children's Services	1.51	(0.75)	0.76
Climate Emergency & Neighbourhood Services	0.60	(0.51)	0.09
Transport Services	8.59	(0.35)	8.24
Housing, Planning & Economic Development	0.57	(0.91)	(0.34)
Community Services	18.09	(3.00)	15.09
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>42.13</b>	<b>(20.70)</b>	<b>21.43</b>
Government grant		(10.00)	(10.00)
Use of reserves		(11.43)	(11.43)
<b>Total</b>	<b>42.13</b>	<b>(42.13)</b>	<b>0.00</b>

This shows the impact on the revenue budget from the proposed financial recovery plans with summary narrative below. There has been an equalities impact assessment of these plans set out in Appendix 4.

### **Resources - £11.78m of recovery measures**

Within the resources portfolio there are £11.78m of in year one-off recovery measures that will help offset the loss of income in commercial estate and provide wider corporate mitigations to the Council overspend.

The planned Corporate mitigations of £10.44m have been summarised under the following headings:

- £2.6m release of revenue contingency budgets
- £2m Balance sheet review and use of ring-fenced reserve to fund service expenditure
- £3m Reprofiting the Capital Programme to reduce borrowing costs
- £2.84m Salary Budget Savings through vacancies and reduced hours

In addition, across the service budgets within the Resources portfolio there has been £1.34m of in year underspends identified through differing expenditure and identifying more affordable ways of delivering services. Examples include reprofiling non-essential maintenance spend and not making new commitments against discretionary budgets to create an underspend.

### **Adult Services - £3.54m of recovery measures**

Within the Adult Social Care portfolio further savings of £3.54m have been identified that build on the existing initiatives set out on the 2020/21 budget approval.

These include:

Reviewing existing care packages to identify efficiencies of £1.31m, evidence has shown that through carrying out regular reviews to ensure only eligible need is met through care provision will generate savings and encourage independence rather than create over reliance on packages of care.

It is anticipated that there will be external service additional underspends of £1.04m from underspends in the cost of care packages where services were not required and/or could not be provided during the Covid-19 restrictions.

A further £0.87m has been identified through rephasing new commissions against the Improved Better Care Fund (iBCF) grant funding to 2021 and utilising this to fund the growth in the 2020/21 Adult Social Care budget creating a revenue saving.

Across the Adult Services budget there is a further £0.32m of miscellaneous underspends and vacancy management through which involve reprofiling non-essential commissions and service expenditure.

### **Children's Services - £0.75m of recovery measures**

Children's Services have identified £0.43m of service review and efficiency savings that include savings that can be realised from high cost residential placements through putting more support into preventative services and strengthening the fostering offer. This aligns with the service improvement savings that were agreed in the 2020/21 Budget Proposal.

In addition, there are £0.32m of planned underspends through miscellaneous underspends and vacancy management, with £0.27m of this arising from the Children's Social Care Salary budgets.

### **Climate Emergency & Neighbourhoods - £0.51m of recovery measures**

Across the portfolio there has been £0.36m identified from general service efficiencies which include reprofiling resource from areas such as Street Cleaning to high demand areas such as Waste. This has helped mitigate additional costs and identified underspends from rescheduling expenditure.

Through the additional government funding to aid recovery across the region there is the opportunity to fund planned activity that was budgeted from grant allocations which will create a £0.25m revenue underspend.

### **Transport Services - £0.35m of recovery measures**

Across the Transport Services £0.35m of mitigations have been put forward, these include finding alternative funding sources and reprioritising budgeted resource to take forward new initiatives creating a saving within 2020/21 budget growth items. Underspends have also been identified from carrying out service reviews where business as usual costs have slipped in the first quarter as a result of the Covid-19 restrictions.

### **Housing, Planning & Economic Development - £0.94m of recovery measures**

There have been £0.94m of mitigations identified, the majority of this relates to utilising £0.66m of accumulated housing grant held in reserves. The grant is not ring fenced and will be released into revenue, creating a revenue budget underspend.

The balance of the mitigations in the main is from holding vacancies across team budgets.

### **Community Services - £3m of recovery measures**

The main recovery measure within Community Services is £2.5m from Heritage Services, this is made up of a range of mitigations that will be implemented throughout the year to take into account the material loss of income and need for lower operating costs to run the service whilst demand has fallen. The Heritage Services recovery is predicated on a revised strategy to re-open its services in a controlled and safe way.

The £0.5m balance is made up from holding vacancies across team budgets, miscellaneous underspends and service reviews as detailed in Appendix 1.

### **MHCLG Revenue Grants**

The table below sets out the MHCLG Council revenue grants that have been announced in response to the pandemic to allow Councils to manage and fund local demands.

<b>Covid 19 Government Support &amp; Grants via Councils</b>	<b>England Total £m</b>	<b>B&amp;NES Total £m</b>
Covid 19 - Local Government Support Grant - Tranche 1	1,600	4.644
Covid 19 - Local Government Support Grant - Tranche 2	1,600	5.358
<b>Sub Total Covid 19 - Local Government Support Grant</b>	<b>3,200</b>	<b>10.002</b>
<b>Other Covid 19 Grants and Support:</b>		
Adult Social Care Infection Control Fund	600	2.189
Test & Trace Service	300	0.849
Reopening High Streets Safely Fund	50	0.173
Covid 19 Bus Services Support Grant	22	tbc
Food and Essential supplies fund	63	tbc
<b>Sub Total - Other Covid19 Grants &amp; Support</b>	<b>1,035</b>	<b>3.211</b>

For the financial recovery plans the £10m revenue grant has been included as being fully utilised as funding the reported pressures across Council, it is assumed that the other Covid-19 grants will be utilised for specific purposes and not have a material benefit to the reported pressures.

The budget monitoring showing the detailed use of the Covid-19 grants will be incorporated into the Councils quarterly monitoring to Cabinet.

### **MHCLG additional support**

This report sets out the financial recovery measures that will be required to balance the 2020/21 revenue outturn based on the government funding allocations that have been confirmed to date. We are expecting a further package of support to be announced by MHCLG that may help reduce the Councils reliance on reserves to fund its year end deficit. However, at this stage it is prudent to set out a full recovery plan to give assurance that the actions set out in this paper will enable the Council to fund its 2020/21 revenue outturn.

## **3.7 Revenue Balances, Contingency and Reserves**

The financial recovery plan includes planned and approved use of earmarked reserves as set out in the table below.

### **Key Reserves**

The following table shows the balances of the key earmarked and un-earmarked revenue reserves held for financial planning and corporate risk at the beginning of the year, planned use, and expected balance at the year-end based on current forecast.

The Budget Report set out the purpose for the two earmarked reserves as follows:

**Revenue Budget Contingency** - The primary purpose of this reserve is to fund in year unforeseen events, overspends, and to meet the risks of non-delivery of budget savings.

**Financial Planning & Smoothing Reserve** - The Financial Planning Reserve will be used to fund the costs of organisational change.

The specific arrangements for the governance and release of reserves are delegated to the Council's Chief Financial Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Resources and the Chief Executive. Due to the risk on the Council's revenue budget £11.43m of reserves have been earmarked for Covid-19 related budget pressures.

The reserve balances have taken account of the 2019/20 revenue outturn which had favourable movements to the 2020/21 opening balances.



	Unallocated Balance as at 1/4/20 £'m	Earmarking for Covid-19 2020/21 In year pressure £'m	Current Estimated Unallocated Balance 31/3/20 £'m
Revenue Budget Contingency	4.32	2.43	1.89
Financial Planning and Smoothing Reserve	5.62	4.00	1.62
Unearmarked Reserves	13.52	5.00	8.52
Total	23.46	11.43	12.03

**Note: In the event of further government revenue grant to support the 2020/21 impacts of Covid-19 the proposed use of reserves will reduce. This will enable the Council to hold a suitable level of financial planning reserve to fund additional one-off costs to manage the longer-term financial recovery.**

### **General Fund Un-earmarked Reserve**

The general fund un-earmarked reserve is retained to meet the Council's key financial risks. The risk assessment has set a range of between £12.3m and £13.5m to meet those risks. When setting the reserve level for 2020/21 the Commercial Income risks and economic risks were taken into account, at that time the magnitude of the Covid-19 income risk could not be understood or quantified, however un-earmarked reserves were increased in the 2020/21 budget by £1.2m.

The utilisation of £5m un-earmarked reserves will leave a balance of £8.52m which is 7.2% of the Council's 2020/21 £118.25m net revenue budget. This leaves a satisfactory level of reserve for financial risk with the remaining balance, when benchmarked against Councils nearest neighbours' group, is higher than the 4%-6% held by our neighbours. Due to the exposure to commercial income it is prudent to hold a higher than benchmark average general fund un-earmarked reserve.

