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**REPORT TO: MORAY COUNCIL EMERGENCY CABINET ON 3 JUNE 2020**

**SUBJECT: ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE SERVICE  
RESPONSE TO COVID 19**

**BY: DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND  
FINANCE)**

**1. REASON FOR REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform the Cabinet of the services within the Economy, Environment and Finance portfolio that have been developed and delivered during the COVID 19 pandemic to provide the response to the incident or to ensure continuity of critical council services.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Emergency Cabinet following a decision of Moray Council on 25 March 2020 to temporarily suspend all delegations to committees as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (para 2 of the minute refers).

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Cabinet review and note the services within the Economy, Environment and Finance portfolio that have been developed and delivered during the COVID 19 pandemic to provide the response to the incident or to ensure continuity of critical council services.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the council has had to take a range of measures to ensure that critical services continue to be delivered and to develop and deliver a number of new services in response to the emergency. This has had to be done at pace in a dynamic and changing environment.
- 3.2 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic services have been temporarily closed, redesigned so that they can continue to operate during lockdown and taking account of social distancing requirements, and new services developed

to help support Moray's citizens during this period of uncertainty and challenge. This is the second report in a series aimed to provide an overview of the services that have been maintained, often very differently from normal and those that have been rapidly created and will be followed by a third and final report from the Chief Executive.

## **4. ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMERCIAL SERVICES**

### **4.1 Transportation**

- 4.1.1 The Streetworks process to enable utility companies and others to repair critical infrastructure has been maintained throughout the lockdown with the members of the team home working.
- 4.1.2 Other activities including responding to planning applications, road construction consent applications, road safety issues, active travel and network development are progressing slowly with members of the traffic team working from home with limited equipment while corporate priorities for further equipment allocation are assessed.
- 4.1.3 Some new work is being undertaken to assess road space reallocation projects to support greater levels of active travel or areas where there is a need to increase pedestrian space to allow for queuing etc. to enable social distancing all in terms of the government's Spaces for People initiative.
- 4.1.4 Parking charges have been suspended at the current time, and no enforcement activity is being undertaken in any car parks.
- 4.1.5 Home to school transport and social care transport activity has largely ceased operation, with some very limited activity in relation to the Education hubs. Administrative and management activity around these areas is still high, including enabling supplier support payments to be made in line with the council's agreed position in this area.
- 4.1.6 The council's Dial M demand responsive and timetabled services are still operating as lifeline services, in line with the council's agreed position. Social distancing is being maintained with seats marked as 'unavailable' to assist with this.
- 4.1.7 There has been some additional operational work relating to assisting the Scottish Ambulance Service with the movement of non-COVID19 patients, and liaison work through the Health & Transport Action Plan partnership to support transport for the NHS – both staff and COVID19 positive patients via a contractor.
- 4.1.8 The harbours have remained operational throughout this period, with social distancing and enhanced hygiene measures in place for employees. At the time of writing, leisure activity is not currently endorsed, and the harbour staff are principally ensuring the leisure harbours are safe. Most activity is focussed on the commercial harbours, particularly Buckie, where cargo

vessel movements are being facilitated in a 'business as usual' manner, with safety mitigations in place.

## **4.2 Lands and Parks Service**

- 4.2.1 Following lockdown all Lands and Parks staff were stood down other than to provide the critical service of burials and emptying of litter bins/litter picking at higher profile sites. The burials service has continued to operate as normal with extra measures in place for social distancing, PPE, cleaning and closer working relationships with undertakers to ensure funerals are carried out sensitively whilst meeting government guidelines for reduced numbers of family and mourners attending and social distancing.
- 4.2.2 From Monday 20<sup>th</sup> April a phased approach to grass cutting was agreed with cutting recommenced at cemeteries and high amenity areas such as war memorials, school grounds, parks, public playing fields, flood alleviation schemes and larger areas of open spaces that can safely be cut by predominantly tractor and gang mowers / ride on machines.
- 4.2.3 As part of that phased approach, road verge cutting including sight lines and road junctions will start from mid May for the safety of road users. Ongoing consideration is being given to when the second phase of services may be restored including smaller areas and assisted cuts.

## **4.3 Catering Service**

- 4.3.1 Schools in Moray closed to pupils on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> March. From Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March all 8 secondary schools and 1 primary school (Tomintoul) provided Free school meals to pupils P1-S6 including universal free school meals with a packed lunch. The parents/carer picked up the packed lunches from the secondary school or primary school. There were some packed lunches delivered by the transport department for pupils that had no transport. Catering provided approx. 540 packed lunches per day.
- 4.3.2 From 30<sup>th</sup> March until Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April the service provided snacks twice a day in the 8 childcare hubs and from 13<sup>th</sup> April Catering provided support to the 8 school and 5 nursery childcare hubs. Catering staff work on a rota system to provide snacks twice a day and packed lunches to the pupils. The team is currently providing approx. 305 snacks and 140 packed lunches per day.
- 4.3.3 8 Catering assistants and 1 Cook are also supporting Moray FoodPlus providing community meals from Lhanbryde Community centre and have done so since 27<sup>th</sup> April. Approx. 200 meals are being produced to support vulnerable people.
- 4.3.4 Catering will shortly also be providing fresh vegetable packs for shielded people from the community food fund.

