

Brighton & Hove City Council

Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub- Committee

Agenda Item 25

Subject: Covid-19 Recovery & Renewal Update

Date of meeting: Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-committee – 20 January 2022

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the progress of the Covid-19 Recovery & Renewal Programme, following a previous update to the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-committee on 4 November 2021.
- 1.2 It should be noted that the report provides an update on progress to late November/early December and given the fast moving nature of the pandemic, aspects of the report may have been superseded by events by the date of the committee meeting.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Notes the progress updates in this report.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 The Recovery & Renewal Programme was established in May 2020 to help prepare and steer the council and city through the transition from emergency response to the Covid-19 pandemic towards recovery. The programme seeks opportunities for the city to emerge from the pandemic as fairer, greener and healthier.
- 3.2 Circumstances with regard to the pandemic have shifted throughout this period. Whilst the focus on recovery is being maintained, it has been managed alongside ongoing response activity, throughout lockdowns and restart following lockdown, and business as usual/statutory responsibilities. Since the initiation of the Recovery & Renewal programme, its working groups have been balancing work on response, restart and recovery simultaneously.

- 3.3 Work continues at city and regional level to support the recovery of Brighton & Hove. Events and activities have extended through the autumn season and into winter, and there is a packed schedule for 2022. The council continues to lead and support a raft of measures to boost employment in the city, and a six month review of the City Employment & Skills Recovery Plan has been completed. The council is working with businesses across the city to support the reintroduction of face coverings and Covid passes for certain destinations. Presentations regarding Events & Economy and Employment & Skills will be provided at the committee meeting.
- 3.4 The impact of the pandemic continues to make the winter a challenging period for many in the city. As reported to the last committee meeting, the council has been allocated £2.1m to provide support for food, fuel and other essential costs over the winter and until 31 March 2022, and the aim has been to create as many access points to this funding as possible. Demand on the Local Discretionary Social Fund has been unprecedented and quadruple the usual level. The Community Hub is picking up cases with those who are not entitled to benefits but who are struggling. Money has also been given to a range of organisations across the city, so they can distribute help more directly to their client groups. A range of winter preparedness plans remain in place, including the National Health Service (NHS) Winter Plan and Cold Weather Plan for Brighton & Hove, Highways Winter Service Plan and Flood Plan (supported by plans at regional level), along with service level Business Continuity Plans.
- 3.5 Council staff continue to work flexibly and according to their roles in light of the re-introduction of government advice for office workers to work from home, where possible. Services are anticipating and planning for reductions in staffing capacity due to sickness and self-isolation.
- 3.6 In light of the spread of the Omicron variant, the council has repeated national advice encouraging first, second and booster vaccinations, not to mix with people unnecessarily, and to take lateral flow tests before meeting others, particularly if they are vulnerable, and meet in areas of good ventilation or outdoors if possible. Everyone should do what they can to keep people safe and avoid putting any more pressure on our already stretched local NHS and social care services.

3.7 **Recovery & Renewal programme**

The following items provide updates on each of the council's Recovery & Renewal working groups:

3.7.1 **Customers**

Aim of working group

- Develop and deliver the Customer Experience Strategy, which includes the Customer Promise and Customer Experience Vision.
- Monitor progress in relation to the delivery of the Customer Experience Strategy.
- Promote best practice in delivering services in a fair and inclusive way.
- Consider and respond to the impact on customers of the changed customer service delivery of the council due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Key recent activities

- Freephone for contacting council services and related signage installed and operational at Hove Town Hall.
- Guidance/clarity for teams around consistent Christmas availability for public facing services. Outcome is that all services will operate minimum agreed phone hours (9.30 – 13.30) for all non-Bank Holiday days.
- Data gathering about current structure of telephone provision to inform future recommendations.
- Data gathering around initial recovery phase to understand customer needs to inform longer term recommendations.

Key forthcoming activities

- Working with the Premises Team to improve accessibility to civic buildings and signposting to services.
- Working with the Future Ways of Working programme on Information Technology skills training for staff, ensuring they are equipped to troubleshoot customer issues when using digital services.
- Analysis and presentation of data gathered at customer contact points.
- Development of options for longer term Customer Service Centres based upon data gathered.

