

Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee

Date: **24 June 2020**
Time: **4.00pm**
Venue **Virtual Meeting - Skype**

Note: in response to current Government Regulations this meeting is being held as a virtual meeting for councillors and accessible via Skype. Public speaking and engagement opportunities will be made available.

The meeting will also be webcast live to the internet.

Members: **Councillors:** Platts (Chair), Mac Cafferty (Opposition Spokesperson), Gibson, Miller and Yates

Contact: **Mark Wall**
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AGENDA

7 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

- (a) **Declarations of Substitutes:** Where councillors are unable to attend a meeting, a substitute Member from the same political group may attend, speak and vote in their place for that meeting.
- (b) **Declarations of Interest:**
 - (a) Disclosable pecuniary interests;
 - (b) Any other interests required to be registered under the local code;
 - (c) Any other general interest as a result of which a decision on the matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting you or a partner more than a majority of other people or businesses in the ward/s affected by the decision.

In each case, you need to declare

- (i) the item on the agenda the interest relates to;
- (ii) the nature of the interest; and
- (iii) whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest or some other interest.

If unsure, Members should seek advice from the committee lawyer or administrator preferably before the meeting.

- (c) **Exclusion of Press and Public:** To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

Note: Any item appearing in Part Two of the agenda states in its heading the category under which the information disclosed in the report is exempt from disclosure and therefore not available to the press and public. A list and description of the exempt categories is available for public inspection at Brighton and Hove Town Halls and on-line in the Constitution at part 7.1.

8 MINUTES

To consider the minutes of the last meeting held on the 29th May 2020 (to follow).

9 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

10 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

To consider the following matters raised by members of the public:

- (a) **Written Questions:** To receive any questions submitted by the due date of 12 noon on the 18 June 2020;
- (b) **Deputations:** To receive any deputations submitted by the due date of 12 noon on the 18 June 2020.

11 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

To consider the following matters raised by councillors:

- (a) **Written Questions:** to consider any written questions;
- (b) **Letters:** to consider any letters;
- (c) **Notices of Motion:** to consider any Notices of Motion referred from Council or submitted directly to the Committee.

12 COVID-19 CITY RECOVERY PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE 7 - 20

Report of the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Culture.

Contact Officer: *Nick Hibberd*

Tel: 01273 293756

Ward Affected: *All Wards*

13 COVID-19 EMERGENCY FOOD PROVISION - UPDATE 21 - 36

Report of the Interim Executive Director for Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities.

Contact Officer: *Emma McDermott*

Tel: 01273 296805

Ward Affected: *All Wards*

14 COVID-19: BUSINESS SUPPORT - UPDATE 37 - 42

Report of the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Culture.

Contact Officer: *Max Woodford*

Tel: 012773
291666

Ward Affected: *All Wards*

15 I360: COVID-19 SUPPORT 43 - 48

Report of the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Culture.

Contact Officer: *Max Woodford*

Tel: 012773
291666

Ward Affected: *All Wards*

16 DIGITAL INCLUSION SUPPORT DURING COVID19 AND RECOVERY

49 - 54

Report of the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Culture.

Contact Officer: Sally McMahon

Tel: 01273 296963

Ward Affected: All Wards

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The closing date for receipt of public questions and deputations for the next meeting is 12 noon on the fourth working day before the meeting.

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FURTHER INFORMATION

For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Mark Wall, (01273 291006, email mark.wall@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Date of Publication – 16 June 2020

Subject:	Covid-19 City Recovery Programme – Progress Update		
Date of Meeting:	24th June 2020		
Report of:	Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Nick Hibberd	Tel: 01273 29
	Email:	nick.hibberd@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The report provides a progress update on the development and delivery of the City's Covid-19 Recovery Programme as agreed by Policy & Resources Committee on 30th April 2020.
- 1.2 The report also outlines how the City Council and the City is responding locally following the publication of 'Our Plan to Rebuild' The UK Government's Covid-19 recovery strategy.
- 1.3 It should be noted that this report provides an update on progress up until 16th June 2020. The response to the public health crisis is fast moving so some aspects of this report may have been superseded by events by the time of the sub-committee meeting on the 24th June 2020.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the sub-committee note this progress update report.
- 2.2 That the sub-committee gives delegated authority to the Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture to procure and award a contract for the deployment of city marshalls to support the management of safe space on the seafront and in our retail high streets.
- 2.3 That the sub-committee requests that officers bring a report to the September Sub-Committee on the impact of Covid-19 upon disadvantaged communities along with proposals for supporting community recovery, including consideration of the equalities implications of the recovery planning process.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 On 30 April, the Policy & Resources Committee agreed to establish the Covid-19 City Recovery Programme to help prepare and steer the council and our city through the recovery phase of the pandemic. The programme will require a coordinated effort over the next 18 months.

- 3.2 The Council is responding locally to support the city through the next phase of the response to the public health crisis. The pandemic has had a major direct impact on our residents including ill health, loss of life, bereavement and the isolation experienced by people who are 'shielding' because they are clinically extremely vulnerable. The events have set an unprecedented challenge for the city's businesses and communities. Council staff, key workers and the partners across the public, voluntary & community and private sectors have pulled together and worked incredibly hard to respond effectively to the crisis, and the council will continue to work with its partners across Brighton & Hove and the wider region to support the city's recovery following the Covid-19 outbreak.
- 3.3 The city recovery programme aims to enable the council, its residents and businesses to be in the best possible position to minimise losses and make best use of opportunities that emerge. This will require a co-ordinated programme over the next 18 months.
- 3.4 Through the newly formed Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee, the aim will be to develop a Recovery Programme which will seek to build a solid foundation for the city, so that Brighton & Hove has the best opportunity to emerge as a safer and healthier city.

Working with partners on city recovery

- 3.5 The Policy & Partnerships team have been working with city partners to carry out some brief scenario planning. Partners have been asked to provide feedback and intelligence in relation to different scenarios as the lockdown restrictions are eased and give consideration of the possibilities of a 'smooth' exit from lockdown, and a 'bumpy exit' involving further outbreaks and restrictions.
- 3.6 The scenario planning included consideration of, changes in social attitudes; local and national economic changes; developments in online service delivery; and possible legislative change. As well as identifying the potential implications of different scenarios, partners have been asked to identify possible actions to support recovery, the resources that might be required, and the local or national decision required. The feedback will be collated into several short thematic reports outlining possible implications and opportunities of recovery and potential actions and next steps.

Events & Economy

- 3.7 The Events & Economy Working Group continues to focus on developing and co-ordinating actions in support of the private and third sectors in the city. Meeting on a weekly basis, the working group has provided oversight of the Business Rates and Discretionary Grants schemes, it enables collaboration on government guidance as it emerges, and generates rapid action when needed, such as the pilot of marshalling on the seafront. This group is providing oversight on use of the Reopening the High Street funds from government, ensuring co-ordinated action from the Council. Support measures for the Council's commercial tenants have been channelled through the working group, as well as actions to help the city's third sector organisations cope with the challenges of fundraising in difficult circumstances.

- 3.8 The report on business support to the 29th May 2020 meeting of this sub-committee set out that the Government has created a package of support measures with the aim of supporting businesses through the period of the public health crisis. The city council has been responding to and delivering the government support programme. This has meant giving £70m in business rates relief and issuing small business and retail, leisure and hospitality grants. Members also agreed the rationale and process for administering a pot of discretionary grants for business. A separate report on the agenda of this sub-committee provides an detailed update on the administration of the business support grants programme.
- 3.9 The restart of the retail sector and enabling use of the city's open spaces for events will be major areas focus for the working group over the next month, as uncertainty continues from business owners regarding the implementation of Covid-19 safe practices. Working group members are developing local and national initiatives with external partners to protect and maintain the city's reputation as the UK's leading cluster for culture and the creative industries. The Events & Economy working group continues to respond and evolve in focus as key sectors of the city's economy move into and through restart phase, communicating widely across the city and the region.

Safer Public Spaces Sub Group

- 3.10 The Safer Public Spaces group is meeting as a sub-group of the Events & Economy Working Group. Work is underway to support the city's residents and businesses for the reopening of retail shops on Monday 15 June.
- 3.11 As more government restrictions are lifted, we're introducing a number of changes to the city's public spaces and transport network which we hope will mean shops can reopen safely, stay open and flourish in a Covid-19 secure environment. They will also help our residents and visitors to move safely around the city and encourage them to maintain physical distancing.
- 3.12 The measures include the widening of footways, new cycle lanes, banners and signage and engagement with local businesses about signs and outside seating. Creating more space for people to visit shops, particularly in narrower parts of the city like Old Town and The Lanes, is important to keep people safe and support businesses in those areas to reopen safely. Working with the Events & Economy working group, officers have produced [advice for retail businesses around what they need to consider to protect staff and public safety and minimise the spread of Covid-19](#). This includes a number of simple poster options to download to help manage physical distancing.
- 3.13 The easing of the lockdown restrictions in May coincided with a period of warm weather. This resulted in the seafront becoming very busy with both residents and visitors. The city council asked people to limit travel to the city and the seafront this weekend to protect public safety. While restrictions are starting to be eased, the need for physical distancing has not changed. The use of beach marshalls has been piloted at weekends, with stewards in place on weekends of warm weather between 11am to 6pm on Saturday and Sunday to monitor the central beach area from East Street to West Street. The stewards work alongside the Seafront Team to monitor access to the beach and put in

restrictions if the area becomes too busy, advising people to go to less busy beaches. It is proposed that officers procure a contract that allows for the deployment of beach and city centre marshalls to support the city to reopen safely. The numbers of marshalls required will depend upon how quickly footfall returns to the city centre a contract is proposed that will allow for flexible deployment.

MHCLG Reopening High Streets Safely Fund

- 3.14 The council has been allocated funding of £0.259m from the 'Reopening High Streets Safely Fund'. The aim of the funding is to support implementation of measures to establish a safe trading environment for businesses and customers, particularly in high streets, through measures that extend to the end of March 2021.