## **4.4 Facilities Management and Building Cleaning**

- 4.4.1 As the decision was made to close schools and a number of buildings the initial focus for Building Cleaning was to maintain the existing provision in closed buildings to ensure a safe and sanitary environment for any possible

return, all sites were continually cleaned following the closure for a period of two weeks. Subsequently cleaning services have been maintained in accordance with the prevailing guidance.

- 4.4.2 As the Childcare Hubs and Early Years Provision operational plan was announced the Facilities Team supported colleagues within Education to ensure these units were fully operational in a challenging period of time. Staff were sourced to work through the Easter break to ensure deliveries of PPE and virucidal disinfectant were supplied to all establishments.
- 4.4.3 The janitorial service has remained fully operational, the main focus being on the initial set up of the Childcare Hubs and Early Years Provision. Education requested that all sites remain accessible as there is a need for teaching staff to collect resources and access IT equipment. The team also supported Education when the request came from the NHS to utilise the High Schools for use as immunisation clinics
- 4.4.4 Facilities staff within HQ and the Annexe supported services that remained operational within the building including the acceptance and storage of emergency PPE for the NHS and Key workers.

#### **4.5 Waste Services**

- 4.5.1 Residual and bio waste (brown bin) kerbside collections have been unaffected by the current pandemic. Frequencies have remained the same as they normally would be; 3 weekly and fortnightly respectively. However, kerbside recycling collections have been affected. The service was suspended for a 3 week period to enable staffing and social distancing issues to be fully considered. Collections resumed on the 20<sup>th</sup> April, albeit on a reduced frequency of a 3 weekly collection and with the exception of glass. Glass kerbside collections remain suspended at the time of writing although consideration is currently being given to reinstatement.
- 4.5.2 All Household Waste Recycling Centres were closed on lock down as they were in all 32 Local Authorities in Scotland. Representatives from the Waste Managers Network spent time liaising with relevant parties including Scottish Government, COSLA, SEPA & Zero Waste Scotland to determine a collective and consistent approach for reopening the sites and as a result these will be reopened with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> June with a booking system in place and restrictions on the materials which can be recycled. The arrangements at the centres will be kept under review and reopened for all materials as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so.
- 4.5.3 All public toilets have been closed, however, key safes have been fitted to a select few in order to provide access for key workers whilst they're out on their rounds. The toilets are therefore being monitored for cleanliness and stock supply.
- 4.5.4 Bulky/Special collections were suspended on 20<sup>th</sup> March for a period of 9 weeks in order to focus on bin deliveries, however, this service has now been reinstated.
- 4.5.5 All 22 unmanned recycling points across the county remain accessible and have been serviced on an increased frequency to cater for the amplified

volumes of material being produced by householders. Glass skips have been sited at all major supermarkets across the authority and there has been very little reduction in the volume of glass being processed.

- 4.5.6 Street sweeping and litter picking operations have remained in place as they normally would be, with the exception of roadside verges.
- 4.5.7 Trade Waste services were affected by the suspension of recycling collections but this has now been resolved. Approximately 15 % (over 200) of our customers businesses have been closed due to the pandemic however and so demand and revenue has reduced.

#### **4.6 Consultancy**

- 4.6.1 When the lockdown began all but emergency construction works were suspended in line with Government guidance and compensation events were issued to contractors to cover contractual issues associated with this action. Procurement of new contracts (with the exception of tenders that were significantly advanced and could be progressed fairly) were also stopped as were site visits with members of the public and or stakeholders.
- 4.6.2 Consultancy is still undertaking bridge and watercourse inspections and taking action to address imminent flood risk or bridge collapse, where required as well as providing advice on all planning applications. The team continue to progress design work for projects planned for this financial year and to prepare tender documents recognising that work to prime the procurement pipeline in readiness for the lifting of restrictions will be critical. This design is both for core work in flood management, harbours and bridges, as well as work on schools for property. The team has also continued to develop the Flood Risk Management Plan for cycle 2 in partnership with SEPA and Scottish Water.

#### **4.7 Roads Maintenance**

- 4.7.1 The service has continued to provide a full winter maintenance service provision but that will be scaled down from 17 May with contingency cover in place. The team has also continued to undertake safety inspections of the roads network and carry out emergency repairs to our roads and street lighting assets. All planned maintenance activities have been postponed with the majority of frontline operational staff made available for redeployment where possible. A large number have been trained to support our refuse collection, grave digging and grass cutting activities and support has been provided to these services as and when required.
- 4.7.2 Office based staff have in the main been working from home developing new working arrangements to facilitate a phased workforce return approach to start addressing the backlog of non-emergency but critical repairs that have built up .