3.7.2 Children & Young People

Aim of working group

- Provide strategic leadership to the recovery and renewal work for children and young people's services in the city.
- Focus on Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic (BAME), disadvantaged, education and early years, Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND), emotional wellbeing and mental health, safeguarding and youth.
- Be a point of escalation for the task and finish groups linked to the working group.
- Represent children and young people's matters in within the Recovery & Renewal programme.
- Link into partnerships and commissioning groups in the city.
- Highlight and mitigate risks.
- Consider equalities impacts of decisions made.

Key recent activities

- Children & Young People's Recovery & Renewal Working Group – Discussion around Covid rates remaining high and the ongoing impact of disruption across the system, particularly around teaching and support staff in education settings.
- Supporting education settings – Public Health and Families, Children & Learning continue to support settings with higher numbers, offering bespoke advice and supporting decision making at the school. Autumn term activities, such as open evenings for prospective parents and festive end of term events, have on the whole been taking place, albeit with additional precautionary measures in place, including some being held online.
- Supporting vulnerable children and young people – Further return to face to face work for social care during this period. Staff being well supported to make those changes and greater numbers are working back in offices helping deliver the full relationship based practice model. Children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) are well supported in their return to education after the summer break, with some distancing

remaining in home to school transport arrangements. Clinically Extremely vulnerable children supported to get their Covid vaccines.

- Reviewing Early Help for families and development of a Disadvantage Strategy - Work on the Early Help review continues, workshops have taken place with a range of stakeholders to identify gaps in the current system mapping and talk through suggestions for potential new ways of working. A bid for the first round of the national Family Hubs transformation fund has been submitted.

Key forthcoming activities

- Children & Young People's Recovery & Renewal Working Group - Discussions will continue about vaccinations, monitoring the schools and the wider programme.
- Supporting education settings - further work will be progressed around the use of CO2 monitors and the potential use of air cleaning units.
- Reviewing Early Help for families and development of a Disadvantage Strategy – Engagement plan to be launched in early 2022 to gather the voice of service users and Community & Voluntary Sector organisations. Work will commence in earnest around the development of plans for potential Family Hubs within the city as a key delivery arm of the Early Help system for families.
- Supporting vulnerable children and young people – Concerns continue regarding the availability of social care placements and the long term impact of Covid starting to be felt more with carers retiring or unable to offer placements to children with more complex needs. Year 1 of SEND Strategy implementation being discussed at the Children, Young People & Skills Committee in January 2022.

3.7.3 Food Policy

Aim of working group

Provide an all-age citywide response to issues relating to food arising from the Covid-19 crisis emergency phase, through recovery and in readiness and response to local outbreaks/other waves. There is a separate, detailed report on Food Policy being presented to this committee meeting.

Key recent activities

- Recommendations taken to the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-committee on 4 November regarding strategic council support for emergency food and all approved. Agreement to pursue a cash or vouchers first approach.
- Recruitment of a Food Hub Co-ordinator at Brighton & Hove Food Partnership (BHFP) with Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) to co-ordinate shared storage space at Downsview School.
- Work outlined for COMF funding for capacity and support continues. The Trust for Developing Communities and the Brighton & Hove Food Partnership undertaking food development work and one-to-one support for capacity and resilience for Emergency Food Network providers. The Black & Minority Ethnic Community Partnership (BMECP) centre food bank supported to stay open. Allocation of COMF funding to organisations – BMECP (£10k), Voices in Exile (£5k) and East Brighton Food Coop (£5k).
- Donations and fundraising campaign supported. Natasha's Law guidance given out and organisations have been supported to answer any questions. Children's Centres food bank moved to vouchers only.

Successful start of affordable food pilot at Roundabout Children's Centre. Shortlisted for Eurocities Award for affordable food network.

- Identification and giving out of major funding to support the sector through the Household Support Fund, Winter grants allocated, Local Outbreak Plan funding given out to purchase extra food.

Key forthcoming activities

- Searching for new premises for the Food Hub – to use as shared storage and processing space, progressing recommendations from the report.
- Strategic planning for the next financial year, including fundraising. Concern particularly around the funding shortfall in April 2022.
- Supporting/liasing around increasing central capacity for emergency food. Promoting the Household Support Fund route within the Local Discretionary Social Fund/Community Hub to residents.
- Developing the Healthy Start campaign and continued donations campaign.
- Providing emergency food over Christmas (for example, Carelink) and sharing communications around opening times.