Transport Network Management

- 3.15 Over the last period officers have commenced the implementation of the transport network Urgent Response Action Plan that was agreed at the 14th May Policy & Resources Urgency Sub-Committee. As the city begins to see more people going back to work, there is need for residents to carry on cycling and incorporating active travel into their commute. With public transport capacity reduced and a government message to avoid using public transport wherever possible, the city could experience significant congestion unless an increased range of alternative sustainable options, including cycling, is facilitated
- 3.16 The Policy & Resources (Urgency) Sub-Committee on 14th May 2020 agreed a series of measures to improve cycling, tackle congested pavements and supporting businesses. Typical road-space reallocation measures include installing 'pop-up' cycle lanes, and widening footways along lengths of road, particularly outside shops and transport hubs where more space is needed to allow people to queue and physical distance. An interim Covid-19 Response Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan is also being developed and will be presented to 23 June Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee.
- 3.17 Officers have also taken steps to respond to addressing some of the conflicts that can arise between use of space by pedestrians and cyclists. This has included installation of pedestrian priority floor signs on the Undercliff path, around Hove Street/King Alfred Car Park, and the Hove to Brighton segregated shared path. Additional no cycling signs have been installed along Hove promenade. In early June, a trial will commence of water filled barriers along the Undercliff path on the approach to the cafes.

DFT Emergency Active Travel Fund

- 3.18 On 27th May, the Department of Transport provided details of the indicative allocations for the first stage of the emergency active-travel fund announced on 9 May. This new funding is designed to help local authorities use pop-up and temporary interventions to create an environment that is safe for both walking and cycling in the city. Active travel allows people to get around whilst maintaining social distance and will have an essential role to play in helping us

avoid overcrowding on public transport systems as the as we begin to open up parts of our economy.

- 3.19 The main purpose of the initial funding is to promote cycling as a replacement for journeys previously made by public transport. Funding allocations have therefore been weighted towards areas which until the crisis had high levels of public transport use, especially for short and local journeys which can now be cycled.
- 3.20 The amounts are only indicative. To receive any money under this or future tranches, the city council will need to show us that you have swift and meaningful plans to reallocate road space to cyclists and pedestrians, including on strategic corridors.
- 3.21 Following the decisions made by 14th May Policy & Resources Urgency Sub-Committee and 29th May Policy & Resources Recovery Sub-Committee, officers have been progress the delivery of the agreed Transport Urgent Response Action Plan. On 5th June, officers submitted a proposed programme bid to the Department for Transport to secure our allocated Tranche 1 funding for emergency / temporary Active Travel Measures including:-
- Improved Walking facilities including widening footways and adjustment of parking and loading bays at The Clock Tower, St James Street, Western Road and Station Road
 - Footway widening, Parking reduction and managed vehicular access in The Old Town and North Laines
 - Cycle Lanes on the A259 westbound carriageway from Aquarium Rbt., A23 Preston Park to Preston Circus and A270 Old Shoreham Road
 - CCTV to enforce parking restrictions on mandatory cycle lanes
 - Basin Road South Cycle Route awareness raising in partnership with Adur & Worthing, Port and WSCC.
- 3.22 To allow changes to be put in place more quickly, a temporary process for new emergency traffic orders was announced on 23 May halving the time needed for approval. The second tranche of £180m will be released later in the summer to enable authorities to install further, more permanent measures to cement cycling and walking habits. Where applicable, this will enable local authorities to implement schemes already planned in Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).
- 3.23 Once this has been submitted, officers expect to be able to prepare for the Tranche 2 process for the creation of longer term projects. Further guidance is expected to be published in due course and Councillors will be notified of this as soon as it is announced.

Working with Greater Brighton and Coast to Capital LEP

- 3.24 On 21st April 2020, the Greater Brighton Economic Board agreed to develop an economic recovery plan for the Greater Brighton city region. The plan will build upon the strategic priorities agreed by the Greater Brighton Economic Board, with a focus on identifying the investment plan for infrastructure projects that will support economic recovery. The draft plan will be presented to the Economic Board in June 2020.

- 3.25 Officers are also supporting Coast to Capital LEP with the development of the Local Industrial Strategy which will become economic recovery plan for the wider Coast to Capital regional area.

Housing & Homelessness

- 3.26 The work of the Housing & Homelessness working group has initially been focused on getting rough sleepers triaged and into accommodation. Move-on plans are now being developed for each individual.
- 3.27 While the action of getting all rough sleepers accommodated has been effective, there are both risks and opportunities. As hotel accommodation has been used, as soon as the restrictions are eased some owners will want to return to commercial business. To mitigate some of this risk student accommodation has been procured from the University of Brighton which will be available until September.
- 3.28 The Council is intending to provide appropriate move on support and accommodation for all rough sleepers currently accommodated. However there is currently insufficient resources to meet all of the needs. Officers are working closely with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) to identify where additional resources and support are required from Government to enable successful move on of all those accommodated under Covid-19 emergency provisions if we are to avoid people returning to the streets.
- 3.29 Officers are now starting to plan the recovery for how those people that are currently housed move on from their current short term accommodation. This involves assessing all people accommodated in terms of their needs and developing Personal Housing Plans. There are several plans being developed into an overarching plan which are broadly:
- Assessment of around 400 people currently accommodated
 - Move on requirements
 - Supply of accommodation
 - Commissioning strategy to move away from congregate accommodation
- 3.30 Officers are working in partnership with St Mungo's, Arch Healthcare and Public Health to assess and support people accommodated. So far 200 people have been assessed from which we will develop our Personal Housing Plans. This is a good opportunity to work with all people who were sleeping rough or about to sleep rough and to develop an alternative model going forwards taking into account the impact of Covid-19 for accommodation with shared facilities.
- 3.31 It is likely that most people will broadly require one of the following types of accommodation to move on to:
- Reconnection where safe to do so
 - Expand Housing First
 - Supported accommodation
 - Private rented accommodation
 - Social housing

- 3.32 In the event we are not able to move all existing and potentially new rough sleepers into more settled housing solutions by September, we will review remaining numbers and consider further accommodation options to meet this shortfall until they can be assisted to move on.
- 3.33 Housing & New Homes Committee on 17th June will focus on Homelessness & Rough Sleeping considering both our Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy (2020-25) and response to Notice of Motion on Homelessness & the Coronavirus Pandemic. Homeless & Rough Sleeper Strategy recommendations include setting up member led Homelessness Reduction Board through which we will keep members updated on progress in addition to future reports to Housing and Policy & Resources Committees and the work of the Housing & Homelessness Recovery Programme Sub-Group.

Welfare Support and Financial Hardship

- 3.34 In response to the pandemic, the Welfare Support & Financial Hardship working group has been focused on the direct administration of benefit and welfare provision, and additional hardship support in relation to Covid 19 to financially support residents through the crisis. Going forward, the working group will help to shape a corporate approach to welfare, vulnerability and hardship, alongside supportive restarting of Council Tax and Business Rates collection. Links will be made to the existing corporate approach to debt and the council will work in partnership with the Community & Voluntary Sector.

Food

- 3.35 The Food sub-group provides an all age citywide response to issues relating to food arising from the Covid 19 crisis and is a sub-group of the Welfare Support & Financial Hardship working group. The group is being jointly led with the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership and, working with the city's emergency food network, co-ordinates the demand and distribution of emergency food provision. It is being resourced by a combination of fundraising and funding from the council. The demand for emergency food has been increasing during the pandemic and the sub-group has been working closely with, and taking referrals from, the Community Hub. As well as responding to the crisis, the sub-group will support people to transition away from dependency upon emergency food provision, informed by data to better understand need and develop appropriate responses. There is a full report on Emergency Food Provision on the agenda for this committee meeting.
- 3.36 Over the next period, analysis will be undertaken of the impact that Covid-19 is having upon community disadvantage across the city. It is proposed that officers bring a report to the September Policy & Resources Recovery Sub-Committee on the impact of Covid-19 upon disadvantaged communities along with proposals for supporting community recovery.
- 3.37 It is also recognised that the recovery phase has coincided with the Black Lives Matter movement. The relationship between ethnicity and health is complex and likely to be the result of a combination of factors. People of BAME communities are likely to be at increased risk of acquiring the infection. This is because BAME people are more likely to live in urban areas, in overcrowded households, in

deprived areas, and have jobs that expose them to higher risk. It is recommended that the report upon disadvantaged communities that is proposed for September will consider the equalities implications of the recovery planning process, ways of improving collaboration with BAME communities, and how the recovery programme can support BAME businesses to recover - ensuring it consider both people and place.

Internal Council Recovery

- 3.38 The internal element of the programme will also involve each directorate considering the timing and phasing of re-opening services that have been closed and reduced in line with government restrictions and guidance during the outbreak. Each directorate will also review their 2020/21 directorate plans so that milestones and priorities reflect the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak

Human Resources and Workforce – Ways of Working

- 3.39 The Ways of Working Recovery Sub-Group, chaired by the Assistant Director, HROD, brings together workstreams for IT&D, property and people and will ensure the council has a clear strategy and operational response to the internal workforce issues related to Covid19 recovery. The group is considering the needs of all the council's workforce to provide support for the variety of working arrangements that are in place and to refocus Our People Promise to ensure our employment offer addresses current needs. The dramatic changes to our ways of working have presented opportunities to improve the working environment, and the group will seek to take advantage of these.
- 3.40 Significant progress has been made on plans to re-open office space at approximately 20% capacity. An analysis of the needs of services and individuals for essential office accommodation has been undertaken, including where office space is needed for health and wellbeing reasons. Whilst this detailed work continues the default arrangement is for staff to work from home where possible to ensure any return to the offices is carefully managed. Once the essential needs have been dealt with, consideration will be given to how any spare office accommodation is used both for service needs and with regard to addressing issues of team cohesion and isolation.
- 3.41 A toolkit has been developed for managers to use in assessing the work arrangements outside of the main corporate buildings, including some of our smaller workplaces that may have been closed during lockdown, but that could potentially open up. This toolkit includes an office blue-print design and risk assessment templates to demonstrate how physical distancing and hygiene considerations must underpin the design of any work space. These tools will also assist in further assessing workplaces that may have been open throughout the lock down period.
- 3.42 IT&D continue to support extensive home working, and the roll-out of a new method of direct access to the council's network will ensure there is unrestricted access for all staff working from home. These changes will be accompanied by the continuation of the Windows10 lap-top rollout that had been paused at the start of lockdown.