Prior years assessments against the budget have set a minimum level of un-earmarked reserves at £7.5m. The ongoing reserve requirement for the Council will be assessed in detail for the 2021/22 Medium Term Financial Strategy.

### **3.8 2021/22 Medium Term Financial planning**

The in-year recovery measures set out in the paper will provide a comprehensive set of mitigations against the 2020/21 revenue budget. As we start to understand the longer-term impacts and recovery actions over the coming months the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy will be re-written taking into account any recurrent impacts on the Council's budget.

What has become apparent in 2020/21 is the Council's reliance on the Visitor Economy and reliance on Commercial Income as a funding source for core Council Services. The financial strategy will take into account the likelihood and associated financial risk that Commercial income will not return to its 2019/20 levels in 2021/22 and require strategic reviews of the following areas:

- Diversification of Parking Charges to meet Climate Change objectives whilst sustaining an essential income source to the Council.
- Reviewing and revising the Council's Commercial Estate Strategy to ensure best use of assets to meet changing needs for retail, businesses and residential.
- Re-thinking the tourism offer through Heritage Services to appeal to and encourage local visitors alongside international visitors.
- Explore opportunities within the workforce, including how people best utilise our workspace to create a new and safe working environment that reduces the need for travel and encourages the best use of technology creating efficiencies across our services.
- Consider the design of the organisation to make it simpler and more financially sustainable with a reduced reliance on commercial income.

### **3.9 Council Tax & Council Tax Support**

The initial forecast for potential impact on the income from Council Tax due to the impacts of Covid-19 affecting residents' ability to pay and the increase in the number of Local Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) claimants is £6 million.

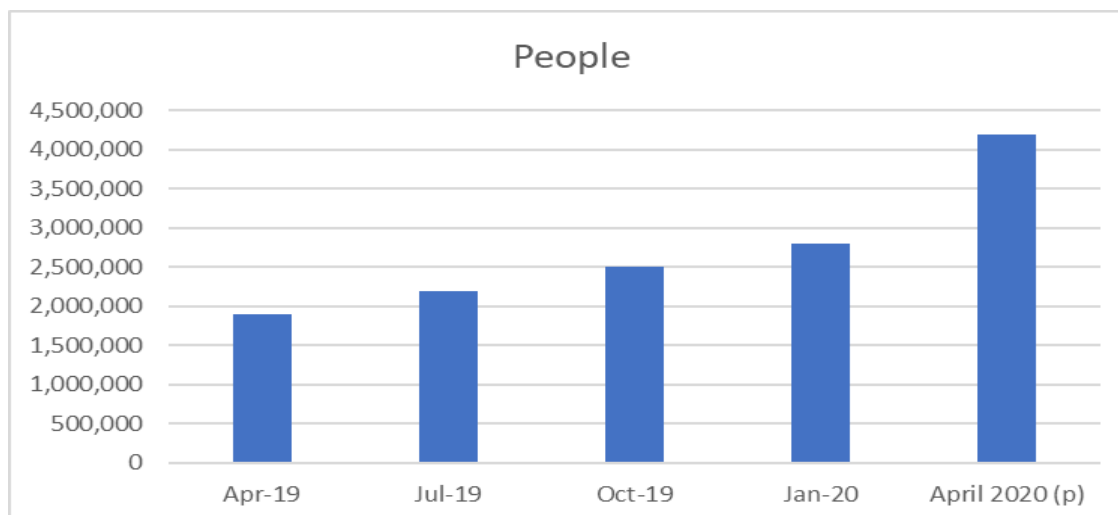
The forecast is based on reductions of around 10% in Council Tax income per month for the first quarter of 2020/21 and then for a gradual monthly improvement until returning to near normal levels by January 2021. Initial assessments of the income levels during the first two months of this financial year, when compared to payment rates for the same periods in 2019/20, shows a reduction of c8% in April, improving to c6% by the end of May.

The Council has seen a large increase in the number of people claiming Local Council Tax Support since April. The 2020/21 tax base included an adjustment of £9.56m for the estimated costs of the LCTSS. At the end of May the current cost has risen to £10.24m, an increase of £0.68m. The number of working age claimants at the end of May was 6,721 compared to the budget assumption of 5,939 an increase of 13%. The increase follows the national trend of increases in people claiming Universal Credit where a record number of claims led to 1.2 million new starts to Universal Credit in the period 13 March 2020 to 9 April 2020, which represents an increase of 40%.

The actual outturn position on LCTSS will depend on a number of variables, including the number of new claimants and the period claimants remain eligible for support whilst seeking employment and this continues to be monitored closely during the year.

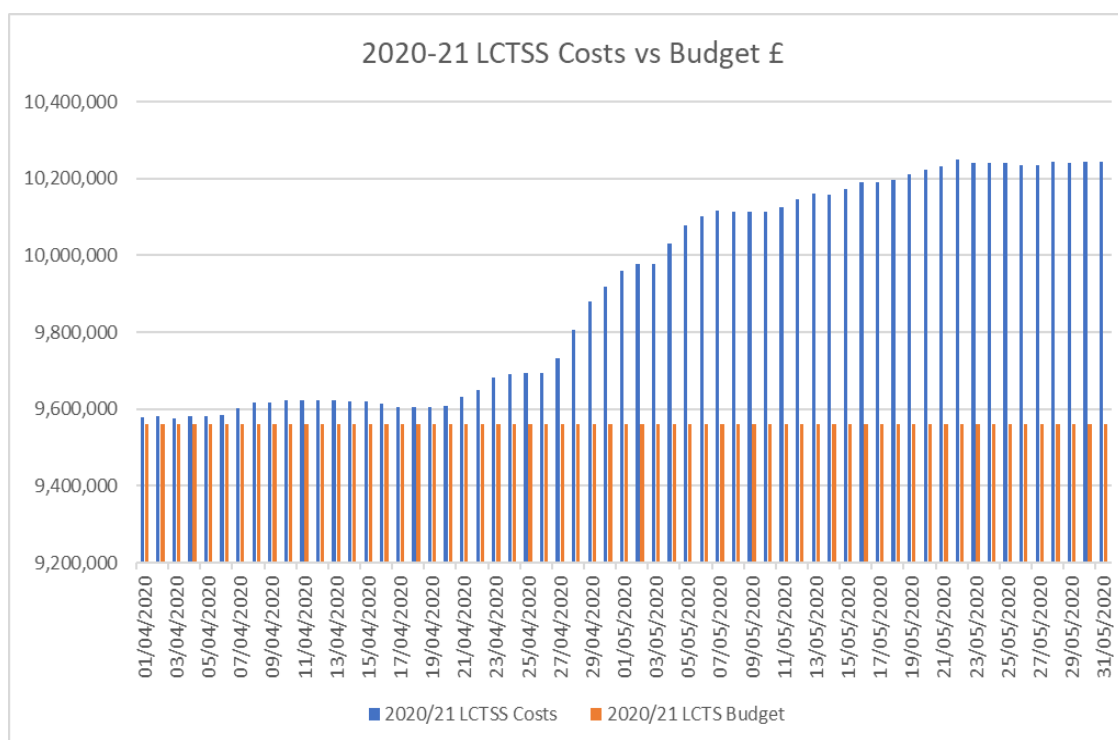
The following two charts show the national increase in Universal Credit Claimants and the increasing cost of LCTSS in B&NES.

## People on Universal Credit (at 9<sup>th</sup> April 2020)



Source: DWP Universal Credit Statistics

## B&NES LCTSS Costs vs Budget (April 2020 to May 2020)



Under Local Government accounting arrangements for Council Tax, the impacts of the Council Tax collection fund projected outturn position will need to be built into the financial planning assumptions for recovery as part of the 2021/22 budget.

### 3.10 Council Tax Hardship Fund

Following the outbreak of Covid-19 and the advice of the UK Government on self-isolation and the temporary closure of Businesses and places of work, the Government made available a £500m Hardship fund for Local Authorities, with the expectation that it will primarily be used to provide council tax relief under

section 13A (1) (c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. The Council received £1,288,040 to fund the costs of these reliefs.

The government guidance gives minimum requirements expected of each local authority, which is to apply a further reduction of the lower amount of the claimant's residual council tax liability or £150.00 to all recipients of working age local council tax support (LCTS) during the financial year 2020-21.

The position, as at the end of May, is that reliefs totaling £764,000 have been applied to 5,514 Council Tax Accounts.

It is highly likely that there will be further increases in the number of people who claim and are entitled to council tax support during the remainder of 2020/21, so a high degree of flexibility is currently required as to how and when any potential residual funding is used.

### **3.11 Business Rates**

The initial forecast for the potential adverse impact on the income from Business Rates due to the impacts of Covid-19 affecting businesses ability to pay is £1.5m. This represents a reduction of c5% on collectible income of £31.5m which allows for the 100% business rate relief holiday which has been granted for Retail, Leisure & Hospitality businesses during 2020/21. The 100% relief is funded by government through a s31 compensation grant.