3.7.4 Vulnerable People

Aim of working group

Work collaboratively across the public and voluntary sector to reduce the spread and limit the morbidity and mortality from the Covid-19 pandemic in Brighton & Hove and ensure the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people. This working group has an assurance role.

Key recent activities

The main workstreams have now been closed, however, the working group remains to report on the following important work themes:

Community Hub:

- Activity is broken down into two main areas: Test & Trace managed by Public Health and Finance & Welfare managed by Revenues & Benefits.
- All activity has been in relation to Test & Trace and Self Isolation Support due to large up-tick in people testing positive locally or those being asked to isolate. The volume had been a challenge for the Community Hub to manage within its existing resource, so recruitment has been undertaken.
- The Community Hub is currently under added pressure as the national Test & Trace system will be shut between Christmas and New Year. A subsequent contingency plan is in discussion.
- The Local Discretionary Social Fund has been approved. The fund will be distributed to many different organisations throughout the city in the hope this can reach as many households as possible. Application is also available through the Local Discretionary Social Fund, for households in receipt of benefits via <https://brighton-gwa.egovhub.net/Gwa/launch>. For households who are not in receipt of benefits, they can apply via the Community Hub.
- Concerns have been raised around residents heating their homes in the city. The Covid pages on the council's website link to the government's Household Support Fund: [Request help for yourself or someone else \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/request-help-for-yourself-or-someone-else).
- Sample questions have also been provided to local services that interact with those at risk of fuel poverty. These questions aim to identify those at

risk of fuel poverty and refer them on appropriately for support. The Covid Testing Street Team are distributing leaflets on the government's Household Support Fund. This fund is available to those who need extra support this winter to pay for food, fuel and other essential expenses. This can be applied for via telephoning the Community Hub helpline on 01273 293117 and selecting option 2 or via www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/household-support-fund.

Mental Health:

- Suicide Prevention Steering Group to take place in December 2021.
- Concern raised over mental health impact of potential widespread self-isolation due to Omicron variant. This has been pre-empted by the distribution of leaflets via the Covid Testing Street Team. The leaflets being distributed are: "Wellbeing and mental health during Covid-19: A guide to looking after yourself and others" and "5 Ways to Wellbeing".
- Following the Mental Health and Debt Webinar on 20 October, there continues to be an effort to build upon levels of engagement.

Communications:

- The council has been working with the NHS to promote the walk-in vaccination locations around the city. The focus is particularly on targeting groups and areas of the city with low take ups. Recent promotion and engagement work has been targeted at younger people and migrants. Locations are shared through vulnerable people networks and other community or targeted groups. Social media adverts and influencers are also being used to reach key audiences. Leaflets are handed out in areas with lower uptake and high footfall areas by the Covid Support Team.
- 'Is it Covid?' testing campaign running on social media to promote the need to get a PCR test if experiencing any Covid symptoms. Engagement among a younger audience is high, so it will be rolled out through other partners to reach more people and a wider audience.
- Weekly Public Health statement sharing simple details on cases, vaccinations, testing and key messages or advice. Public Health statement published on the website, shared with local media, on social media, with staff and through networks. Translations also shared in Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, Gujarati, Hungarian, Polish, Portuguese, Simplified Chinese and Spanish.

Volunteering

- Development of a volunteer model of 'welcomers' for mobile vaccination units and associated best practice support.
- Standing up of Sussex wide Volunteering Cell to support testing and vaccination.
- Recruitment of volunteers is becoming increasingly difficult and numbers are decreasing. It is unclear how this will impact upon the sector fully.
- Any organisations that require volunteers are being advised to go via the Sussex Resilience Forum (SRF) as they are best placed to deploy them effectively.
- All services to consider the use of and support to their volunteers to prevent burn out.
- A letter is being drafted by the council for volunteers that enables them to access a booster vaccination.

Key forthcoming activities

Community Hub:

- There is an ongoing review into how the activities undertaken by the Community Hub align with business as usual and directorate redesigns. This includes ensuring it can stand up again offering the full support service if needed.
- Omicron impacts remain currently unknown and service may have to be adapted to suit demands in the next period.

Mental Health:

- A meeting of the Mental Health Oversight Board is to take place in January 2022.
- Continuing to reshape delivery of the Mental Health Promotion Worker post revisiting the first round of applicants.