- 3.43 A pulse survey will be undertaken to establish the views of staff with regard to current work arrangements. This is a short survey that will be repeated at regular intervals to measure the engagement of our staff, and to shape the work of the group particularly with regard to wellbeing.
- 3.44 Arrangements are in place to collaborate and consult with Trade Union colleagues on changes to working arrangements, and to engage with other stakeholders including the Council's staff forums. The chair of the Disabled Workers and Carers Network has joined the group to ensure we proactively manage reasonable adjustments as we make necessary changes to our working environment.

Customers

- 3.45 A Customer working group has been established which will take forward the work of the council's Customer Experience programme. It will review the existing Customer Strategy, Promise and Vision, and strengthen the 'One Council' approach in light of lessons learned from Covid-19. The pandemic has necessitated changes to the ways in which customers interact with the council, and the working group will be reviewing the use of physical access points and telephone lines, and the ways in which customers can access services digitally. The Customer Experience Steering Group will drive this work collaboratively across the organisation.

Finance

- 3.46 In accordance with the report to the virtual Policy & Resources Urgency Sub Committee meeting on 31 March, interim Financial Position Statement reports were presented to Policy & Resources Committee to both the 30th April and 27th May for information and noting. These reports highlight that the Council is experiencing significant financial impacts as a result of the Covid19 outbreak. With the exception of government grant funding, all of these income and taxation sources are now very uncertain. Taxation revenues are likely to be affected as a result of both individuals and businesses falling into hardship, therefore resulting in reduced Council Tax income through increased Council Tax Reduction applications, and reduced Business Rate revenues through insolvencies or closures. Fees & Charges are expected to be severely depressed by the economic situation, particularly the downturn in the important visitor economy, which underpins significant incomes such as parking, museums and the Brighton Centre, and other incomes linked to economic activity (e.g. planning fees).
- 3.47 The government has announced funding support for local authorities to mitigate the financial impact. However, if the funding does not match all of the additional costs and income losses experienced by the council it could impact upon financial resilience in the medium term. The Recovery Programme will include work to recover the financial resilience of the council.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 As the democratic body of the city, the council has a role in leading the governance and delivery for the recovery phase of the crisis. The impacts of the implications of the Covid-19 outbreak. The consequences of the public health

crisis forces the city to respond in ways that are different from what has been considered normal. The recovery programme is designed to ensure that the city is able to respond in an agile way as the city transitions through different phases of the pandemic.

- 4.2 The Covid-19 outbreak represents an unprecedented challenge for Brighton & Hove and major shock to the city's economy and communities. It also presents the city with an opportunity to shape it's future. The Recovery Programme is designed to provide the governance structure for initiating and organising a series of co-ordinated multi agency actions, during the recovery stage(s) following the Covid-19 outbreak affecting the communities and/or environment of Brighton & Hove.

5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 There are a range of stakeholders and partners who are fully engaged with the City Recovery Programme through the city's partnerships, Brighton & Hove Connected, and the City Management Board. Whilst Brighton & Hove City Council will have democratic oversight and decision making, the governance of the programme is designed to ensure that Brighton & Hove Connected partners from the public and private sectors, which includes stakeholders from across the city, are able to contribute. The city council has a key role to play in the overall co-ordination and oversight of the programme, whilst not always delivering every element.
- 5.2 During the Covid 19 crisis the Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership has been commissioned to provide fortnightly reporting on business issues across Brighton & Hove, including sector focused reports giving an overview of the issues and actions of the local business community. The Economic Partnership has taken a lead on business consultation throughout the lockdown and into the recovery phase drawing from a range of local organisations such as language schools, developers, co working spaces, charities, finance, retail, leisure, pharmaceuticals, education and others. The reports, virtual meetings, flash surveys and dedicated web portal that they have created will help to inform the city's recovery plan, assist in lobbying for support from regional and national government; and, facilitate collaborative working between the partners, the BHEP and the city council.
- 5.3 Since March 2020 officers have engaged extensively with organisations operating in the Events and Cultural Industries sector as well as with various groups representing these sectors. Officers have also engaged with other funding bodies such as Arts Council England and the Local Enterprise Partnership.
- 5.4 Internally, council officers are using the established weekly Trade Union meetings to consult on the recovery programme, and specifically the impacts on our council staff. Working together we will establish the frameworks, processes and policies that will guide decision making for service managers and ensure our staff are enabled to work safely and effectively as restrictions on us change.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Council is responding locally to support the city through the next phase of the response to the public health crisis. The pandemic has had a major direct impact on our residents including ill health, loss of life, bereavement and the isolation experienced by people who are 'shielding' because they are clinically extremely vulnerable. The events have set an unprecedented challenge for the city's businesses and communities. Council staff, key workers and the partners across the public, voluntary & community and private sectors continue to pull together and work incredibly hard to respond effectively to the crisis, and the council will continue to work with its partners across Brighton & Hove and the wider region to support the city's recovery following the Covid-19 outbreak.
- 6.2 The city recovery programme aims to enable the council, its residents and businesses to be in the best possible position to minimise losses and make best use of opportunities that emerge. This will require a co-ordinated programme over the next 18 months.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The report covers a wide range of issues with financial implications that are being included in summary finance reports to Policy & Resources Committee.
- 7.2 The recommendations of this report include the procurement of a contract for the deployment of city marshalls. It is expected that the costs of this contract will be reclaimed through the Reopening the High Streets Safely government grant where this council has been awarded an indicative allocation of £0.259m. Clarifications are currently being sought that this is a qualifying expenditure for this fund. The funding is on a 'claim' basis rather transferred in advance. Should this expenditure not qualify for this fund, this will restrict the response that we are able to provide as there will be a need to manage expenditure within existing budgets.

Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld

Date: 11/06/20

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 The procurement of a contract to supply marshalls will need to comply with the Council's Contract Standing Orders and the public procurement regime. There are no other legal implications arising directly from this report.

Lawyer Consulted:

Alice Rowland

Date: 12/6/20

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 The relationship between ethnicity and health is complex and likely to be the result of a combination of factors. People of BAME communities are likely to be at increased risk of acquiring the infection. This is because BAME people are more likely to live in urban areas, in overcrowded households, in deprived areas, and have jobs that expose them to higher risk. People of BAME groups are also

more likely than people of White British ethnicity to be born abroad, which means they may face additional barriers in accessing services that are created by, for example, cultural and language differences.

- 7.5 Research has also shown that people of BAME communities are also likely to be at increased risk of poorer outcomes once they acquire the infection. For example, some co-morbidities which increase the risk of poorer outcomes from COVID-19 are more common among certain ethnic groups. People of Bangladeshi and Pakistani background have higher rates of cardiovascular disease than people from White British ethnicity, and people of Black Caribbean and Black African ethnicity have higher rates of hypertension compared with other ethnic groups. Data from the National Diabetes Audit suggests that type II diabetes prevalence is higher in people from BAME communities.
- 7.6 Equalities considerations are being incorporated into the recovery planning process, highlighting high risk locations and communities. The actions and initiatives delivered as part of the recovery programme plan will be subject Equalities Impact Assessments as appropriate. The public sector equality duty also applies. An aspect of the work on the recovery programme will look at issues of community cohesion, protecting the most vulnerable, enhancing equalities and building on the good will generated among people of different backgrounds during the crisis.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.7 The coronavirus crisis has, for many people heightened our collective awareness of nature's many benefits—from the tranquillity of the outdoors to clean air and water, natural resources, disease suppression, and the capacity to help slow climate change and protect us from its impacts.
- 7.8 Cities across the UK and beyond are focusing upon putting greater equality and climate resilience at the heart of their recovery plans. This includes the need to take steps to ensure ensure that the city's economic recovery is aligned with climate and Sustainable Development Goals

Brexit Implications:

- 7.9 The government has indicated that they are not minded to ask for an extension of the 31st December 2020 deadline for full implementation of Brexit. There is therefore a risk that we may be moving into the final phase with no trade and people movement agreements in place. This will accentuate the challenge posed by the Coronavirus. The Recovery programme, as part of the economic modelling and impact on businesses on the city, will consider Brexit implications.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.10 The programme involves working with the police and our Communities Team to look and respond to crime and community safety implications

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.11 The current risk register will be updated with focus on the recovery and inform the development of the programme

Public Health Implications:

- 7.12 The Covid-19 pandemic will have a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of residents. This will include the direct effects of the virus (ill health, loss of life and bereavement), indirect health impacts, including mental ill health, and from deferred access to healthcare during the lockdown, and in the longer term the impact from wider determinants of health including income and employment. The pandemic has the potential to significantly increase health inequalities in our communities. Therefore, the goals of our Health and Wellbeing Strategy continue highly relevant throughout the recovery phase. There is also an ongoing need for a direct public health response to protect residents and visitors from further outbreaks. Public health approach will therefore be central to limiting the risk of new infections while creating an environment that supports the recovery of our communities and opening up businesses and the local economy.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.13 The City Recovery Programme aims responding locally to support the city through the next phases of the response to the public health crisis. The pandemic has had a major direct impact on our residents including ill health, loss of life, bereavement and the isolation experienced by people who are 'shielding' because they are clinically extremely vulnerable. The events have set an unprecedented challenge for the city's businesses and communities.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. None

Background Documents

1. None.

Subject:	Covid-19 Emergency Food Provision - Update		
Date of Meeting:	24th June 2020		
Report of:	Interim Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Emma McDermott	Tel: 01273 29 1577
	Email:	Emma.mcdermott@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 This report provides an update on emergency food provision in the city during the Coronavirus (Covid-19) public health crisis. Since mid-March 2020, the city council has work with the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership to co-ordinate the demand and distribution of emergency food provision. The demand for emergency food is rising;

- Week commencing 27th April 2020 40 local food projects gave out emergency food parcels to 3001 households, supporting over 4831 people (including at least 996 children) and served 3966 meals.
- In the week of 30th March 2020 this was 1400 parcels and 1800 meals.