Business Rates income can be very volatile and with the increase in the retail business rate relief which now totals an estimated £44.5m for 2020/21, prior year like for like comparisons on income collection are difficult. The forecast income impact will be reviewed at the end of the first quarter based on trends for the first 3 months, although there is likely to be a lag until impacts on income such as through increases in empty property relief start to feed through the system.

As set out in the Budget Report, any surplus or deficit on the Business Rate Collection Fund and associated income will be transferred to or from the Business Rates Reserve for consideration as part of the Business Rates calculations for future years and this position will be reflected in the 2021/22 budget. The balance on the Business Rate Reserve as at 31/3/2020 is £3.568m.

### **3.12 Business Support Grants**

The Government announced support for small businesses, and businesses in the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors in the form of two grant funding schemes in 2020/21, these were to be administrated by each local authority:

- a) Small Business Grant Fund - all businesses in England in receipt of Small Business Rates Relief will be eligible for a payment of £10,000.
- b) Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund - all businesses in England that would have been in receipt of the Expanded Retail Discount (which covers retail, hospitality and leisure) with a rateable value of less than £51,000 will be eligible for the a cash grant of either £10,000 or £25,000 dependent on the rateable value of the property.

The Council has approximately 3,062 eligible businesses in the Bath and North East Somerset area and has redeployed staff from non-critical service areas to assist with processing applications for business support grants.

The number of grants processed as at 21<sup>st</sup> June 2020 was 2,929 with 80 either being processed or waiting for a claim to be submitted, this indicates around 97% of eligible cases have been processed. The following table shows numbers and value of grants processed.

Type of Grant	Amount of Grant	Eligible Cases (estimate)	Grants Processed for Payment	Percentage of Grants Processed	Amount Paid
Small Business Grant	£10,000	2,050	2,027	98.9%	£20,270,000
Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant (RV<£15k)	£10,000	313	312	99.7%	£3,120,000
Retail, Hospitality & Leisure Grant (RV >£15k but <£51k)	£25,000	646	590	91.3%	£14,750,000
<b>Overall Totals</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,009</b>	<b>2,929</b>	<b>97.3%</b>	<b>£38,140,000</b>

The government has recently announced an additional discretionary fund aimed at providing support for some small and micro businesses who were not eligible for the Small Business Grant Fund or the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Fund.

The government will provide funding equivalent to 5% of the grants fund allocation for the Small Business Grants Fund and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants Fund using data returns submitted on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020. This equates to a funding cap for the council's scheme of £2.143m.

Taking into account the government guidance, the following businesses are prioritised for grants from the discretionary fund:

- a) Charities and community organisations – with a property that has a rateable value of up to and including £15,000, in receipt of mandatory charitable business rate relief, that otherwise would have been eligible for Small Business Rate Relief or Rural Rate Relief and therefore not eligible for funding under the existing grant schemes.
- b) Businesses in Shared / Flexible workspaces – that have exclusive use of a unit but do not have their own business rate assessment. Examples include units in offices, industrial parks, science parks and incubators.
- c) Market / Street Traders – with a fixed pitch and a street trading licence or lease agreement if in a covered market.
- d) Bed & Breakfasts and guest houses – where the business owner lives on site, holds a valid food safety registration with the council and is paying council tax rather than business rates.

The two week application window for businesses to apply for support from the discretionary fund opened on the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020 with a closing date of 10<sup>th</sup> June. The Council received 308 applications with the fund undersubscribed so a further application window is planned to open at the end of June to give those businesses that haven't applied another chance to access the grant funding.

### **3.13 West of England Combined Authority (WECA) Response to Covid-19**

B&NES has been working closely with WECA to understand the regional impact of Covid-19 specifically on business and transport which is set out below:

The Covid-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented challenge for the businesses, residents and public services across the West of England. WECA, the LEP and key partners have been working to support businesses and residents through this crisis period and seeking to ensuring the support and infrastructure is in place to prepare for recovery.

#### **Business Recovery**

The West of England Mayor, along with the other combined authority mayors, has established a Regional Economic Recovery Taskforce. This is a partnership between the West of England Combined Authority, the Local Enterprise Partnership, business, universities and the region's councils. WECA have identified, and allocated, **£5m** of Investment Funding for the taskforce and will continue to re-prioritise the overall investment programme to identify further funding where required.

#### **Transport**

In the short term following the lockdown, WECA has worked to ensure that public transport is in place to support essential workers travelling to their place of work. This has included maintaining regular contact with bus companies to ensure services are provided and providing travel updates on both the WECA and Travelwest websites to assist people who still need to travel.

WECA has been allocated **£741k** funding from the Government's Emergency Active Travel Fund which is being applied to a programme of measures across the region to promote walking and cycling and to enable passengers to access and egress bus and rail services as safely as possible within social distancing guidelines. Funding is expected to be received from DfT by the end of June 2020, and it is likely that later in the summer further funding will be made available, potentially up to **£3.7m**. Transport Officers from WECA and our Constituent Authorities have started to work up relevant proposals with momentum underpinned through a **£3m cash** injection from the WECA investment fund in advance of receipt of government funding.

Many of the temporary measures being developed have the potential to become permanent, and be extended, to become rational integrated parts of the public realm that could significantly increase Active Travel within the region and capture some of the behaviour engendered by the Covid-19 Emergency. The Investment Fund report to June 2020 WECA committee proposes the creation of a **£10m** capital funding pot to invest in walking and cycling infrastructure building on the

Emergency Measures as well as delivering additional high value active travel measures in the region.

In addition, over the next few months it is anticipated that DfT would announce potential funding and associated guidelines for / access to the previously announced **£1.75bn** national funding for cycling and walking measures.

### **WECA support for UA cashflow**

To help West of England Unitary Councils with challenging cashflow forecasts over the coming months, WECA is proposing, (to the June committee), to introduce a scheme offering low interest, flexible short-term loans across the region. Matching cash balances held by the Combined Authority with periods of cash shortages within our UAs in another excellent example of proactive and productive partnership working.

### **3.14 Capital Review**

The Corporate mitigations set out a £3m revenue saving through reviewing the delivery timetable of the Capital programme.

The objectives of the review are to aid the Council's financial recovery by minimising new Council borrowing that will need funding from the revenue budget and to also come up with a revised budget profile that takes into account the Covid-19 impact on delivery. In addition, the review has focussed on ensuring grant funded schemes that can continue within budget are supported.

Appendix 2 list's the Capital Schemes with proposed changes that will result in a revenue saving from rephasing. Appendix 3 list the proposed schemes with other actions that included aligning the schemes with other programme items for more effective management of the programme. The following needs to be noted when reviewing these documents:

1. Proposed interest saving is from reducing the amount of Council Capital borrowing in 2020/21 – this is a one-off saving from timing changes as schemes will still require the approved budget in future years.
2. The theme column is to consider grouping common areas of the programme into strategic delivery themes
3. The recommended actions will result in:
  - Integrate – align and combine related schemes
  - Pause – reconsider scheme due to viability issues
  - Rephase – realign budget to delivery profile taking account of Covid-19
  - Revise – revisit scheme delivery options
  - Review – re-think scheme

The £3m saving is broken down in the table below

<b>Action</b>	<b>Identified saving £'m</b>
Revisions to the Capital Programme	1.3
MRP Review	0.5
Treasury Management -e.g. borrow short term	0.5
Further Slippage Savings	0.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3.0</b>

The adjustments to the approved and provisional Capital programme by portfolio are detailed below:

<b>Cabinet Portfolio: Approved Capital Schemes</b>	<b>Budget 2020/2021 £'m</b>	<b>Rephase £'m</b>	<b>Budget 2020/2021 £'m Restated</b>
Resources & Deputy Leader	22.538	-10.042	12.496
Adult Services	0.388	0	0.388
Children's Services	5.69	0	5.69
Climate Emergency & Neighbourhood Services	6.595	-0.063	6.532
Transport Services	10.548	-0.936	9.612
Housing, Planning & Economic Development	64.477	-26.885	37.592
Community Services	6.662	0	6.662
Corporate Capital Contingency	0.9	-0.225	0.675
<b>Total</b>	<b>117.798</b>	<b>-38.151</b>	<b>79.647</b>

<b>Cabinet Portfolio: Provisional Capital Schemes</b>	<b>Budget 2020/2021 £'m</b>	<b>Rephase £'m</b>	<b>Budget 2020/2021 £'m Restated</b>
Resources & Deputy Leader	34.349	-1.748	32.601
Children's Services	18.427	-0.03	18.397
Climate Emergency & Neighbourhood Services	35.224	-16.781	18.443
Transport Services	11.089	-5.141	5.948
Housing, Planning & Economic Development	20.421	-7.61	12.811
Community Services	2.596	-0.063	2.533
<b>Total</b>	<b>122.106</b>	<b>-31.373</b>	<b>90.733</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>239.904</b>	<b>-69.524</b>	<b>170.38</b>



The review of the programme has considered priority schemes delivering transport and infrastructure improvements with the aim to minimise disruption to scheme delivery. The schemes where there has been material rephasing to the Capital scheme budget of over £0.5m for the purpose of delivering revenue savings are listed below:

**Corporate Estate Planned Maintenance (£2.1m rephased to 2021/22)**

Rephasing of £2.1m to 2021/22 leaving £1m in the programme for 2020/21 investment. This aligns with a review of the Corporate Estate.