Communications:

- Updates will continue to be provided on national guidance and local case rates. Weekly Covid statements will continue to be produced in a variety of languages and shared across the city through relevant networks, local media and on social media.
- The council's Covid webpages are being updated to reflect current guidelines introduced on 8 December.
- Vaccine promotion continues to be the priority and this has now been expanded to include booster vaccinations, 12-15 school vaccinations and flu. We will continue to work closely with the NHS to promote these to the key audiences. Information will be shared across a variety of channels, including through networks and schools, targeted social media advertisements, young social influencers, printed advertisements in local magazines and through local media.

Volunteering:

- Co-ordination between the Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust, the council and Community Works to ensure effective recruitment and management of increased volunteering opportunities and work on preventing burnout in this key workforce. There are currently more volunteer vacancies than applicants.

3.7.5 Employment & Skills

Aim of working group

To come together to discuss matters relating to economy, skills and employment that cut across the Recovery & Renewal programme.

Key recent activities

Further engagement with partners to progress City Employment Skills Recovery:

- A six month review of the City Employment & Skills Recovery Plan was completed with contributions from the Adult Learning & Skills Partnership. A summary update against each objective was provided to Members at the last meeting of the Adult Learning & Skills Partnership.
- Engagement meeting with the Destination Experience Group in respect of skills challenges facing the Visitor Economy Sector at the Brighton Centre.

- Ongoing engagement with the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) in respect of local priorities and the future of the Youth Employment Hub.
- Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) stakeholder meeting held in Brighton to contribute to the development of the LSIP.
- Engagement meeting with the Chichester College Group/Coast to Capital LEP in respect of the Institute of Technology bid which involves both universities.
- Two meetings with equivalent officers at East and West Sussex to discuss alignment of projects and collaboration, where possible.
- Meetings with the National Careers Service to increase access to appointments at the Youth Employment Hub and Adult Education Hub.
- Working with the DWP to move young people into employment by supporting and hosting Kickstart employer engagement events.
- Ongoing engagement with members of the following networks: English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Network, Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Young People Network and the Work & Learning Network. All networks contribute to the objectives in the City Employment & Skills Recovery Plan.
- Engagement with the NHS in respect of Health and Social Care and recruitment activity.
- 62 Sector Workforce Academy Programmes with 351 customer starts were delivered between 1 March and 31 August.
- Team Dominica have been successful in supporting 10 young people who were furloughed back into work. Additionally, the young people undertaking supported internships have secured paid work post placement.
- The Brighton Housing Trust (BHT) has received renewed funding for the BHT Accommodation for Work Project, housing and supporting homeless working people and those who want to get back to work.
- The DWP awarded £99,999 of Flexible Support Funding to the council to work in partnership with local services to provide a Multi-cultural Employability Support Hub. Migrant employability courses have been launched at the new Adult Education Hub, particularly around starting a business/enterprise, as well as non-accredited ESOL provision.
- Between April and July 2021, Digital Brighton & Hove/Citizens Online delivered 5,022 digital skills support sessions. Seven devices were loaned to residents and 22 devices were gifted. Nine new data packages/Wi-Fi devices/dongles were supplied, and six Digital Champions were recruited and trained.
- 296 social inclusion steps were recorded at the Youth Employment Hub, exceeding the target set for the project of 200. Each step moves an individual forward on their personal journey.
- Extension of the Think Futures European Social Fund project with West Sussex County Council to 2023 has been approved for the amount of £112k.
- 243 enrolments have been achieved in the first term at the Adult Education Hub with a further 45 already signed up for next term. Online courses in dealing with anxiety and pre-entry ESOL courses have proved particularly popular.
- Key partnerships have been formed with community groups, such as the International Women's Network, Evolve (YMCA), Voices in Exile, Emmaus and Job centre Plus to name a few and clients are being referred to our courses.

- The Adult Education Hub continues to support the Blue Print project with work package 2 training on the circular economy. The introduction to the circular economy is likely to be launched with a pilot group in March.
- A new student management system has been implemented into the service to help manage enrolments, data returns and measure performance of teaching learning and assessment.