As a comparison, prior to the Covid-19 crisis, emergency food providers were giving out 420 parcels a week.

1.2 The demand for the children centre food bank has increased by more than 200% since March. In the week starting 27 April:

- 113 parcels distributed (increased to 130/140 parcels in May)
- Supporting 131 adults and 194 children

Referrals to the council run Community Hub have also risen: week commencing 11th May the community hub received 164 requests, 130 of those were for food help, 92 couldn't afford food but only 4 people said it's because they had lost their main source of income. The Local Discretionary Fund team reports significant increase in applications including a food need especially in certain wards. See table 1 appendix 1. Fareshare distributed 71 tonnes of surplus food in March 114 tonnes in April, and 131 in May (as of 28th May 2020).

1.3 For the following reasons the council has provided funding to the value of £124,500 for emergency food provision for a further 12 weeks (June-August), that:

- emergency food need does not appear to be abating.
- recovery for the city may not be a linear path with the possibility of resurgence of the virus and reinstating of lockdown measures.

- numbers on the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable list likely to fluctuate as new individuals awaiting clinical procedures join the list and may need additional food support on top of/instead of the government doorstep delivery as well existing individuals who have been removed from the CEV list whose doorstep delivery has been stopped but still have a food need.
- The new community led neighbourhood food hubs developed to provide additional capacity to existing food banks may need to close as their venues – i.e. community centres - revert to their original use as lockdown ease. This will require the food banks to take on their resident lists

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Sub-Committee:

- 2.1 notes the exceptional work of the projects in the emergency food network and by Brighton & Hove Food Partnership; and
- 2.2 notes the Urgency Decision taken by the Chief Executive (attached as Appendix 4) to commit funding of £124,500 as outlined in paragraph 3.9.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In early March the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership (BHFP) held its quarterly meeting of the city's Emergency Food Network. The timing of this meeting was fortuitously just prior to the 23rd March COVID-19 lock down. The anticipated impact of Covid-19 on residents meant a significant shift in tone of the meeting with an expanded list of invitees to focus on managing the emergency response for food.
- 3.2 BHFP's initial focus was on working with existing members of the Surplus Food Network co-ordinating the collection and re-distribution of surplus food from closing restaurants, cafés and bars bringing the food to a central hub and then sending it out to neighbourhoods city-wide. It also launched a crowd-funding appeal (HungryAtHome) with the aim of raising £15,000 to buy emergency food in bulk from catering wholesalers in the city. The target was quickly reached and doubled to £30,000. When that target was reached the council provided match-funding of £30,000 to support the effort to purchase emergency food.

The Council also provided grant funding of £15,000 to BHFP to manage and co-ordinate the emergency food distribution and helped to secure a local secondary school as the premises for the food processing hub.

- 3.3 Three things became clear immediately:
 - There would not be enough food available through collection of surplus to meet the needs of the city's most vulnerable residents
 - Food banks, though located in the neighbourhoods, didn't have the capacity to meet the anticipated increase in need for food from vulnerable residents
 - There are large areas of the city and certain communities that weren't covered by pre-existing food banks

- 3.4 The HungryAtHome campaign funding (plus other fundraising by BFHP) has been used to provide food to foodbanks, food hubs and community meal projects - either in the form of cash or food depending on the experience and set up each project. The funding has also been used to pay the Fareshare fee until October (meaning individual food projects do not have to pay this), to buy food for same day emergency food parcels for referrals from the community hub, and for cleaning and PPE equipment for the food projects.
- 3.5 BHFP co-ordinates the central food processing hub, based at Hove Park School (valley site), where purchased and donated food is collected and packaged into individual food parcels or for meal preparation. BHFP also purchases food for food banks that were in operation prior to the crisis as all reported increased demand / challenges of food supply, as well as for the new neighbourhood food hubs across the city that are providing additional capacity/options i.e. food parcel deliveries. The work also includes sourcing food from local farms and businesses as well as buying from wholesalers. See appendix 2 for list of food banks, food hubs and meal projects.
- 3.6 In addition, the BHFP central processing hub provides same day emergency parcels for individuals contacting the council's community hub providing on average 50 food parcels a day. It also provides bulk food for the council's children centres.
- 3.7 Alongside the community response the council, working with not for profit organisation Pay It Forward, set up provision of meals for housed rough sleepers, and working with local food business Little Tums (whose income stalled over night as a meal provider for the city's nurseries) and homeless charity Justlife for residents in emergency accommodation.
- 3.8 The city's successful response to the emergency food needs of residents has been dependent on the presence and capacity of the emergency food network and of Brighton and Hove Food Partnership, along with the swift establishment a cross sector and multi-disciplinary food cell. The cell is jointly lead by the council and the Food Partnership, is chaired by the Food Partnership, and its purpose is to provide oversight for matching food supply with priority groups, managing volunteers and coordinating existing voluntary sector provider response; in order to identify gaps.

A key factor in the success of the work has been the speed at which the cell and the emergency food network have been able to work through problems and solutions. This has been as a direct result of the pre-existing relationships and trust between organisations and individuals and the city's prior commitment to sustainable food and tackling food poverty.

- 3.9 The funding of £124,500 has been allocated as follows:

Expenditure	Total
Funding contribution approximated on number of parcels/meals provided and/or value of food provided via BHFP	
Funding for food banks in existence before the	30,000

crisis: 8 receive £500 per month for three months 6 receive £1,000 per month for three months	
Funding for food hubs: 6 receive £500 per month for three months 11 receive £1,000 per month for three months	42,000
Funding for community meals: 7 receive £500 per month for three months 3 receive £1,000 per month for three months	19,500
Funding for same day emergency parcels April and May costs approx. £12-13,000 per month	13,000
Funding for children's centre food bank: Average approx. cost of £12 per family per week (costed on a four-person family for 2/3 days of food) 140 parcels per week for 12 weeks	20,000
Total costs	124,500

3.10 The funding for the banks and hubs has been passported through the BHFP. This allows each project and the BHFP to reach an arrangement that best suits their individual set up and maximise value for money. In addition, it provides flexibility as the new food hubs need to close and food banks take on their resident lists.

One food project reported the following about being in the network: "Speaking to other food providers in the city, I was able to redesign my service to one that met the immediate need. It was massively reassuring to know that I was now part of a team; I wasn't on my own. In sharing information around the evolving situation in B&H, issuing the most up-to-date guidelines on e.g. food handling, provided guidance, morale support and a single point of contact. I am convinced that our struggling families have benefited from being in a city that has collaborated in the way that it has".

3.11 In order to help people transition away from dependency on emergency food provision BHFP will work with each project and ensure that they provide the Partnership and the Food Cell with data so that we can better understand the need and develop responses to reducing food poverty. This includes monthly snapshot data as well as demographics of their resident lists which the city council will map. Based on data gathered and analysed in June we will work with projects in July / August on their longer-term plans including helping them to take on people as the temporary hubs shut and being part of the 'what next' programme. Furthermore, the July and August funding would be dependent on engagement with others working in their neighbourhood and strategic discussions on need and solutions.

- 3.12 The Food Cell is also working on a set of standard 'step-down' criteria for food projects to use to enable them to safely remove people off their lists as well as a standard set of triage questions that food projects and council services can use to ensure residents have been signposted to all relevant advice and support.
- 3.13 As the city recovery programme develops, the Food Cell will transition to become a sub-group of the Welfare Support & Financial Inclusion Recovery Working Group. This will allow for the work to contribute to a strategic approach to addressing community disadvantage arising from the public health crisis. It is proposed that a report will be brought to the next meeting of the Policy & Resources Recovery Sub Committee outlining the work that is taking place around welfare support and community disadvantage.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Alternative options considered including doing nothing, with local food projects being reliant on their own fundraising and donations of surplus food and from general public. This would transfer the financial pressure to the project, majority of which are volunteer led. To manage within their resources the projects would have to reduce the number of residents they provide for, reduce the content of the food parcel i.e. 1 / 2 days' worth of basic provisions as opposed to 3 or 4.
- 4.2 Another option considered was to provide a greater level of funding. Long term funding of food banks is unsustainable. It is preferable to consider the funding available to advice and welfare support in the city to support residents to maximise their incomes and manage their money.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The funding requirements were devised in partnership with the Food Partnership and based on data returned by the food projects and that held by the Partnership.
- 5.2 The Leader and Deputy Leader of the council, the Convenor of the Green Group, the Leader of the Conservative group, the Lead Member for Food and the Chair of the Health and Well-Being Board were consulted about the decision.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The main reasons that people use food banks are low income, debt, benefit delays and benefit changes. These reasons have not changed during COVID19. Food poverty is the driving demand for need for food banks and hubs. Peoples shopping options in lockdown became more expensive – local shops are more expensive, the cost of delivery charges, unable to bulk buy food cheaply and more people at home to feed - especially households with children and young people.
- 6.2 As part of recovery planning it is critical that tackling food poverty is incorporated into the consideration of economic renewal, carbon reduction, community wealth building.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The financial implications are set out in the main body of the report, showing that £45,000 has already been provided and a further £124,500 is committed for the period June to August.
- 7.2 The funding source will be the COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund and this will be reported separately as part of the Targeted Budget Management (TBM) report to Leaders' Group and Policy & Resources Committee, as set out in the COVID-19 Financial Position Statement P&R report of 30th April 2020.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Michael Bentley Date: 05/06/20

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 Under the Council's Scheme of Officer Delegations in cases of urgency, Chief Officers can take decisions provided that they have consulted with the Chair of the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee. The action take must be reported to the Committee or Sub-committee. The use of Officer Urgency Powers Protocol requires that the Opposition Spokes are consulted – this has been carried out as set out in the Urgent Decision Record.