**Property Improvement – Orange Grove Structural Works (£0.75m rephased to 2021/22)**

Current scheme held in provisional programme with no commitments, scheme will undergo a review considering revised options in light of Covid-19.

**Neighbourhood Services - Asset & Vehicle Replacement Programme (£0.94m rephased to 2021/22)**

Replacement of vehicles is to be made on a priority-based criteria, where compliance with the clean air zone is required.

**Passenger Transport Vehicle Replacement Programme (£0.89m rephased to 2021/22)**

As above

**Highways Road Salt Storage (£0.68m rephased to 2021/22)**

Scheme to be aligned with the Waste Redesign and relocation planned in future years.

**Affordable Housing (£2.1m rephased to 2021/22)**

Scheme amendments to consider Covid-19 impact on delivery timetable.

### 3.15 Risks

The key risks to the budget were outlined in the Councils 2020/21 Budget Report, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance. These have been reviewed with the additional risks added below that specifically relate to the Covid-19 Pandemic:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Management Update
Further government restrictions in the event of a second wave virus spread.	Possible	High	This is certainly a material risk, whilst not one the Council has direct control over, every step is being put in place to follow government guidance following the recommendations of our Director of Public Health.
Long term impacts on the Councils Commercial Estate over and above anticipated levels.	Possible	High	Current modelling has been prudent anticipating a material impact in 2020/21 if this continues into future years a full assessment will be required of the Commercial Estate

			asset base.
The income from Heritage Services may not recover in the short term.	Possible	High	Continue to monitor income levels and impact on business plan once the service is re-opened. Pre Covid-19 performance has exceeded business plan targets; performance will be closely monitored for the rest of the financial year.
Impact on Reserves	Possible	High	Without additional government grant there is the risk that Council reserve levels are not enough to manage future years risk. To manage this the full delivery of recovery plans will help minimise use of reserves.
Interest rates increase	Possible	Medium	A reserve is available for borrowing to manage market risk and long-term borrowing costs have been factored into the longer-term MTFS. The current forecast from our treasury management advisors is that borrowing rates will remain at current low levels in the medium term until economic growth prospects improve. The Council will continue to consider shorter term borrowing options alongside the PWLB.
Volatility and uncertainty around business rates	Likely	High	<p>The impacts of Covid-19 will increase the volatility and uncertainty around business rate income. In 2020/21 this risk will be partly offset by the 100% business rate relief the government has announced for all Retail, Leisure and Hospitality businesses.</p> <p>We continue to monitor arrears, CVAs, and liquidations with a specific reserve held to manage in-year volatility.</p>
Capital projects not delivered resulting in revenue reversion costs or liabilities from underwriting agreements	Possible	High	The Council has a number of projects within this category. These risks will continue to be monitored and reported. An assessment is made as part of the budget process to ensure that revenue reserves are sufficient to meet these risks. The capital programme methodology looks to de-risk projects wherever possible.
Changes to Government Policy that affects future funding	Likely	High	Need to monitor and continue to highlight impact
Brexit risks	Likely	Medium	During the Brexit transition period from the 31 <sup>st</sup> January 2020 to the 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2020 there will be a period of uncertainty whilst a Trade Deal is negotiated. Impacts on the Councils supply chain will need close monitoring.

Funding pressures through WECA, CCG and other partners	Possible	Medium	Ensure good communication links with partner organisations.
Capital receipts in the areas identified are insufficient to meet target	Possible	Medium	There is a risk that a depressed market will impact on current values, in the short to medium term the Council should not rely on capital receipts as a key funding source.

## 4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1** The annual medium-term financial planning process allocates resources across services with alignment of these resources towards the Council's corporate priorities. This report sets out the in-year recovery measures that are required to enable the Council to continue performing against the financial envelope agreed in February 2020 through the Budget setting process.
- 4.2** Under part 4D (1) Rule 5 this report will be exempt from call in and prior to the Cabinet decision be scrutinised by the Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel. Under the procedural rule the effect of the call-in alone would be to cause the Council to miss, or fail to comply with or fulfil, a deadline or duty. In this instance under the Policy and Budget Framework as set out in the Constitution the Cabinet and its Directors must put measures in place to manage the in-year over budget position.

## 5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1** The financial implications are contained within the body of the report.

## 6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1** A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.
- 6.2** The substance of this report is part of the Council's risk management process. The key risks in the Council's budget are assessed annually by each Director, with these risks re-assessed on a monthly basis as part of the budget monitoring process.

## 7 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 7.1** The objectives of the administration have been considered throughout the design of the financial recovery plan to retain and enhance all key elements of climate and ecological emergency activity and policy planning. This will allow the Council to influence not only its own activities in recovery, but also the economic recovery of the wider district. This will ensure that sensitivity to the climate and ecological crises is retained at the heart of decision-making, in order to radically reduce carbon emissions. Over the course of the next decade as per the climate emergency action plan.

## 8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 None

## 9 CONSULTATION

9.1 Consultation has been carried out with the Cabinet Member for Resources, Corporate Directors, Section 151 Officer, Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer.

9.2 Consultation was carried out at meetings and via e-mail.

<b>Contact person</b>	<i>Will Godfrey - Chief Executive 01225 477400,</i> <a href="mailto:Will_Godfrey@bathnes.gov.uk">Will_Godfrey@bathnes.gov.uk</a>  <i>Andy Rothery – Director of Finance (S151 Officer) 01225 477103,</i> <a href="mailto:Andy_Rothery@bathnes.gov.uk">Andy_Rothery@bathnes.gov.uk</a>
<b>Background papers</b>	COVID19 - Update report and position statement – 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2020 Cabinet  <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&amp;MId=5754">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=122&amp;MId=5754</a>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	

Portfolio	Ref.	Savings Title	Savings Description	Risk R/A/G	Type of Saving	Staffing Related	2020/21 £000
Resources and Deputy Leader	RP01	Balance sheet review	Review the aged debt provision held on the balance sheet to identify sums no longer required to release back into revenue.	A	Other	N	1,000
	RP02	Capital Review	Reduce revenue borrowing costs through reprofiling the corporately funded capital schemes.	A	Other	N	3,000
	RP03	Corporate contingency	Release corporately held revenue contingency.	G	Underspend	N	1,000
	RP04	Mental Capacity Act funding	Release corporately held budget on a one off basis as unlikely to be utilised in 2020/21.	G	Other	N	445
	RP05	One off budget for new initiatives	Release balance of one-off budget that did not have commitments.	A	Other	N	250
	RP06	Remove SEND corporate contingency	Remove SEND corporate contingency following DfE guidance that SEND cost need to be fully funded from the dedicated schools grant.	G	Other	N	909
	RP07	Social Care refinancing	Fund Social Care purchased care from retained IBCF grant held in reserve.	A	Other	N	1,000
	RP08	Salary Budget Savings	Savings through, holding vacancies, recruiting to reduced hours contracts and agreeing reduced hours for members of staff.	A	Service Review	Y	2,843
	RP09	CCTV	Review service to release savings	A	Supplies and Services	N	50
	RP10	Chairman's Budget	Delete all non essential discretionary budgets left in the chairman's budget	G	Supplies and Services	N	10
	RP11	Community Engagement Apprentice	Defer new community engagement apprentice post	A	Vacancy	Y	20
	RP12	Digital communications- content	Defer growth item for improvements to digital content	G	Vacancy	Y	35
	RP13	PDS Panels	Reprofile expenditure for dedicated support for PDS Panels	G	Supplies and Services	N	9
	RP14	Webcasting	Greater use of YouTube streaming in place of current webcasting solution	G	Supplies and Services	N	10
	RP15	Service Review and Efficiencies	Organisational redesign	A	Vacancy	Y	130
	RP16	Reduction in maintenance spend	Reduction in reactive maintenance across the estate, retaining provision for statutory works and prevention of major deterioration only	R	Supplies and Services	N	100
	RP17	Savings Review and Efficiency Savings	Review Reception facilities based on revised use of Corporate offices	A	Service Review	Y	21
	RP18	Vacancy management	Holding vacant posts in the short term without compromising service delivery	G	Vacancy	Y	274
	RP19	Miscellaneous underspends	Reducing supplies and services spend to a minimum without compromising service delivery	G	Underspend	N	538
Resources and Deputy Leader Total							11,644
Adult Services	RP20	Community - Review of Care Package Delivery	Review of existing packages to identify efficiencies	R	Commission	N	1,312
	RP21	Community - Review of Better Care Fund schemes	Delay or do not progress identified schemes	A	Commission	N	871
	RP22	Vacancy management	Holding vacant posts in the short term without compromising service delivery	G	Vacancy	Y	12
	RP23	Miscellaneous underspends	Reducing supplies and services spend to a minimum without compromising service delivery	G	Underspend	N	311
	RP24	External services cost reductions	Cost reductions from external services not able to be delivered as a result of lockdown	A	Commission	N	1,035
Adult Services Total							3,540
Children's Services	RP25	School Improvement	Savings Review and Efficiency Savings	A	Other	N	60
	RP26	Remodel service offer for children and young people	Negotiate reduction in commissioned service levels whilst maintaining statutory delivery	G	Commission	N	24
	RP27	Remodel service offer for children and young people	Negotiate revisions to commissioned service levels whilst maintaining statutory delivery	G	Commission	N	15
	RP28	Revise service offer for children and young people	Provide statutory level of participation support to children and young people	G	Commission	N	10
	RP29	Revise service offer for children and young people	Provide statutory level of respite support to children and young people	G	Commission	N	10
	RP30	Revise service offered to children and young people providers	Decommission Network non statutory support service	G	Commission	N	6
	RP31	Children's Centres	Savings Review and Efficiency Savings	A	Service Review	Y	22
	RP32	Family Group Support	Focus on support, to keep family groups at home, avoiding residential placements.	A	Underspend	N	89
	RP33	Intensive Fostering Service	Innovative Fostering Service offering, to avoid residential placements .	A	Underspend	N	180
	RP34	St Martin's Garden	Rent reduction of no longer use office space at St Martin's Garden	A	Supplies and Services	N	15
	RP35	Vacancy management	Holding vacant posts in the short term without compromising service delivery	G	Vacancy	Y	270
	RP36	Miscellaneous underspends	Reducing supplies and services spend to a minimum without compromising service delivery	G	Underspend	N	50
Children's Services Total							751