Business & Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) Sussex

- A Kickstart employee, BIPC Support Officer, recruited to support the team and help implement the BIPC's Social Media Strategy.
- Additional Restrictions Grant funds secured for a fixed term BIPC Manager.
- Preparation of the BAME and Female Entrepreneur specification for delivery in 2022.
- The Leader of the Council and the Mayor visited the BIPC Brighton & Hove as part of Small Business Saturday.
- Successful Start Up Day 2021 at the BIPC Brighton & Hove with around 20 attendees.
- 121 Clinics and Webinars have taken place during October, November and December, both online and at the BIPC Brighton & Hove delivered by BIPC staff and partners in the city.
- Promotion of the BIPC Brighton & Hove in Platinum Business Magazine with monthly double-page features on the BIPC, the centre's Entrepreneur in Residence, CEO and Founder of Man Bites Dog including a press release about the new Entrepreneur in Residence.
- BIPC Sussex sponsored the Small Business of the Year Category for the Sussex Business Awards.
- BIPC Sussex Partners 'Thank You' event to be held at the BIPC Brighton & Hove.
- Fifteen staff members from the Sussex Innovation Centre (SiNC) visited BIPC Brighton & Hove in December.
- BIPC Brighton & Hove joined the Patent Library (PATLIB) network and attended the Annual General Meeting in early December.
- Role out of training to around 25 staff at BIPC Local Crawley.
- Creating links with business support organisations in West Sussex and working with the Economic Development Team at West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) and library staff at Crawley.
- The manager of Crawley Library gave a presentation to the Leader of WSSCC and the Leader of Crawley Borough Council about Crawley Library, including the new BIPC Local there.

Brighton Living Wage Campaign

- Raised the salaries of over 4,000 people.
- 782 businesses in the city have joined the campaign.
- Living Wage Week in November raised the Living Wage in the city to £9.90.
- A virtual event in November was organised by Brighton Chamber celebrating the success of the campaign, at which the Leader of the Council congratulated its success in supporting employees in the city.

Small Business Saturday

- Bus replaced this year with a fleet of zero emission electric vehicles, including a branded van, car, electric scooter (seated moped style, not standing) and bicycle.
- Interviews with local businesses outside the library and streamed online.

- Brighton & Hove's Mayor and Leader were in attendance, were interviewed by the Small Business Saturday team and had a tour of BIPC centre.
- Tours of the BIPC were on offer.
- One-to-one mentoring sessions for small businesses were run online alongside the tour.
- 'Happy Hour' broadcast at 12pm on Instagram with 'good news stories' and giveaways.
- Social media posting – Instagram posts, tweets and retweets. Twitter @SmallBizSatUK (mutually following) and Instagram @smallbizsatuk.

Invest4 fund

- Eighteen new grant applications approved since October for a total of £366,000.
- Since October, payments of grants have generated a total of £460,831 Small & Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) match funding, which is the highest figure yet.
- A streamlined application form and guidance has been launched to make the process simpler.
- A mailshot to the larger eligible manufacturing firms in the Coast to Capital area has generated new leads.

Key forthcoming activities

Further engagement with partners to progress City Employment Skills Recovery:

- Agree the key objectives for the City Employment & Skills Recovery Plan 2022 – Adult Learning and Skills Partnership, including addressing and responding to the barriers for disabled people, ethnic minorities, the disadvantaged, older workers and less economically active residents.
- Ascertain the future of the Youth Employment Hub.
- Contribute to the LSIP as it continues to evolve.
- Consider the implications of:
 - Skills and post 16 Education Bill.
 - Respond to the Levelling up White Paper (January 2022).
 - UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) (Spring 2022).
 - LEP review and impact on Coast to Capital and the Skills Agenda.
- Sector base work academy pre-employment training programmes are planned for the new year with particular focus on Health and Social Care and support and pre-employment courses for services within the council, such as City Clean and Parks.
- Procurement of training in Security Guard training (Security Industry Authority qualifications) is being planned for the new year, as a need for qualified security guards has been identified in the city.
- The Deputy Leader and Executive Director of Families, Skills & Learning are to visit the Adult Education Hub.

Business & Intellectual Property Centre (BIPC) Sussex

- Evaluate and recruit to the BIPC Manager post.
- Work with the British Library to push for a longer term funding stream from central government.
- Commission and oversee delivery of the BAME and Female Entrepreneur programme.
- Continue to develop and deliver the BIPC business support offer.
- Official launch of the BIPC, including invitations to Members.

Brighton Living Wage Campaign

- Ongoing promotion of the Brighton Living Wage.

3.7.6 Events & Economy

Aim of working group

- Understand and quantify the impact of the spread of Covid-19 on the city's events, culture programme and visitor numbers, which leads to a wider impact on the city's economy.
- Align the city's businesses and event organisations around a common set of messages and actions, minimising (where possible) the impact upon the city, in accordance with Public Health England (PHE) guidance.
- Ensure government and council support gets to as many organisations as possible so that key sectors in our economy are able to survive, retain employment and recover.