Lawyer Consulted: Alice Rowland Date: 03/06/2020

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 All people should have access to food that provides sufficient calories and nutrients to promote good health. Food poverty is a key symptom of inequality and key groups affected are those in low income work, single parent households. Funding food for the emergency food network provides a short-term solution to food poverty exacerbated by COVID19 while longer term community recovery plans are developed and while the risk of COVID remains.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 Zero hunger is one of the UN's 12 Sustainable Development Goals providing a framework to many authorities work on sustainability. It encourages countries to: meet the immediate food needs of their vulnerable populations, boost social protection programmes, keep the domestic food supply chain moving and support small farm holders' ability to increase production. COVID19 has highlighted the food insecurity experienced by many residents in the city. This funding will help to meet the immediate food need and incorporate of food poverty in to the city's recovery planning will be critical to develop more sustainable solution.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.6 None

Public Health Implications:

- 7.7 Access to sufficient healthy food is a prerequisite to good health.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 7.8 As noted above the city's successful response to the emergency food needs of residents is testimony to the pre-existing collaborate relationships between communities and between the voluntary sector and the city council, and the city's work on sustainable food and food poverty.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Applications to the BHCC Local Discretionary Social Fund January to April 2020
2. List of food banks, food hubs and meal projects in the emergency food network

Applications to the BHCC Local Discretionary Social Fund January to April 2020					
	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	
Ward	Total Food Applications	Total Food Applications	Total Food Applications	Total Food Applications	Increase From Jan to April
Total	94	70	139	238	153%
Queen's Park	14	10	25	32	56%
East Brighton	17	8	21	30	76%
St. Peter's and North Laine	9	5	13	23	156%
Hollingdean and Stanmer	3	2	9	19	533%
Hangleton and Knoll	3	2	5	18	500%
Regency	7	2	8	18	157%
Moulsecoomb and Bevendean	2	1	5	13	550%
Hanover and Elm Grove	4	6	7	12	200%
Central Hove	2	2	1	10	400%
Goldsmid	2	2	6	10	400%
Withdean	0	1	3	7	
No Fixed Abode	10	3	10	7	-30%
Preston Park	2	1	3	6	200%
Westbourne	1	2	2	6	500%
South Portslade	4	1	0	5	25%
Wish	1	1	2	5	400%

Woodingdean	1	2	1	5	400%
Patcham	2	1	7	4	100%
North Portslade	2	1	2	3	50%
Rottingdean Coastal	3	2	3	2	-33%
Brunswick and Adelaide	2	7	3	1	-50%
Hove Park	0	0	0	1	
East Saltdean and Telscombe Cliffs	3	1	0	0	

List of Fourteen Food Banks operating before C19

- Salvation Army Food Bank - Hove and Central
- The Purple People Kitchen Food Bank – Portslade
- Hangleton Food Bank
- Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project (BUCFP)
- Brighton Food Bank
- Craven Vale Food Bank
- The Gathering Place (Hollingbury)
- Whitehawk Food Bank
- Bevendean Food Bank
- Chomp (families across city)
- Mutual Aid Vegan Food Bank
- Real Junk Food Project - food parcels and meals
- Voices in Exile Food Bank - migrants and refugees
- Time to Talk

List of Seventeen New Food Hubs

- Central Brighton (council run C19)
- The Hop - Cornerstone community
- Florence Road /One Church (Preston Park area)
- Brighton Table Tennis Club
- Phoenix Community Centre
- Portslade Village Centre
- Hangleton & Knoll Project - St Richard's
- The Edge Community Centre – Pankhurst
- Java Community Cafe – Woodingdean
- BELTA - Bristol Estate
- East Brighton Food Coop
- Saltdean Community Hall
- Hollingdean Community Centre

- Old Boat Community Centre
- Coldean St Mary Magdalen Church Hall Coldean
- The Carers Centre - unpaid family carers
- BMECP Centre, Muslim Forum and Brighton Cauldron

List of Ten Community Meal Projects

- Hove Luncheon Club - Food and Friendship
- BELTA - Bristol Estate
- East Brighton Food Coop
- Coldean St Mary Magdalen Church Hall Coldean
- The Bevy and the Food Factory based at BACA
- Hollingdean - World Food Project
- Table Tennis Club
- Lunch Positive - people living with HIV and their carers
- Time to Talk - older people living alone
- Real Junk Food project

This record relates to urgent decisions taken by Chief Officers under the Scheme of Delegation to Officers Paragraph 7(2).

RECORD OF URGENT DECISION TAKEN BY: Chief Executive, Brighton and Hove City Council

SUBJECT: Emergency Food Provision
CONTACT OFFICER: Emma McDermott, Head of Community & Equality, x1577

REASONS FOR URGENCY AND WHY NOT PRACTICABLE TO HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING OR URGENCY SUB-COMMITTEE:

The Food Cell is part of the local COVID-19 emergency response structure. The objective of this cell is to provide an all-age citywide response to issues relating to food arising from COVID-19 crisis.

The Food Cell identified an immediate and growing need to secure food supplies and distribution to ensure that the most vulnerable residents of the city could be provided with the food that they need to sustain them. Working with the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP), also part of the cell, an urgent response was developed including appropriate food supply chains and identification of staffing support to aid with planning and distribution. The Chief Executive of Brighton and Hove City Council has agreed to the funding of £124,500, broken down as follows:

Expenditure	Total
Funding contribution approximated on number of parcels/meals provided and/or value of food provided via BHFP	
Funding for food banks in existence before the crisis: 8 receive £500 per month for three months 6 receive £1,000 per month for three months	30,000
Funding for food hubs: 6 receive £500 per month for three months 11 receive £1,000 per month for three months	42,000
Funding for community meals: 7 receive £500 per month for three months 3 receive £1,000 per month for three months	19,500
Funding for same day emergency parcels April and May costs approx. £12-13,000 per month	13,000

Funding for children's centre food bank: Average approx. cost of £12 per family per week (costed on a four person family for 2/3 days of food) 140 parcels per week for 12 weeks.	20,000
Total costs	124,500

The Food Cell completed financial projections matched to expected demand for June to August and through that process identified a significant shortfall against the anticipated donations for BHFP. Given that there is no cashflow capacity with BHFP and the urgent need for funding an officer urgency decision was required.

DETAILS AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION WITH THE CHAIR/DEPUTY CHAIR OF RELEVANT COMMITTEE AND OPPOSITION SPOKES:

All groups were in agreement with the proposal.

DATE OF CONSULTATION WITH CHAIR/DEPUTY CHAIR AND OPPOSITION SPOKES:

Chair 28th May

Opposition Spokes 5th June

THE DECISION:

To note the use of officer urgency powers by the Chief Executive Brighton and Hove City Council to utilise up to £124,500 from the COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund to secure the supply and distribution of food to vulnerable residents.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

For the following reasons the council has provided funding to the value of £124,500 for emergency food provision for a further 12 weeks (June-August), that:

- emergency food need does not appear to be abating
- recovery for the city may not be a linear path with the possibility of resurgence of the virus and reinstating of lockdown measures
- numbers on the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable list are likely to fluctuate as new individuals awaiting clinical procedures join the list and may need additional food support on top of/instead of the government doorstep delivery as well existing individuals who have been removed from the CEV list whose doorstep delivery has been stopped but still have a food need
- The new community led neighbourhood food hubs developed to provide additional capacity to existing food banks may need to close as their venues – i.e. community centres - revert to their original use as lockdown eases. This will require the food banks to take on their resident lists.

DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED:

Alternative options considered including doing nothing, with local food projects being reliant on their own fundraising and donations of surplus food and from general public. This would transfer the financial pressure to the projects, majority of which are volunteer led. The projects would have to reduce the number of residents they provide for, reduce the content of the food parcel i.e. 1 / 2 days' worth of basic provisions as opposed to 3 or 4.

Another option considered was to provide a greater level of funding. Long term funding of food banks is unsustainable. It is preferable to consider the funding available to advice and welfare support in the city to support residents to maximise their incomes and manage their money.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Under the Council's Scheme of Officer Delegations in cases of urgency, Chief Officers can take decisions provided that they have consulted with the Chair of the relevant Committee or Sub-Committee. The action take must be reported to the Committee or Sub-committee. The use of Officer Urgency Powers Protocol requires that the Opposition Spokes are consulted – this has been carried out as set out above.

Lawyer Consulted: Date: 05/06/2020

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The financial implications are set out in the report. The funding source will be the COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund.

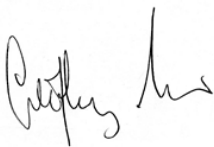
Finance Office Consulted: Michael Bentley Date: 05/06/20

DATE OF NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING TO WHICH THE DECISION WILL BE REPORTED:

Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub Committee 24/06/20

Date:

05/06/20

Signed:

Geoff Raw

OFFICER DECISION

Brighton & Hove City Council

Chief Executive Brighton and Hove City Council	
Logged by Democratic Services Officer for Annual Report:	
Name:	Date:

Subject:	Covid-19: Business Support Update		
Date of Meeting:	24th June 2020		
Report of:	Executive Director Economy, Environment and Culture		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Max Woodford	Tel: 01273 291666
	Email:	max.woodford@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report updates members on the programme of work being undertaken by the Economy and Events Cell that has been set up to respond to the Covid-19 Crisis.
- 1.2 The report sets out the latest position with regards to the issuing of small business grants and retail, leisure and hospitality grants. It also sets out the latest position with regards to the discretionary grant scheme, the principles of which were agreed by this sub-committee on 29th May, 2020.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the sub-committee notes the work being undertaken to deliver business rates relief and business grants to local businesses.
- 2.2 That the sub-committee notes the work being undertaken to deliver discretionary business grants to local businesses.
- 2.3 That the sub-committee agrees to the city council continuing to press the government for any unspent grant money left in the small business grant fund to be reallocated to the discretionary grant fund so it can be targeted at protecting the city's economy.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Previous reports to Policy and Resources, and to this sub-committee or P&R, have set out that the current Covid-19 pandemic will have a significant detrimental impact on the nation's and the city's economy and will affect many local businesses. It will mean that some businesses cannot continue to trade or function; there will be a rise in unemployment and a general slow-down of economic and community activity.