Portfolio	Ref.	Savings Title	Savings Description	Risk R/A/G	Type of Saving	Staffing Related	2020/21 £000
Climate Emergency & Neighbourhood Services	RP37	Recharging officer time to government grant funding for the delivery of new initiatives	Additional funding announced for active travel across the region creates an opportunity to fund existing budgeted activity from the new grant allocation, which will create a £250k revenue underspend	G	Underspend	N	250
	RP38	Review mechanical sweeping timetable	Delay mechanical sweeping from the summer months to autumn, releasing fuel savings - one off	A	Supplies and Services	N	6
	RP39	Temporary reduction in waste communications	Reduction in communications materials	G	Supplies and Services	N	18
	RP40	Review refuse collection times	Review waste collection services to secure service efficiencies	G	Supplies and Services	N	10
	RP41	Street Cleansing	Budget reprioritised to support waste services during lockdown. Litter at minimal level and managed within service capacity.	G	Other	N	80
	RP42	Recycling Centres	Review opening hours of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRs) to focus on key demand hours	G	Supplies and Services	N	40
	RP43	Vacancy management	Holding vacant posts in the short term without compromising service delivery	G	Vacancy	Y	16
	RP44	Miscellaneous underspends	Reducing supplies and services spend to a minimum without compromising service delivery	G	Underspend	N	95
<b>Climate Emergency &amp; Neighbourhood Services Total</b>							<b>515</b>
Transport Services	RP45	Network Management	Reprioritise existing resources to progress council priorities	A	Other	N	150
	RP46	Network Management	Recruit sustainable transport officers through alternative funding sources	A	Other	N	100
	RP47	Risk based approach Blue Badge abuse enforcement	Take a more risk based approach to monitoring/enforcement of on street blue badge compliance	A	Supplies and Services	N	10
	RP48	Review independent mobility assessments for Blue Badges	Review contract for independent mobility assessments for blue badges	R	Supplies and Services	N	40
	RP49	Service Redesign	Redesign of day to day operational services to release efficiencies	G	Supplies and Services	N	25
	RP50	Miscellaneous underspends	Reducing supplies and services spend to a minimum without compromising service delivery	G	Underspend	N	25
<b>Transport Services Total</b>							<b>350</b>
Housing Planning & Economic Development	RP51	Salary recharge	Recharge Director of Economy & Growth time to Capital projects	G	Income	N	15
	RP52	Use of historic grant funding	Full release of the Housing Reserve to fund current costs	A	Other	N	664
	RP53	Vacancy management	Holding vacant posts in the short term without compromising service delivery	G	Vacancy	Y	155
	RP54	Miscellaneous underspends	Reducing supplies and services spend to a minimum without compromising service delivery	G	Underspend	N	75
<b>Housing Planning &amp; Economic Development Total</b>							<b>909</b>
Community Services	RP55	Heritage recovery plan	Variety of cost saving measures to be implemented throughout the year	A	Other	N	2,500
	RP56	World Heritage cost reduction	Reduction in support for World Heritage management	A	Supplies and Services	N	38
	RP57	Service Review and Efficiencies	Revised management reporting arrangements	R	Service Review	Y	17
	RP58	Savings Review and Efficiency Savings	Service Review within Land Charges	A	Service Review	Y	15
	RP59	Reducing expenditure of Licensing	Hold back purchase of Southgate street traders new canopies until 21/22	G	Underspend	N	7
	RP60	Health, Safety & Food vacancy management	Hold 2 vacant posts open for 12 months	R	Vacancy	Y	67
	RP61	Delay recruitment of Environmental Services Project Officers	Delay budget growth allocated for Project Officers	A	Other	N	100
	RP62	Vacancy management	Holding vacant posts in the short term without compromising service delivery	G	Vacancy	Y	99
	RP63	Miscellaneous underspends	Reducing supplies and services spend to a minimum without compromising service delivery	G	Underspend	N	149
<b>Community Services Total</b>							<b>2,992</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>							<b>20,700</b>

## APPENDIX 2

### CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW

#### Schemes Proposed for Rephasing by Portfolio

Portfolio	Status	Project Name	Budget 2020/21	Rephasing to Future Years	Borrowing Saving 2020/21	Recommend Action	Theme	Narrative
Resources and Deputy Leader	Approved	Corporate Estate Planned Maintenance	3,150	2,111	148	Rephase	Property	Review required for compliance spend only, forecast reflecting some spend will be needed. Slippage also to be reviewed
Resources and Deputy Leader	Approved	Property Company Investment (Aequus Loan Facility)	14,931	7,931	0	Continue and rephased		Release of Funds controlled by Business Case Submission. Delayed by Covid
<b>sub-total</b>				<b>10,042</b>	<b>148</b>			
Resources and Deputy Leader	Approved	Capital Contingency	900	225	9	Continue and rephased		Back-up to all schemes in programme. May be released as monitoring allows.
<b>sub-total</b>				<b>225</b>	<b>9</b>			
Climate Emergency and Neighbourhood Services	Approved	Neighbourhood Services - Asset & Vehicle Replacement Programme	1,129	45	7	Rephase	Vehicles	Criteria for Vehicle replacement to be established, inc CAZ compliance.
Climate Emergency and Neighbourhood Services	Approved	Environmental Protection Vehicles	36	18	2	Rephase	Vehicles	Criteria for Vehicle replacement to be established, inc CAZ compliance.
<b>sub-total</b>				<b>63</b>	<b>9</b>			
Transport Services	Approved	City Centre Security	550	385	25	Integrate	Update City Centre Plan	Ensure outcomes to support Visitor Economy recovery and Zero traffic options.
Transport Services	Approved	Clutton Depot Refurbishment	230	115	8	Rephase	Property	Pause and confirm statutory arrangements, assume 50%
Transport Services	Approved	Parking Vehicle Replacement Programme	67	33	5	Rephase	Vehicles	Criteria for Vehicle replacement to be established, inc CAZ compliance.