Key recent activities

Tourism and Hospitality

- Ten high quality promotion videos have been produced as part of city destination management, for use on multiple media channels.
- Following the national lockdowns of early 2020, since re-opening in July 2020, hotel occupancy rates were exceeding those of 2019.
- The Welcome Back Funded digital campaign has generated additional hotel bookings Oct – Dec 2021 and a digital campaign to promote local areas to residents and regional visitors will run in March 2022.
- The Brighton Centre diary is full for the remainder of 2021.
- The period of January to December 2020 covered two national lockdowns and the introduction of local 'tier' systems of Covid restrictions, as well as the introduction of the 'rule of six.' Overall, visitor numbers from Jan to Dec 2020 decreased by 27% on 2019 figures. Spend decreased by 62% on 2019 (Economic Impact Assessment of Tourism Report, 2020).

Outdoor Events

- There is a full events calendar for 2022. Over fifty major events are taking place, including many new events such as a Brighton Trail Marathon which will utilise other parts of the city, targeting different age groups with the aim to improve health and wellbeing. Applications will be presented to the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture committee in January.
- A new Outdoor Events Manager joined the council in November and will be based at the Brighton Centre.
- The Economic Development Team have been approached by a business moving into Hove who have enquired about where they can hold a local festival. The Economic Development Team will co-ordinate with the Outdoor Events Team to find a space.

Third Sector

- There has been a drop off in availability of staff and volunteers due to Covid.
- Certain groups are wanting to experience more face to face sessions but anxiety is an issue.
- There is concern around the next financial year; income will be significantly reduced creating a huge pressure.

- There is concern regarding the wellbeing of staff. Funding has been secured from the Sussex Health & Care Partnership, which provides counselling and legal advice, to support the workforce through the winter pressure.

Wider City Economy View

- Shared performance tracker of largest cities in England. Brighton & Hove is second highest in terms of start-ups across the country.
- Housing and affordability – the city is becoming less and less affordable.
- Employees are moving from transient sectors into ones that offer more job security.
- Chamber session last week on the four day working week. Offers to staff need to include health and wellbeing.
- The Social Value Framework is a useful resource for businesses and has been shared.
- £6,000,000 of Contain Outbreak Management Funding has been spent by the end of October, with the largest allocation going to temporary housing.

Council as Landlord

- Council rents are being paid and things are positive. Payment plans have been set up, are being honoured and debt levels are coming down. This is a good indication of consumer confidence. Currently, all property is let and there is optimism in retail sector and more widely.

Key forthcoming activities

- Discussions underway regarding how Pool Valley Coach Station could be improved as a gateway to the city. There are concerns around graffiti and deterioration of a listed building and poorly lit areas.
- The implications of Hatch's Regeneris report on the economic impacts of Covid-19 on the city are to be explored, including what the council and city can do to address the issues around employment and skills shortages.
- Examine the detail, and discuss the implications for the council, of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
- Work closely with Public Health to understand the impact of Omicron, Public Health measures and how the city can effectively respond.

3.7.7 Homelessness & Housing

Aim of working group

- Covid Response amongst the homeless and rough sleeping population.
- Prevention and management of cases and outbreaks in homelessness and rough sleeping settings.
- Enabling individuals accommodated in emergency accommodation during the Covid Response ('Everyone In') to move on from rough sleeping into sustainable accommodation.
- Achieve a sustainable reduction in rough sleeping.
- Collaboration between housing, finance, planning, development, health protection, social care and local stakeholders and partners, in the development of submissions for the funding included in the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG).
- Delivery of both MHCLG Programmes - Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) and RSAP

Key activities in the last period:

Our key priority remains reducing our use of Emergency Accommodation (EA). This includes move on planning via Next Steps and Rough Sleeper Accommodation programmes for people accommodated in EA under Covid-19 pandemic provisions. Key work streams include:

- Delivery of Rough Sleeping Accommodation programme capital and revenue grant schemes to provide homes based on a Housing Led Support Model aimed at rough sleepers with complex and multiple needs, and a Rapid Rehousing Model aimed at people with lower needs who are newer to the streets.
- Under Housing Led Support 'Purchase & Repair', the target is to provide 30, 1 bed properties during 2021/22 and 2022/23. Our target for this financial year is to ensure 20 properties are purchased and ready to let. We are on track to meet this target.
- We are in the early stages of the second scheme, which is to deliver 30 properties under 10-year leases under our Rapid Rehousing Model. The properties are to house rough sleepers with lower support needs. The scheme is going well with proactive engagement with local accommodation owners and a communication strategy via social media.
- Provision of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) rooms for rough sleepers and people accommodated during the pandemic.
- Continued reduction of clients who remain in accommodation following Covid pandemic placements through move on, including into the private rented sector homes and through funded support for offenders.