Business Grants

- 3.2 The report on business support to the 29th May 2020 meeting of this sub-committee set out that the Government has created a package of support

measures with the aim of supporting businesses through the period of the public health crisis. The city council has been responding to and delivering the government support programme. This has meant giving £70m in business rates relief and issuing small business and retail, leisure and hospitality grants. As of 12th June the city council has issued 4774 such grants, to a value of £65.080m and the team are continuing to look for any businesses that have not claimed the grant. Councillors have also been given lists of possible premises in their wards where businesses might be eligible for a grant that has not been claimed and have used their local knowledge or have gone to investigate to help drive take up of the grants.

- 3.3 The council originally received £82.884m funding to cover the grants based on high level government assumptions. The council’s original estimate was £73.540m and currently allocations are £8.460m below this. The council has also been awarded £3.680m to fund a Local Discretionary Grants scheme to be funded from the original allocation. The following table shows the amount of this grant unused currently.

	£m
Grant Allocation	83.884
Grants issues to date	-65.080
discretionary grants scheme	-3.680
Unused to date	15.124

- 3.4 It is not expected that many more grants will be taken up leaving a substantial level of funding unable to be allocated locally. The council, the city’s MPs and city business groups have all called for the remainder of the fund to be reallocated to the discretionary fund which, as set out below, is oversubscribed. Additional money in the discretionary grant fund could be targeted at helping more businesses that are important to the city’s economy and would aid the economic recovery. For this reason it is proposed that the city council continue to work with city partners to press the government for any unspent grant money left in the small business grant fund to be reallocated to the discretionary grant fund, rather than the money being rediverted away from the city.

Discretionary Business Grants

- 3.5 At a meeting of this sub-committee on 29th May, 2020, Members agreed to the rationale and process for administering a pot of discretionary grants for business, and delegated the agreement of the detail of the application and assessment process to the Executive Director Economy, Environment and Culture, and acting Chief Finance Officer.
- 3.6 It was agreed that the Brighton & Hove discretionary fund would prioritise the following businesses:
- Events
 - Arts, culture and creative industries
 - Retail
 - Business in shared work space and the managers of shared workspaces
 - Charities, Community Interest companies and third sector organisations who undertake commercial operations
 - Businesses with high fixed costs that do not pay business rates

- Locally based businesses in leisure including bed & breakfasts
 - Long established companies that have invested in their business
 - Market traders with fixed locations in the city and with fixed costs
 - Businesses employing between 20 and 50 employees or with high turnover
- 3.7 The report set out that applications to the fund would be via the MyAccount online portal which is already set up to capture business information, and that eligible applications would be assessed against the following assessment criteria, which support the goals of the Economic Strategy and the Corporate Plan:
- **Local economic importance** - no of jobs saved, delivering essential services, businesses with a record of supporting city resilience during the Covid 19 crisis, community/ social value, importance to a local area
 - **Supporting the city's economic success** - through wage levels, generation of employment, levels of export (a marker of business resilience), able to demonstrate business innovation (creating new products or services)
 - **Supporting key sectors/sub-sectors** - the role the business plays in local networks such as providing services or as a link in a chain that creates or delivers products or services, integral to the delivery of city strategies such as skills training delivery
 - **Commitment to a carbon neutral city** - what actions has the business taken to reduce carbon emissions, (for example; reuse / recycling of materials, waste management, use of sustainable transport for staff / products)
 - **Impact** - loss of the business leading to additional costs to the city, e.g. avoiding the need to recommission a service or procure the service from other suppliers
 - **Levels of future Investment** - evidence of investment during the last 12 months in upgrades to premises, new equipment, staff training and apprenticeships, new modes of operation such as investment in digitisation or other forms of diversification.
 - **Purpose** - Able to explain what they are using the money for, evidence that they have coherent plans for the future of the business and evidence that the business has a viable future
- 3.8 Grants were available for values of £25,000, £10,000 or £2,500. The different levels of grants were aimed at different sizes or types of business.
- 3.9 The scheme was publicised daily through the council's channels in the run-up to the portal opening and during the application process up until the deadline of 12 June. Channels included social media, Covid-19 business and news web pages, print and broadcast media, partner newsletters and LinkedIn. A Twitter thread was used to highlight the different kinds of organisations that could apply.
- 3.10 Members and MPs received a separate briefing when the portal opened and it was further highlighted in two city briefings (circulated to councillors, MPs and internal contacts and posted on our public website). The information was shared with businesses by a range of partners, including the Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership, Brighton Chamber of Commerce, VisitBrighton, Cultureinourcity.com, and the communities, events, property and environmental health and licensing teams.
- 3.11 On the council's channels (from the portal going live on 3 June to 11 June), 34,372 people were reached across Facebook and Twitter, 731 people interacted

with the post and 247 users clicked on the link to access the portal and online application. There were 3,000 individual page views on the website guide and 2,685 views to the online form.

- 3.12 The application process closed at midnight on Friday 12th June. By that point 916 bids had been submitted, seeking grants to a value of £10,787,500. Of these, 204 bids were for £25,000, 521 were for £10,000 and 191 were for £2,500.
- 3.13 Some early bids were assessed during the week commencing 8th June to ensure some grants were paid quickly, with the first payments due to be made on Friday 12th June.
- 3.14 At the time of writing the assessment process for the bids is underway, and so a verbal update will be given to the committee about the number and type of grants paid and the types of businesses helped.

Community and Voluntary Sector

- 3.15 The business grant schemes that have been available through government funding, and the Discretionary Business Grant scheme have been advertised to the Third Sector using the council's web site, council twitter and other social media, and through the city's infrastructure organisation Community Works. Community Works has a membership of 500 CVS organisations across the city.

Commercial Tenants

- 3.16 On the 30th April 2020, P&R Committee agreed to grant delegated authority to the Executive Director of Economy, Environment & Culture, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, to negotiate and conclude alternative payment arrangements, deferral or reduction, on a case-by-case basis, in relation to its commercial tenants who were struggling with rental payments. A process for considering these cases has now been agreed and where tenants have indicated they are struggling with their rent at this time their individual circumstances are being considered.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 This report is mainly for noting, so alternative options are not considered.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 One of the main work streams of the Economy and Events Cell has been publicising to businesses how they can operate in these challenging circumstances, and how they can access various support packages being proposed.
- 5.2 The work being done by BHEP referenced above will feed information into the city council's resilience planning over the coming weeks, with regular meetings to discuss the ongoing needs of business through that group.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The above report sets out that a number of steps have been taken quickly to support the city's businesses and to ensure that government grants are

distributed as widely as possible and that where we have discretion they are targeted towards businesses that support the city's economy.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. The council is fully compensated for the lost revenue from Business Rates relief. The government has fully funded the Business and Discretionary grant in advance so there is no adverse impact on the council's cashflow. It is anticipated the council income from commercial tenants will be impacted through the support described in paragraph 3.16 and high level estimates have been included in government returns relating to the financial impact of Covid19, and will be included in Targeted Budget Management reports to Policy and resources Committee.

Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld

Date: 12/06/20

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Lawyer Consulted: Alice Rowland

Date: 11/06/20

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 The measures set out in this report are safeguarding employment, local businesses and the economy. The discretionary fund will help to ensure that there is a fair and transparent decision-making process in the allocation of funds to business.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 None identified

Brexit Implications:

- 7.5 Normally, measures such as those set out in this report would be constrained by State Aid consideration. The government has set aside state aid issues so they do not limit this package of offers.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Subject:	i360: Covid-19 Support		
Date of Meeting:	24th June 2020		
Report of:	Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Max Woodford	Tel: 01273 291666
	Email:	max.woodford@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 This report proposes measures necessary to support the continued working cashflow of the i360 during the Covid-19 pandemic, which is having a negative impact on the entire visitor economy. The report identifies the need to support the i360 a means to preventing future additional costs to the city council in the future.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Committee:

- 2.1 Agrees to defer £150,000 from the December 2019 payment in addition to the £880,304.25 which the Policy & Resources Committee agreed to defer on 5th December 2019, on the same terms;
- 2.2 Agrees to defer the loan payments due in June and December 2020, but request that any funds over and above the cashflow necessary to keep the attraction operational are paid to the Council in part payment of the sums owed;
- 2.3 Agrees to establish a pattern of regular meetings and information provision between the i360 management and board and the i360 Member Working Group, as set out at section 3.14, below;
- 2.4 Notes that officers have not progressed the loan restructure or completed the novation of the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) loan agreed at Policy & Resources Committee in December 2019 due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the i360 and that they will progress these once the attraction is able to reopen.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The i360 is a key part of the city's visitor economy, having carried well over one million visitors. A report to the December 2019 P&R Committee set out the strong economic and social impact the Brighton i360 has had, already contributing £89.6 million to the Brighton & Hove economy. By the time the £36.2 million loan from the city council and the £4.0 million LEP loan, that were

invested to fund its construction are repaid, the i360 will have contributed £640 million to the city's economy. This represents a return of £15.90 for every £1.00 of public sector investment. It has also generated direct additional income for the council which has been or will be reinvested in the seafront; in particular in the landscaping of the council owned land around the i360, contributions towards the refurbishment of the Madeira Terraces and festoon lighting along the seafront.