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW**

**Schemes Proposed for Rephasing by Portfolio**

Portfolio	Status	Project Name	Budget 2020/21	Rephasing to Future Years	Borrowing Saving 2020/21	Recommend Action	Theme	Narrative
Transport Services	Approved	Street Lighting LED Replacement Programme	350	350	25	Pause		Rephase to consider remaining Value for Money of final phase of programme.
Transport Services	Approved	London Road Modification	53	53	4	Pause		Rephase to bring together with Cleveland Bridge Proposals
<b>sub-total</b>				<b>936</b>	<b>66</b>			
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Approved	Bath Streetspace	490	490	12	Integrate	Update City Centre Plan	Ensure outcomes to support Visitor Economy recovery and Zero traffic options.
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Approved	Waterspace	154	154	11	Integrate	Update City Centre Plan	Ensure outcomes to support Visitor Economy recovery and Zero traffic options.
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Approved	Bath Quays North	34,760	26,241	0	Continue and rephased		Progress actions under Development Agreement to support planning phase pre-works.
<b>sub-total</b>				<b>26,885</b>	<b>23</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Approved</b>			<b>38,151</b>	<b>255</b>			



**CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW**

**Schemes Proposed for Rephasing by Portfolio**

Portfolio	Status	Project Name	Budget 2020/21	Rephasing to Future Years	Borrowing Saving 2020/21	Recommend Action	Theme	Narrative
Resources and Deputy Leader	Provisional	IT Asset Refresh	500	475	79	Rephase	IT	Criteria for replacement to be established
Resources and Deputy Leader	Provisional	Revenues & Benefits System: End of Life Replacement	100	100	22	Rephase	IT	Criteria for replacement to be established
Resources and Deputy Leader	Provisional	Property Improvement – Orange Grove Structural Works	750	750	53	Revise	Property	Revisit options for scheme
Resources and Deputy Leader	Provisional	Property Improvement – Haycombe Crematorium	60	60	4	Rephase	Property	Dignified Entrance works, ensure integrated with Crematorium Work Programme in Corporate Estate Maintenance
Resources and Deputy Leader	Provisional	Property Improvement – Youth Centres	325	163	11	Rephase	Property	Ensure integrated with Work Programme in Corporate Estate Maintenance
Resources and Deputy Leader	Provisional	Project Inception Fund	200	200	24	Rephase		Ensure linked to Place Recovery Plan
<b>sub-total</b>				<b>1,748</b>	<b>193</b>			
Children's Services	Provisional	IT Improvements at Children's Centres – Keynsham, St Martins, Radstock and Bath	30	30	6	Rephase	IT	Ensure integrated with Work Programme in Corporate Estate Maintenance
<b>sub-total</b>				<b>30</b>	<b>6</b>			
Climate Emergency and Neighbourhood Services	Provisional	Neighbourhood Services - Asset & Vehicle Replacement Programme	939	939	148	Rephase	Vehicles	Criteria for Vehicle replacement to be established, inc CAZ compliance.

## APPENDIX 2

### CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW

#### Schemes Proposed for Rephasing by Portfolio

Portfolio	Status	Project Name	Budget 2020/21	Rephasing to Future Years	Borrowing Saving 2020/21	Recommend Action	Theme	Narrative
Climate Emergency and Neighbourhood Services	Provisional	Waste Depot Relocation	15,842	15,842	0	Continue and rephased		Spend will be in future years. 20/21 is Design and Planning phase and part of approved programme.
<b>sub-total</b>				<b>16,781</b>	<b>148</b>			
Transport Services	Provisional	Cleveland Bridge Refurbishment	3,920	1,920	0	Continue and rephased		Contractor appointed. Continue to seek approvals and delivery options prior to Sept 2021 grant condition.
Transport Services	Provisional	Transportation Delivery Programme	600	480	34	Integrate	Update City Centre Plan & Others	Member led Environmental Improvements - rephase to focus on implementation programme for 21/22
Transport Services	Provisional	Replacement Mopeds for Outer Area Parking Enforcement	35	26	4	Rephase	Vehicles	Criteria for Vehicle replacement to be established, inc CAZ compliance.
Transport Services	Provisional	Passenger Transport Vehicle Replacement Programme	1,180	885	139	Rephase	Vehicles	Criteria for Vehicle replacement to be established, inc CAZ compliance.
Transport Services	Provisional	Pay & Display Replacement	285	285	34	Rephase		Criteria for replacement to be established
Transport Services	Provisional	Somerdale Bridge	1,200	600	0	Rephase		Funding sources for full scheme need confirming.
Transport Services	Provisional	Highways Road Salt Storage	675	675	47	Rephase		Progresses with Waste Relocation which will 21/22
Transport Services	Provisional	Lansdown P&R Extension	240	240	17	Rephase		Review to seek external funding.
Transport Services	Provisional	Securing of Sports and Leisure Centre car park	30	30	2	Rephase		Criteria for replacement to be established
<b>sub-total</b>				<b>5,141</b>	<b>278</b>			

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW**

**Schemes Proposed for Rephasing by Portfolio**

Portfolio	Status	Project Name	Budget 2020/21	Rephasing to Future Years	Borrowing Saving 2020/21	Recommend Action	Theme	Narrative
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Provisional	York Street & Swallow Street Public Realm	225	225	16	Pause	Heritage	Forecast reflect rephase to next FY
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Provisional	BWR Phase 2	5,000	5,000	0	Continue and rephased		No plans for 20/21
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Provisional	Affordable Housing	2,085	2,085	61	Rephase		Monitor Progress of when capital works will take replace
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Provisional	Cattlemarket	150	150	11	Rephase		Carry out feasibility study later and seek alternative funding
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Provisional	Borrowing Match Grant Programmes	150	150	11	Rephase		New bids to wait until 21/22
<b>sub-total</b>				<b>7,610</b>	<b>98</b>			
Community Services	Provisional	Parks Equipment	125	63	4	Rephase		Criteria for replacement to be established
<b>sub-total</b>				<b>63</b>	<b>4</b>			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>Provisional</b>			<b>31,373</b>	<b>728</b>			

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**CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW**
**Schemes with Other Review Actions by Portfolio**

Portfolio	Status	Project Name	Budget 2020/21	Borrowing Cost Saving	Recommend Action	Theme	Narrative
Resources and Deputy Leader	Approved	York Street Vaults Phase 2	900	0	Pause	Heritage	Ensure project linked to Archway Project t and Heritage Plans
Resources and Deputy Leader	Approved	Bath Area Forum - CIL Funded Schemes - Approved	196	0	Integrate	Ensure correct CIL focus	Budget represents committed offers by Bath Area Forum.
Climate Emergency and Neighbourhood Services	Approved	Waste Depot Relocation	1,491	105	Continue - swap grant for borrowing		Planning & design of New Waste Depot facilities at Pixash Lane. Grant replaces by borrowing for 20/21, but future build will need borrowing
Transport Services	Approved	Highways Maintenance Programme	5,826	106	Continue - swap grant for borrowing where possible		Further Government funding likely to be annouced will allow budget to funded more from grant and Council Borrowing to support 21/22
Transport Services	Approved	Hicks Gate Roundabout Improvement	113	0	Continue but develop future project differently		Meet immediate critical land and legal gateways then put on hold. Then consider transfer to WECA as lead authority
Transport Services	Approved	A37 to A362 Improvements to Access Somer Valley Enterprise Zone	10	0	Continue but develop future project differently		Meet immediate critical land and legal gateways then put on hold. Consider future transfer to WECA lead authority

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW**
**Schemes with Other Review Actions by Portfolio**

Portfolio	Status	Project Name	Budget 2020/21	Borrowing Cost Saving	Recommend Action	Theme	Narrative
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Approved	Keynsham High Street Public Realm Implementation	1,493	0	Integrate	Update Economic Recovery Plan	Re-scope to better support economic recovery including exploring Zero traffic option
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Approved	Midsomer Norton Public Realm	169	0	Integrate	Update Economic Recovery Plan	Re-scope to better support economic recovery including exploring Zero traffic option
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Approved	Somer Valley Enterprise Zone - Infrastructure	1,043	0	Continue but develop future project differently		Complete current OBC stage Milestone and pause.
Community Services	Approved	Heritage Services Energy Capture Scheme	300	0	Pause	Heritage	Ensure this is priority project within Heritage Plans
Community Services	Approved	Parade Gardens Café Acquisition	10	0	Remove		Excess budget from old scheme no longer needed. Borrowing saving adjusts income target

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW**

**Schemes with Other Review Actions by Portfolio**

Portfolio	Status	Project Name	Budget 2020/21	Borrowing Cost Saving	Recommend Action	Theme	Narrative
Resources and Deputy Leader	Provisional	Bath Area Forum - CIL Funded Schemes - Provisional	1,123	0	Integrate	Ensure correct CIL focus	Pause to Review CIL Priorities & role of Bath Area Forum
Children's Services	Provisional	SEND Capital – Bath Studio School/Aspire	2,000	141	Continue - swap grant for borrowing		Can come from Basic Need Grant and also likely will be 20/21
Children's Services	Provisional	Schools CIL	1,472	0	Integrate	Ensure correct CIL focus	Pause to Review CIL Priorities
Climate Emergency and Neighbourhood Services	Provisional	Clean Air Zone	18,320	0	Integrate	CAZ Proposals	Link Proposals with other Low Emission Work
Transport Services	Provisional	City Centre Protection Measures	640	0	Integrate	Update City Centre Plan	Ensure outcomes to support Visitor Economy recovery and Zero traffic options.
Transport Services	Provisional	City Centre Streetscape / Security	250	0	Integrate	Update City Centre Plan	Ensure outcomes to support Visitor Economy recovery and Zero traffic options.
Transport Services	Provisional	Electric Vehicle Charging - Taxi's and On Street	80	0	Integrate	CAZ Proposals	Link Proposals with other Low Emission Work
Transport Services	Provisional	Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) Bid	804	0	Integrate	CAZ Proposals	Link Proposals with other Low Emission Work