Key activities in the next period:

- Responding to the government's "Protect & Vaccinate" initiative to increase the uptake of vaccinations amongst the rough sleeping cohort and prevent spread of Covid/Omicron. Protect & Vaccinate accommodation has been provided to rough sleepers since 22 December 2021. We are working closely with Health partners to deliver a targeted vaccination rollout across rough sleeper provision, emergency and supported accommodation.
- Homeless Transformation Project is well underway and includes our key focus on reducing use of emergency and temporary accommodation use, including continued move on of clients placed under the Covid pandemic. Continued close working with our Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) advisors to: deliver Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme funding priorities; repurpose of Rough Sleepers Initiative (4) funding; review funding for combined winter/ Protect & Vaccinate accommodation provision; and co-produce Rough Sleepers Initiative (5) funding from 2022-2025.

3.7.8 Future Ways of Working

Aim of working group

- To scope the future ways of working for the council through service and staff engagement. From this develop a vision for the council which will inform Our People Promise (OPP), and Digital and Accommodation strategies
- Consolidate emerging workplace needs and deliver the Programme and model for a different return to the workplace in 2021-22, which considers changing service delivery models and working practices

Key recent activities

- Completion of Focus Groups and collation of email and other feedback.
- Office preparation and changes by Workstyles across the corporate estate to repopulate with equipment and restore workstations (1600+ desks).
- Wider staff return to offices from 13 September prioritising customer phone services, including staff reinduction (e-learning) and virtual briefings for managers.
- Delivery of ventilation virtual briefings for staff (and recording published on website for later viewing).

Key forthcoming activities

- Complete analysis of 94 Focus Groups and identify the key future ways of working themes for engagement.
- Engage with existing staff and management networks, unions and worker forums on working themes from Focus Groups and staff survey as relating to Future Ways of Working.
- Establish a council Digital Skills Framework for all staff.
- Launch a Collaboration Space Pilot in Bartholomew House in early January 2022 for staff to trial different office set-ups for hybrid working.
- Review interim working arrangements in January, including office occupancy and start analysis for any reprofiling of accommodation use.

3.7.9 Supporting Members

Aim of working group

To explore with Members:

- the role of a Member, how that is changing and what it looks like going forward;
- the relationship between a Member and their ward/communities and with officers; and
- how Members want to work;

informed by experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic. This will lead to a series of actions, including the creation of a Training, Development & Improvement Plan for Members.

Key recent activities

- Member Training & Development (T&D) Plan launched on 11 October and an updated version sent to Members on 29 November.
- Reminders given regarding completion of Member Performance & Development Plans (PDPs). Group Leader PDPs being arranged with the Local Government Association. Update provided to Leaders' Group on 1 December.
- Planning for South East Employers Charter Plus accreditation visit on 18 January.
- Meeting held of the Member Development Working Group (MDWG) on 7 December to discuss Member Development governance, evaluation and quality assurance, and to provide an overview of the Supporting Members programme.
- Planning for a Being a Councillor event to be held in March 2022. Exploring how to obtain views from under-represented groups in the city on the drivers and barriers to becoming a Councillor with a view to broadening the diversity of Members in Brighton & Hove. An update was provided to the Officer Working Group on 30 November, Leaders' Group

on 1 December, and the Executive Leadership Team and Corporate Equalities & Diversity Group on 8 December.

- Programme update provided to the Supporting Members Officer Working Group on 25 November.
- Future Ways of Working presentation given to Leaders' Group on 1 December to agree a way forward.

Key forthcoming activities

- Group Leader PDPs undertaken with Associates of the LGA.
- Charter Plus application submitted and South East Employers visit hosted.
- Planning well underway for the Being a Councillor event and next officer working group held. Approach agreed regarding focus groups.
- Next steps meeting regarding Future Ways of Working to be held.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

4.1 As the democratic body of the city, the council has a role in leading the governance and delivery of the recovery phase of the pandemic. The consequences of this public health crisis force 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 it transitions through different phases of the pandemic and moves in and out of response.