- 3.2 However, like much of the rest of the economy, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a massive impact on the attraction. The board took the decision to close on Thursday 19th March, ahead of the government mandated lockdown announced on 23rd March. In addition, the combination of the fact that the first reported UK cluster of Covid-19 cases was centred around Brighton & Hove, plus two major storms on consecutive weekends, meant that February was also a very poor month for visitor numbers, down 50% on what was budgeted.
- 3.3 Upon taking the decision to close, the i360 board tested cashflow against various staffing scenarios. All of these scenarios showed the attraction running out of cash quite quickly. In the end, the government announced the furlough scheme for staff that are temporarily laid-off, which has been of a lot of assistance to the attraction and has meant that the cashflow situation is not as urgent as it was, but it remains the case that the i360 has fixed costs it cannot avoid, and no source of income.
- 3.4 The lockdown has taken place over weeks of good spring weather, when the i360 would expect to make significant income. Furthermore, even as the government does move towards easing the lockdown, it is uncertain whether the visitor economy will be prioritised. Even if that sector does come back strongly, it is still expected that social distancing measures will be in place, that will limit numbers in the pod, the shop and the restaurant: the main income drivers for the i360. However, in discussions with the i360 board, they have expressed optimism that they do have space for good social distancing, and if they are allowed to open in July and August they would benefit from 'staycation' tourism and start to see income coming back quickly in what is the two most lucrative months of the year (about 30% of annual turnover is normally achieved in July and August).

The Current Cashflow Situation at the i360

- 3.5 The i360 board has shared their existing cashflow with the city council. They have fixed costs, including around keeping on a small number of non-furloughed employees and utilities bills. They have also provided updated figures based on the revisions to the furlough scheme, which suggest that in the event of lock down continuing through the summer they would obviously face a cash shortfall.
- 3.6 This cashflow does not take into account payment of any element of the loan (and linked interest) to the city council.
- 3.7 In addition, it needs to be noted that the council agreed a reduced loan payment of £612,000 in December 2019. In the end the city council received £462,000 from the i360 – a shortfall of £150k. This was because the amount the board said they could pay was predicated on receiving back a large financial deposit that was being held by World Pay, for card transactions. This deposit took longer than expected to be released to the board, and by the time it was the challenges

during February had meant the cashflow situation was such that the money could not be released to the city council.

- 3.8 Given the financial and visitor number situation, officers have not progressed the loan restructure agreed in December 2019 as this was based on agreeing improved visitor number targets, impossible in the present environment. Discussions have commenced on the transfer of the LEP loan to the city council (at no cost to the council), but have also not been able to be completed due to time pressures around the covid-19 crisis.
- 3.9 If the i360 were to become insolvent then the city council would have to enforce its step-in rights under the funding agreement. As set out in the December 2019 P&R report, Avison Young has done has been to look at whether it would be in the council's financial interest to exercise its step-in rights under the present loan agreement and take control of the attraction. Their report set out several reasons why such action would not be advisable, and the advice is that the council should seek to avoid enforcement options. The asset benefits from commercial and maintenance arrangements that could be terminated as a result of an insolvency or step-in by the city council, and there would be a loss of value to the asset that is likely to be worse than restructuring the loan. Furthermore, as the directors of the i360 are operating the asset in way that substantially meets the requirements of the city council and are being co-operative, there is currently no clear rationale to pursue an enforcement strategy. The advice from Avison Young was the same as they would give to a commercial lender in similar circumstances, which gives the city council a degree of reassurance that it is in compliance with State Aid laws.

Proposed Financial Support for the i360

- 3.10 Aware that the i360 would face a severe challenge to its financial resilience in this difficult environment, officers suggested that the i360 board clearly articulate what the attraction needs to remain operational. This was with a view to understanding whether it might be financially advantageous for the city council to make concessions to keep the attraction viable rather than allow it to fail and then have to step in and take control of a distressed asset with the addition costs and loss of goodwill from staff and suppliers that that would entail. Officers have discussed with the i360 what support might be needed, and compared this to their cashflow. However, as set out above, the exact nature of the financial impact on the i360 and therefore the support the attraction might need is dependent on how the recovery process proceeds.
- 3.11 The possible short-term package of support that could keep the i360 a viable operation would need to as a minimum include measures to defer loan payments at this time. So may include:
- Agreeing to defer the £150,000 that was not received as part of the December 2019 payment and adding it to £880,304 that was agreed to be deferred by P&R committee that month, on the same terms.
 - Agree to defer all loan payments due in June and December 2020.
- 3.12 As set out above, the i360 are confident that if the visitor economy reopens and bounces back quickly then they may not need any further support beyond deferral of loan payments, and they have not made any formal request for further

support. But if the lockdown were to continue, or recovery were to be slower than expected, then the i360 would potentially need access to further cashflow support to remain solvent. However, that is not being requested at this time.

- 3.13 If the visitor economy does return to strength quickly, and the i360 makes good income, then it is proposed that any cash over and above that necessary to retain a strong cashflow position is paid to the council. This would be similar to the 'cash-sweep,' principle of the loan restructure agreed in December 2019. It will not be a legally binding obligation on the i360 as the cost of agreeing amendments to the loan agreements would be disproportionate to the likely income the Council would receive but if recommendation 2.2 is agreed, officers will write to the board making it clear that this is our expectation. Officers are confident that the i360 board will be keen to retain the good relationship with the Council, particularly as we still need to agree terms of the restructure previous agreed by P&R. Officers will also expect the board to continue to operate on an open book basis and share their cashflow with the Council.
- 3.14 The December 2019 P&R committee agreed to the establishment of a cross-party Member Working Group around the i360. A first meeting of that group was held on 03/06/2020 to discuss the impact the Covid-19 crisis has had on the i360's finances, and what steps the i360 are taking to plan for reopening. At that meeting, members expressed a desire for closer oversight of the i360's operation and finances. It is therefore proposed that the Member Working Group meets monthly with the i360 management and board, and receives regular detailed information around the performance and financial position of the attraction. That way, members will get a better understanding of the steps being taken to get the attraction back to a financially sound footing.
- 3.15 Members also wanted the i360 board to ensure it has examined all government financial support, including government backed loans. The city council cannot require that such a loan is taken out, as that is a decision for a lender and consideration needs to be given to the council's position as primary lender. But they will be encouraged to explore options such as the 'bounceback' loans.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Section 3.9, above, sets out why the city council enforcing its step-in rights under the funding agreement has not been advised by Avison Young.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 As identified in the December P&R report, the i360 has received a wide range of supportive statements from local businesses, charities and other organisations. Businesses have focussed on the beneficial impact on tourism to the city and the improvements made to a previously run-down part of the seafront.
- 5.2 The council is due to receive 1% of ticket sales in perpetuity to spend on local initiatives with about 25% of this sum allocated to fund part of the landscaping works and discussions continue with local organisations about how to spend the remainder.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The full impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the i360 cannot yet be quantified. The recent economic impact study released by the i360 showed that it is an important piece of the city's visitor economy infrastructure, and letting it fail would mean we would have a closed attraction on the seafront for a number of months at a time when we would be trying to restart the city's visitor economy.
- 6.2 However, there are a number of businesses and attractions that need help and cannot be supported with the council's limited resources. The case for supporting the i360 in particular is more than about the wider economic reasons: It is about protecting council finances. If the i360 were to fail then the cost of getting it operational again and the loss of future loan payments would outstrip any concessions made now.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The i360 Ltd, like the whole of the visitor economy has been severely financially impacted by the pandemic. The organisation has minimised its costs during the lockdown period including utilising the nationally available government financial support. However, with no admission income until the attraction can reopen and the potential for a longer period of restricted passenger numbers, the company will have limited cash surpluses.
- 7.2 The recommendation to defer up to 100% of the June and December 2020 loan repayments will support the i360 Ltd to recover from the pandemic and therefore improve the prospect of the council receiving loan repayments in the future. The revised loan agreement approved at Policy and Resources committee in December 2019 has yet to be finalised but once agreed will support the ongoing operation of the attraction.
- 7.3 Deferring payments will have a cashflow impact on the council; at present the council is keeping its cash investments fairly short term to support liquidity and as a result receives very low levels of interest. Therefore, the investment income lost as a result of this deferment is considered immaterial in the current financial climate.
- 7.4 The December 2019 loan repayment from the i360 was £150,000 lower than expected and has therefore increased the outstanding debt; the total debt including deferred payments and accrued interest to 31 March 2020 is £38.903m

Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld

Date: 08/06/20

Legal Implications:

- 7.5 The options for enforcing the council's security were set out in the report which went to Policy Resources & Growth Committee in June 2018.
- 7.6 Loan arrangements such as this comply with state aid law if they meet the market economy operator principle (MEOP). The council is required to act in a

similar manner to a commercial investor in the same circumstances. As set out in the body of the report it is lawful to defer the December and June payments as a commercial lender would do this in response to the pandemic.

- 7.7 In order to protect its position, the council will send a reservation of rights letter to i360 as it has in relation to previous deferrals. The Council continues to take external legal advice in relation to the loan arrangements.