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW**
**Schemes with Other Review Actions by Portfolio**

Portfolio	Status	Project Name	Budget 2020/21	Borrowing Cost Saving	Recommend Action	Theme	Narrative
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Provisional	Bath River Line	602	0	Integrate	Update City Centre Plan	Ensure outcomes to support Visitor Economy recovery and Zero traffic options, s.t. grant conditions
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Provisional	Bath Quays - Weston Island	100	0	Integrate	Update City Centre Plan	Seek to rephase over future financial years with alternative funding
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Provisional	CIL - Public Realm	300	0	Integrate	Ensure correct CIL focus	Pause to Review CIL Priorities
Housing, Planning and Economic Development	Provisional	Keynsham High Street Public Realm Implementation	952	0	Integrate	Update Economic Recovery Plan	Re-scope to better support economic recovery including exploring Zero traffic option



**CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW**

**Schemes with Other Review Actions by Portfolio**

Portfolio	Status	Project Name	Budget 2020/21	Borrowing Cost Saving	Recommend Action	Theme	Narrative
Community Services	Provisional	CIL - Green Infrastructure / Recreation	300	0	Integrate	Ensure correct CIL focus	Pause to Review CIL Priorities
Community Services	Provisional	Whitchurch Parks (CIL)	50	0	Integrate	Ensure correct CIL focus	Pause to Review CIL Priorities
Community Services	Provisional	Heritage Collections Centre	250	0	Pause	Heritage	Ensure this is priority project within Heritage Plans
Community Services	Provisional	Museums Acquisitions	5	0	Pause	Heritage	Ensure priority projects within Heritage Plans
Community Services	Provisional	Heritage Infrastructure Development	377	0	Pause	Heritage	Ensure priority projects within Heritage Plans
<b>OVERALL TOTAL</b>				<b>351</b>			

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## **Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment:**

### **Equality impacts of financial recovery plan proposals June 2020**

#### **1. Introduction and legal background**

This report outlines how the impacts of the Council's financial recovery plans relating to Covid-19 are being considered from an equality perspective. The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual because of certain 'protected characteristics'. The law also requires that equality issues are considered by public bodies as part of decision making, especially where services are reduced or redesigned.

Failure to undertake proportionate Equality Analysis/Equality Impact Assessment could present risks of legal challenge to the Council for failing to pay due regard to its public sector equality duty.

#### **2. Actions so far**

Each proposal has been set out in a Financial Recovery Plan proposal template, with the high-level intentions outlined. The proposals describe what changes are being proposed and identifies if there are potential impacts upon residents and/or service users.

As part of the Council's equality analysis process, Directors (and their officers with delegated responsibilities) have also been tasked to consider their proposals from an equality perspective. This initial 'screening' process aimed to highlight if any of the proposals have the potential to have significant impacts upon service users, and if so, what actions could be taken to mitigate any unexpected or unintentional impacts. During the initial screening process, several proposals were deleted and will not be taken forward due to equality impacts that could not be mitigated. For the remaining proposals, the findings of the equalities screening process are contained within this report. Where potential impacts were highlighted, these are now summarised under the relevant protected characteristic(s). This is to assist Cabinet members in assessing how these various proposals may affect people from different groups, and also what the cumulative impacts upon particular groups might be.

If proposals are agreed, it is recommended that comprehensive and detailed equality analysis is carried out on those where significant potential impacts have been identified. This will help to ensure that opportunities to enhance equality are utilised, and any possible negative impacts or barriers for particular groups are taken account of, and if possible, mitigated.

### **3. Equalities scrutiny process**

Budget proposals will be presented to Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> July. The Cabinet is being briefed to enable them to scrutinise the proposals from an equality perspective (see *page 9 of this appendix*)

### **4. Specific savings proposals**

Across the Council, every attempt has been made to achieve efficiencies through service redesign, with minimum reduction in frontline services or disproportionate increases in charges.

In respect to impacts on staff, the Council's Human Resources policies and procedures ensure there is full consultation and consideration of staffing matters and that employment-related equality issues are fully considered. Therefore, the focus here is largely on impacts upon service delivery and service users.

Broadly speaking, the proposals being put forward as financial savings have the potential for the greatest impact upon the following groups of people:

- Older people- particularly those in receipt of Adult Social Care services
- Young people
- Disabled adults
- Disabled children and children with Special Educational Needs

### **5. Impacts on specific protected characteristics:**

#### **5.1 Age**

Proposals relating to older people include the following:

- **Reviewing care package delivery to identify efficiencies (RP20).** This could result in emotional distress and upheaval for older people and their families – especially if agencies give notice; this could result in people having to move to alternative accommodation or having to build new relationships with support staff from a new agency to enable them to remain in their own home. However, if this were to happen, steps should be taken to minimise such disruption.
- **External services cost reductions (RP24).** Some services have ceased operating or changed the way they deliver services during the Covid 19 lockdown period in order to comply with government guidelines; some service users have found alternative sources of support due to the lockdown in order for them to shield. There will be a change to older people day services which will mean that some older people will need to be supported to find alternative support and this may cause them and their families' emotional distress. However, alternative types of support offered during Covid lockdown have

also proved popular with some people and there may be positive opportunities for continuing some of these activities.

- **Delaying the start of the Better Care Fund schemes** (RP21). This is partly a consequence of the Covid 19 response and lockdown impacting on the capacity to take forward schemes as planned and partly a proactive choice to delay implementation. It will mean that improvements to practice are delayed which may result in a lost opportunity to improve the experience of service users.

***Points for consideration:*** In respect of Adult Social Care, changes were introduced by the Care and Support Charging and Financial Assessment Framework in April 2020 and further changes could be viewed negatively especially by those who were adversely impacted by the introduction of the Framework.

Proposals relating to younger people include

- **Children's attainment in school:** School improvement budget reduction (RP25) will mean that there is very little Council resource to focus on reducing disadvantages in attainment in the B&NES area. We will continue to explore alternative sources of funding or capacity to continue the focus on this.
- **Children's health and wellbeing:** Schools Health Education Unit Survey not being undertaken (RP23). This biennial survey helps us to understand the health and wellbeing of children across different protected characteristics in B&NES, to identify levels of bullying/discrimination, and also to assess the impact of any interventions we are making to address problems and inequalities. Future funding or alternative funding sources could allow this to be recommissioned at a later date so that this is only creating a longer than usual gap between surveys. There is also a proposal in relation to vacancy management that will reduce capacity to develop children's health programmes (RP22)
- **Revise service offer for children and young people - children's participation:** The reduction in support for the participation of young people (RP28) would mean that children and young people's ideas and views are no longer heard in the same way as the Council's financial contribution would be reduced. We would need to work with the provider to look at how the service offer can be adapted, or alternative sources of funding identified.
- **Protecting vulnerable children:** A reduction in commissioned services relating to Child Sexual Exploitation (RP26) and Children's Centres service reductions (RP31) would mean that services to some of our most vulnerable community members are remodelled; the services relating to children who are

at risk of sexual exploitation will be provided in an alternative way to ensure their needs are met which we believe will be beneficial rather than having an adverse impact. However, it is possible a small number of children may feel this change is not what they would choose.

- **Revise support offered to children and young people providers (RP30);** This would require a change to the way children and young people's groups and organisations across B&NES share their views and the way the Council and other partners share information with them; this is not a statutory function of the Council but it will mean groups and organisations need to find alternative ways to ensure they keep abreast of new developments across the sector.

***Points for consideration:** Narrowing the gap in respect of educational attainment and health & wellbeing remains a key challenge for B&NES. It is anticipated that Covid-19 lockdown will have had a disproportionate impact upon the educational attainment of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, and impacted much more harshly upon the health and wellbeing of vulnerable children and young people.*

## 5.2 Disability

Proposals relating to children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability):

- **Removal of SEND corporate contingency (RP06):** – The DfE has now made clear that councils must not fund Dedicated Schools Grant overspends so the responsibility for this will sit with the Schools Forum (national policy guidance).
- **Miscellaneous underspends:** The removal of uncommitted budgets may represent a lost opportunity or delay to some service improvements through the SEND strategy.
- **Reduction of support to families with children who have special educational needs (RP27):** This includes a reduction in the level of council funding contributing to the support to families which helps them access mainstream support and preparing for school. We need to work with the provider to fully assess savings that have been possible during lockdown and the actual impact on the service that results from this reduction in funding.
- **Reducing the range of disabled children's respite support (RP29):** Reducing this support to statutory levels may decrease the number of options disabled young people have for respite support. This will have knock on impacts upon families. Further work will need to be done to fully assess the impacts with the provider.