4.2 The pandemic represents an unprecedented challenge for Brighton & Hove and a major shock to the city's economy and communities. It also presents the city with an opportunity to shape its 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 pandemic affecting the communities and/or environment of Brighton & Hove. Those leading Recovery & Renewal have worked closely throughout with colleagues supporting outbreak control and emergency response to ensure a co-ordinated approach.

5. Community engagement and consultation

5.1 The programme is engaging with the city's partnerships and governing bodies, and the Community & Voluntary Sector (CVS) as part of the recovery process. The city's partnerships were consulted as part of the programme's initiation via a scenario planning exercise where they were asked to consider the implications of the pandemic on their sectors and a response. The CVS and Clinical Commissioning Group are represented on the Covid-19 Recovery & Renewal Group, where the leads of each working group share progress in order to identify issues, links and dependencies, and cross-cutting areas of work. Each working group has also been reviewed to determine whether it has appropriate CVS representation. The working groups undertake engagement and consultations specific to their theme, as appropriate.

6. Conclusion

6.1 The Covid-19 pandemic and the council's response to it have been fast paced, agile and in partnership with others, and this ethos is being carried forward into recovery. The programme will plan ahead as far as it is able,

adapt in line with outbreak control, emergency response and restart of the city, and each working group will review its approach as circumstances change. The organisational capacity required to respond to the crisis, restart the city, begin recovery from it, and manage business as usual and statutory responsibilities cannot be under-estimated. Officers remain committed to delivering for the city, and the council and its staff, and will continue to update Members as the programme progresses.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The governance structure of the Recovery & Renewal Programme is provided for within the council's existing resources. Except where specific delegations have been approved by committee, actions or recommendations arising from the programme that have financial implications are reported through the council's recognised governance and decision-making routes, normally Policy & Resources Committee, or its Recovery Sub-Committee, and in accordance with Financial Regulations.

Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld

Date: 10/01/22

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 This report is for information only. There are therefore no legal implications arising directly from it. The Recovery and Renewal Programme is consistent with the Council's powers and duties.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 22/12/21

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 Equality is fundamental to the city's and council's recovery from the pandemic, along with addressing the inequalities that it may have worsened. Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) have been completed, as required, by the working groups and include actions to gain the best outcomes for all service users and staff. Each working group is considering what existing inequalities have been revealed by the pandemic and social restrictions, what inequalities have been created or worsened, and what can be done to tackle these by the council, its partners and communities. In addition, the groups are also considering whether recovery from the pandemic creates any opportunities to narrow pre-existing inequalities. Progress towards delivery of each EIA is checked regularly as part of the governance of the programme.

The Equalities & Access Group continues to meet following closure of the workstream, so all groups are able to capture intelligence. Vaccination has been the priority, in particular, Black & Minority Ethnic (BME), Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQ) and Faith, and engagement work has been carried out with all groups. Results of the LGBTQ survey on the Impact of Covid have been shared (see <https://www.switchboard.org.uk/new-research-by-switchboard-highlights-inequalities-exacerbated-by-covid-19-for-lgbtq-communities-in-brighton-hove/>).

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 The sustainability of its recovery plans is a key aspect of the programme's approach. This ranges from the plans to facilitate the movement of people around the city, to the sustainability of food provision, to the sustainability of the council's finances. As well as responding to the challenges thrown up by the pandemic, the programme will similarly seek to optimise any opportunities that are presented to support delivery of the council's priorities. The council's Carbon Neutral programme is one of the underpinning activities of Recovery & Renewal. A representative from the council's Sustainability Team has been invited to Covid Recovery & Renewal Group meetings.

11. Other Implications

Crime & disorder implications:

- 11.1 The implications for crime and community safety/cohesion in relation to the pandemic are embedded within the work of the Community Safety Partnership and Strategy.

Public health implications:

- 11.2 Public Health is at the heart of the council's response to, and recovery from, the pandemic and is mainstreamed throughout the Recovery & Renewal programme. Colleagues from Public Health and the Recovery & Renewal programme are co-ordinating their responses to the pandemic and meet regularly to discuss progress and any issues.

Supporting Documentation

None.