Lawyer Consulted:

Alice Rowland

Date: 09/06/20

Equalities Implications:

- 7.8 The i360 is accessible throughout to people with disabilities and has improved access to the seafront lower promenade by the building of a new lift to the east. Unisex toilets are open to members of the public who are not using the centre or visiting the attraction. The i360 has introduced a range of concessions for local residents and free tickets for local schools. The i360 is a living wage employer and does not offer zero hour contracts. There is an apprenticeship scheme in place and training opportunities for staff at all levels of the organisation.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.9 The i360 is a low energy user, with energy recovery when the pod is descending. The installation of heat pumps provides air heating and cooling in the pod and main building and provides an estimated 30% of the total thermal heating energy use. All electricity is purchased from renewable energy sources. Grey water and rainwater recycling has been included. Purchasing policies are based on sourcing environmentally friendly local products particularly the Sky Bar, café and restaurant.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.10 None identified.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.6 None identified.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Background Documents

1. [Brighton i360 Economic and Social Impact Report.](#)

Subject:	Digital Inclusion support during Covid19 and recovery		
Date of Meeting:	24TH June 2020		
Report of:	Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Sally McMahon	Tel: 01273 296963
	Email:	Sally.mcmahon@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All Wards		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 The report is seeking agreement for the council to make a funding contribution to the continuation of the Digital Brighton & Hove (DBH) project through to March 2021, to continue to support digital inclusion work with vulnerable people in the city during Covid19 and in transition/recovery. DBH has been operating as the digital inclusion delivery work stream of the vulnerable people's cell in the council during the pandemic. DBH has been working with others such as seniors housing, homeless charities and many others to supply devices and digital support to vulnerable people especially older residents and homeless people during Covid19.
- 1.2 Digital Brighton & Hove (DBH) has been successful in delivering and coordinating Digital inclusion in the city in the last five years. Current project funding ceases at the end of June this year, at a time when the services that it delivers are even more needed. Over its existence, the project has successfully attracted additional funding from other sources such as BT, National Lottery Community Fund, Community Works, and CAST (Centre for Acceleration of Social Technology), but needs core revenue funding to continue to operate and to lever in other resources.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the council makes a contribution of £51,809 to enable Digital Brighton & Hove to continue to provide the digital inclusion support and coordination in the city from July 2020 to the end of March 2021.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Digital Brighton & Hove (DBH) is a digital inclusion project run by Citizens Online, and over the past five years has achieved considerable success as reported in its [evaluation and impact report](#), working with over 300 organisations and reaching in excess of 4,500 residents, and provided nearly 7,000 sessions of support.

3.2 DBH has established the extent of digital exclusion in the city through a [baseline evaluation](#) in 2016 which was [reviewed](#) in 2018. The disproportionate impact on older people has long been recognised, and DBH has produced a [report](#) on this. This disproportionate effect is reflected in the impact of Covid19 on older and vulnerable people, who are now doubly disadvantaged at a time when digital access is even more critical.

3.3 Benefits of Digital Inclusion Provision:

To the end beneficiaries:

- Access to services and support via digital means especially for vulnerable people
- Reduction in social isolation and exclusion, and related financial disadvantage
- Improved health and well-being using digital contact with health and social care providers, digital self-help resources, and mood-boosting recreational resources
- Earnings benefits: these relate to increased earnings of between 3% and 10% through acquiring digital skills
- Employability benefits: access to work, education and training opportunities, improved employability, and access to benefits if unemployed
- Retail transaction benefits: shopping online has been found to be 13% cheaper on average than shopping in-store
- Communication benefits: basic digital skills can enable people to connect and communicate with family, friends, and the community 14% more frequently
- Time savings: these relate to the time saved by accessing government services and banking online rather than in person, est. about 30 minutes per transaction.

(Data based on research by the [Centre for Economics and Business Research](#)):

To the council:

- Improved communication and service delivery to residents
- Improved customer satisfaction through improved quality of service
- Greater cross-sector collaboration in meeting the needs of local vulnerable people

To the community and voluntary sector:

- More efficient use of their resources and better sustainability from greater collaboration
- Improved digital skills of staff and volunteers
- Improved communication and marketing using digital tools
- Less dependency of clients on face to face or telephone advice on routine issues as they become more willing and able to use online resources

3.4 In a crisis where digital access and skills are even more essential to get support, food, medicines, benefits, and remain in contact with family and friends, it is essential that organisations and sectors work together to reduce the digital divide. Specific objectives are:

- To operate as part of the city's Covid19 Recovery Programme, supporting vulnerable people through digital inclusion activity

- To coordinate the provision of remote digital support to those already online but lacking skills and confidence to use digital, and isolated due to the Covid19 crisis
- To help organisations source and distribute digital tech and connectivity to those without it, and link this to remote support in using it
- To support local community and voluntary sector organisations with their digital development using digital strategies and tools to innovate and improve their service as they shift from face to face to more digital contact with their end beneficiaries (this work was interrupted in its last phase by the Covid19 crisis)
- To maintain and support the DBH network, working across sectors to enable collaboration on digital inclusion activity
- To support the network of Digital Champions to resume face to face digital inclusion support, and provide training for organisations developing their digital development

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Three options were considered in the business case: do nothing; fund 100% of the core operating budget for DBH; fund 70% of the operating budget for DBH.
- 4.2 The case for doing nothing is that the council does not spend £51,809 in supporting the project. But the disadvantage of this is that the city will then lose the value of the benefits that DBH can bring, estimated at £229,859, and also face potential additional costs of increased email, telephone and face to face enquiries relating to digital support and skills, and recreating the training and support materials for volunteers and staff supporting digital inclusion and skills that DBH currently provides. Most importantly, local people would also feel the negative impacts of digital exclusion including, greater isolation and poorer mental health; difficulty accessing benefits, information, support, and services.
- 4.3 The other two options bring similar benefits (see 3.3 above) with the opportunity to reach more people and achieve higher targets with the fully funded option as more time would be spent on seeking funding for digital devices rather than to just remain operational. The 70% funding option gives DBH a reasonable chance of being able to raise the additional funding required from elsewhere, whilst still achieving substantial outcomes and targets.
- 4.4 The estimate value of the contribution that DBH can make is £229,859, if the council can provide £51,809 (70% of operational funding) made up of:
- £155,400 value of social return on investment at 3:1 ratio¹
 - £36,750 value of support to each sector organisation (output)²
 - £10,500 value of DC volunteers time
 - £5,500 value of devices already acquired
 - £5,000 Citizens Online Training & Support Resources (webinars, materials)
 - £1,500 DBH Signposting Website hosting and development

¹ Based on Just Economics research from Get IT Together programme 2014. Alternative calculations are £500. saving in the first year for a new internet user (>£250,000 under this programme), or using a 15:1 Cost Benefit Ratio based on research by Good Things Foundation in 2018, however this was based on a ten year cumulative impact and investment.

² Estimate of £175. value to each organisation in the network over 9 months, based on 300 current registered

- £1,200 Digital Champions Network resources
- >£7,000 value of leveraged funding
- >£7,000 of in-kind support from Tech sector

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1 The DBH network of over 300 organisations meets quarterly and has regular digital engagement, and the issue of the continuation of DBH was discussed through this network. The overwhelming response from those involved was the support for its continuation and the importance of the work that it is doing. There are example case studies with feedback from organisations and beneficiaries engaged in phase two of the project, including from seniors housing; council customer service centres; Brighton Unemployed Centre Families Project; and YMCA.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The context of Covid19 has made the issues of digital exclusion and digital service transformation, utterly essential and urgent. Those suffering from multiple and overlapping forms of deprivation in the city are also the most likely to be digitally excluded. Without devices or connectivity, the most vulnerable may be stuck in their homes, unable to access food, healthcare and other services and the support they need.

6.2 As the crisis swiftly evolves, these immediate problems of connectivity will be supplemented with medium term problems of service provision in the public and third sectors having to make radical and substantial transformations from mostly in person, to online forms of provision. This will trigger many other needs of digital transformation, including upskilling workers and putting in place new forms of digital infrastructure. This digital transformation will then be increasingly necessary for organisations to survive through a recession that is predicted to be the deepest in 100 years.

6.3 The recommendation is to contribute £51,809 for the July 20 to March 21 period to enable DBH to continue to support digital inclusion activity in the city. This represents 70% of the operational costs and gives DBH a reasonable chance of being able to raise the additional 30% from other sources.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

7.1 There is currently no specific budget to fund the £51,809 contribution. However, this cost can be managed within the current Libraries budget by reducing the contribution to the Libraries PFI reserve during 2020/21. A review of the reserve has been undertaken and this one year reduction in contribution is achievable.

7.2 The council is currently facing a gap of an estimated £51.6m due to the costs of the pandemic against the expected levels of government grant. Any additional costs to the authority could increase this gap.

Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks

Date: 09/06/20

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 The Council must take into consideration the financial implications referred to above in reaching a decision.

Lawyer Consulted:

Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 080620

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 Digital inclusion impacts hardest on those most vulnerable, such as the elderly, the poor, the homeless, and those with health conditions and mental health issues. The digital divide reflects other social exclusions factors, and these are more acute at this time of crisis. An equalities impact assessment is being completed.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 DBH will be working with organisations that recycle digital devices to help supply this equipment to those without and who cannot afford to purchase them. Currently exploring the opportunity to work with Tech Takeback on project to recycle digital devices for working and studying at home.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.6 None

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.6 DBH has been an operational workstream of the Vulnerable People's cell during the height of the crisis, supporting vulnerable people in the city through digital inclusion activity. This would continue as part of the developing City Recovery Programme.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 7.7 None

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 7.8 This is an opportunity to build on the benefits already achieved and improve digital access, skills, and confidence for the most vulnerable. If DBH stops work in June, there is a risk that the most vulnerable experience further disadvantage through lacking opportunities that digital inclusion brings and the digital divide gets larger.

There is a risk of not achieving the additional funding needed to maintain the DBH projects work, but this will be significantly mitigated by the council funding 70% of core operating costs.

Public Health Implications:

7.9 Public health implications include:

- access to services and support via digital means;
- reduction in social isolation and exclusion, and related financial disadvantage;
- improved health and well-being using digital contact with health and social care providers, digital self-help resources, and mood-boosting recreational resources

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

7.8 Digital inclusion has an important role to play in supporting council priorities:

- A healthy and caring city: as described in public health and equalities sections above. The digital divide reflects other social exclusions factors, and these are more acute at this time of crisis.
- A growing and learning city: digital access to information and learning has become even more important during the pandemic
- A city working for all: job-seeking, self-employment, and small business development, as well as access to benefits and grants, all require some level of digital access
- Homelessness: DBH has been working with homeless charities such as ClockTower Sanctuary, Just Life and BHT to support with supply of technology and digital skills support for homeless people in the city before and during the Covid19 crisis.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Background Documents

Business case for supporting Digital Brighton & Hove