**Points for consideration:** some families who have a child/children with SEND may find that they are affected by more than one of the above proposals. This could result in families losing support that they rely on to help them cope with the challenges of having a disabled child/child with SEND.

Proposals that may have an impact upon disabled adults:

- **Reviewing care package delivery to identify efficiencies** (RP20) could result in emotional distress and upheaval for disabled people and their families – especially if agencies give notice and people have to move to alternative accommodation or have to build relationships with new members of staff supporting them from a new agency in their own home. However, if this were to happen, steps should be taken to minimise such disruption.
- **External services cost reductions** (RP24). Some services have ceased operating or changed the way they deliver services during the Covid 19 lockdown period in order to comply with government guidelines; some service users have found alternative sources of support due to the lockdown in order for them to shield.
- **Delaying the start of the Better Care Fund schemes** (RP21). This is partly a consequence of the Covid 19 response and lockdown impacting on the capacity to take forward schemes as planned and partly a proactive choice to delay implementation. It will mean that improvements to practice are delayed which may result in a lost opportunity to improve the experience of service users.
- **Waste collection changed times** (RP40). Collections occurring as early as 6am or in the evening may cause alarm and anxiety to those who receive assisted collections (where rubbish is removed from or near their front doorstep).
- **Less Blue Badge enforcement** (RP47) could result in abuse of the scheme and less appropriate parking being available for Blue badge holders.
- **Reviewing the contract for Independent Mobility Assessments** (RP48): These assessments help determine if someone qualifies for a Blue Badge. If the assessment process is no longer a part of the application, this could mean an increase in Blue Badges being issued (possibly to those who do not meet the criteria), and more competition over access to disabled parking bays.
- **Deferring weed control for 20-21** (RP44) If weed control is not undertaken throughout the summer months this could have an impact upon disabled people who may find it difficult to negotiate overgrown pavements. Pathways will be cleared on request if they become difficult or overgrown

**Points for consideration:** In respect of Adult Social Care, changes were introduced by the Care and Support Charging Framework in 2019 and further changes could be viewed very negatively especially by those who were adversely impacted by the introduction of the framework.

We need to consider the impacts of the financial recovery proposals upon disabled people alongside other changes we are introducing (e.g. increasing pedestrianisation/road closures post Covid-19 lockdown; Active Travel initiatives; etc) to ensure that we are aware of the extent of impacts upon disabled people.

### 5.3 Race

Proposals relating to race equality include:

- **Children's health and wellbeing:** Schools Health Education Unit Survey not being undertaken (RP23). This biennial survey helps us to understand the health and wellbeing of children across different protected characteristics in B&NES, to identify levels of bullying/discrimination, and also to assess the impact of any interventions we are making to address problems and inequalities. Future funding or alternative funding sources could allow this to be recommissioned at a later date so that this is only creating a longer than usual gap between surveys.
- **Children's attainment in school:** School improvement efficiency savings (RP25) will mean that there is very little resource to focus on reducing disadvantages in attainment in the B&NES area. We will continue to explore alternative sources of funding or capacity to continue the focus on this.

**Points for consideration:** Given the Council's longstanding commitment to race equality and support for the Black Lives Matter campaign, consideration should be given to how we maintain or increase work that focuses on reducing gaps in educational attainment or health & wellbeing, rather than reducing such work. This may rely on exploring alternative routes to resource or deliver some of these activities in future.

## 6. Recommendations

For each proposal that is taken forward, the following recommendations should be considered (as appropriate), to ensure that equality issues continue to be considered during the implementation stages.

- a. **Full Equality Impact Assessments/equality analysis** should be carried out on all proposals where initial reviews have revealed likely impacts upon



particular groups of people due to their protected characteristics. This enables the Council to demonstrate it has taken due regard to equality issues and has thoroughly considered how to uphold the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty. The Council's Equality Impact Assessment template can be found on the Council's [EIA web pages](#), and support is available from the Equality Team in carrying out the assessments. Completed EIAs should be published on this web page.

- b. **Inclusive consultation.** Where consultation is arranged as part of taking any of these proposals forward, it is vital that a diverse range of people are encouraged to take part. This will help highlight any additional equality impacts that may need to be addressed and mitigated where possible. A variety of methods should be used to access consultees. The Equality Team can advise on this and on how to access participants from groups representing different equality strands. The [Independent Equality Advisory Group](#) can also be used as a consultative body, and will provide further guidance on likely impacts, and ways of mitigating these.
- c. **Clear and transparent communication.** Wherever it is planned to introduce changes, it is important to ensure that the communication and publicity strategies are accessible to disabled people (for example, people with visual impairment or learning disability) and those for whom English is an additional language. The Council has commissioned Oncall Interpreting services to assist with [Interpreting and Translation](#) where necessary.
- d. **Incorporating equality issues within commissioning specifications.** Where proposals include commissioning or recommissioning external providers, detailed equality requirements should be built into contract specifications. This will ensure that best practice relating to equality in delivery of services is continued and improved upon when delivered by external partners.
- e. **Workforce training and development.** A number of the budget proposals are dependent upon the ability of officers to recognise opportunities to advance equality (for example, within recommissioning, or by targeting services towards those who are most vulnerable). It is also important that officers are aware of, and sensitive to, the particular needs of different groups of people. Equality training is available as part of the Corporate Training programme, and bespoke training can be arranged by the Council's Equality Team.
- f. **Ongoing monitoring.** Where services are subject to redesign, equality monitoring should be carried out to help identify if the service is operating as intended, if it is reaching and meeting the needs of our most vulnerable

communities; and if there are any unforeseen impacts that need to be addressed. See the Council's sample [equalities monitoring template](#) for the data categories that should be used.

Louise Murphy  
Corporate Equality Officer  
June 2020

## **Briefing note for Cabinet members: considering equality issues in decisions relating to financial recovery**

### **Background**

The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against an individual because of certain personal characteristics ('protected characteristics').

The law also requires that equality issues are considered by public bodies as part of decision making, especially where services are reduced or redesigned.

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires us to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people.

The questions below are intended to assist Cabinet members to scrutinise the proposals (within their remit) from an equalities perspective.

### **For each new draft proposal to be put before Cabinet in June 2020:**

- Are Cabinet members clear that this proposal has been considered from an equality perspective?
- Do we know what the impact will be on the most vulnerable people?
- Are there any potential unintended impacts or "knock-on" effects consequences - e.g. on partners, residents or other services?
- Have we consulted people and listened to what they have told us about this?
- During the implementation of the proposal – how will we continue to check for unintended effects on particular groups of people?
- Will there be room for discretion if during the implementation we discover that the change of service disproportionately disadvantages some people?
- Considering all the proposals together, what will the cumulative impact be, and will adverse impacts fall disproportionately on specific groups?

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## CORPORATE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

This Forward Plan lists all the items coming to the Panel over the next few months.

Inevitably, some of the published information may change; Government guidance recognises that the plan is a best assessment, at the time of publication, of anticipated decision making. The online Forward Plan is updated regularly and can be seen on the Council's website at:

<http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/mgPlansHome.aspx?bcr=1>

The Forward Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to openness and participation in decision making. It assists the Panel in planning their input to policy formulation and development, and in reviewing the work of the Cabinet.

*Should you wish to make representations, please contact the report author or, Democratic Services (). A formal agenda will be issued 5 clear working days before the meeting.*

*Agenda papers can be inspected on the Council's website and at the Guildhall (Bath), Hollies (Midsomer Norton), Civic Centre (Keynsham) and at Bath Central, and Midsomer Norton public libraries.*

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Director Lead
<b>30TH JUNE 2020</b>				
30 Jun 2020	Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Chairs & Vice Chairs Task & Finish Group Feedback - Covid-19 Position Statement	Councillor Paul Myers, Donna Vercoe Tel: 01225 396053	Director Finance - Section 151 Officer
30 Jun 2020  2 Jul 2020  <b>E3210</b>	Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel  Cabinet	Covid-19 2020/21 Financial Recovery plan	Andy Rothery Tel: 01225 477103	Director Finance - Section 151 Officer
<b>27TH JULY 2020</b>				
27 Jul 2020	Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Contacting the Council (Background Briefing:- reporting an issue to the Council)	Tracey Long	Director Partnership & Corporate Services
27 Jul 2020	Corporate Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel	Retail Centres: Initiatives / Rent pressure / Empty premises / Commercial Estate challenges	Andrea Frow Tel: 01225 47 7242	Director of Economy & Growth
<b>28TH SEPTEMBER 2020</b>				
<b>23RD NOVEMBER 2020</b>				

Ref Date	Decision Maker/s	Title	Report Author Contact	Director Lead
<b>FUTURE ITEMS</b>				
The Forward Plan is administered by <b>DEMOCRATIC SERVICES:</b> Democratic_Services@bathnes.gov.uk				

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