## **4.8 Fleet Services**

- 4.8.1 The fleet service has continued to provide a fully virtual service during this period ensuring the Council's fleet of vehicles are repaired during this period and frontline mechanics available to undertake repairs, respond to breakdowns to ensure critical services such as bin collections are maintained. MOT Inspections have stopped and normal service inspection frequencies extended to minimise social contact. Office based staff have been assisting with the distribution of the Council's pool cars so these can be utilised by Health and Social Care staff and NHS staff supporting the delivery of food parcels, essential medical supplies and home visits to vulnerable groups.
- 4.8.2 The stores teams have worked both from home and in the office to provide and source essential PPE across the council and its strategic health & social care partners.

## **5. ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

- 5.1 In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the Economic Growth and Development Services has temporarily stopped services, redesigned existing services so that they can continue to operate during lockdown and taking account of social distancing requirements, and developed new services to help support Moray's citizens during this period of uncertainty and challenge. This document summarises the changes that have taken place since the start of the crisis and will be updated as we move into a recovery phase.

### **5.2 Economic Development and Business Support**

- 5.2.1 Business Gateway and the economic development team have been working throughout the lockdown to help advise and support local businesses and guide them to available grant funding and advise how to reduce overheads and expenditure and access loan funding to help them survive the exceptionally difficult trading conditions or closures.
- 5.2.2 The team supported the Business Resilience Forum for Moray with Highlands and Islands Enterprise and other agencies as well as Moray's MP and MSP which has been invaluable to disseminate and share information on grant eligibility and the application process and to share information from business on gaps in funding or problems arising.
- 5.2.3 The team has also continued to work with and pay the Town Centre Fund ensuring payments are made quickly to business.
- 5.2.4 More recently the team has implemented the Self Employment Hardship Scheme grants providing £2000 grants to the recently self-employed and supported the non-domestic rates team in the small business grants and assisting businesses found to be ineligible.

### **5.3 Development Management and Building Standards**

- 5.3.1 Having Embraced DBS, and following the success of e-planning and e-building standards, along with introducing flexible working this has enabled both Planning and Building Standards to embrace digital working and be ready for change. Both Building Standards & Development Management saw an increase in submissions for building warrants and planning applications at the outset of lockdown however more recently the number of applications has slightly reduced. The service is unable to stop applications being lodged as statutory timescales for determinations, first response letters and responding to revised plans remain unchanged. Valid applications must still be processed and verified.
- 5.3.2 Building Standards required to cease site inspections entering in to the lockdown phase however otherwise maintained the service to facilitate house sales and any essential building works. The service has also maintained the provision of intermediate inspections when necessary and also maintained their 24hr dangerous building call out service. The service provided the opportunity for developers/homeowners to submit digital evidence in the form of photos and videos and has carried out remote verification inspections by video conference.
- 5.3.3 Restrictions on the availability of laptops, VPN access and redeployment of support staff to critical services has resulted in determination timescales not being met and applications have taken longer to process impacting on overall performance. Building Standards have been able to maintain targets for first responses and amended plans over the period to date however this is with the backdrop of not being able to provide an inspection service.
- 5.3.4 Restrictions on VPN access in the first weeks following lock down meant that if the service was to be maintained this could only be done by taking access outwith core times such as early in the morning, evening and at weekends. The team volunteered to work in this way in order to keep business moving and managed working hours around this. Several support staff have been redeployed both to the Registrars and the Grampian Assistance Hub. The Planning Scheme of Delegation was amended by the Emergency Cabinet and approved by the Scottish Ministers to allow the appointed officer to determine applications that would previously have been determined by the Planning and Regulatory Services Committee subject to the Emergency Cabinet having the opportunity to call an application in for determination. This is critical to delivering a service and avoiding appeals against non-determination.

### **5.4 Strategic Planning and Development**

- 5.4.1 Staff have continued to work from home and again officers have been willing to work flexibly in the evening and at weekends to allow business to continue as efficiently as possible. The team is prepared for the anticipated release of the reporter's decision on the Local Development Plan which will require substantial work over the coming month to prepare for adoption. Developer Obligations assessment continues and updated Developer Obligations

Supplementary Guidance was approved at the meeting of the Emergency Cabinet on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

- 5.4.2 Work has continued on the Elgin Town Centre Masterplan, which will help with some Moray Growth Deal projects and will play a part in the recovery process. Reporting and consultation has been delayed due to COVID-19.
- 5.4.3 Work has continued on Moray Growth Deal projects developing Outline Business Cases using virtual workshops and video conferencing to bring partners together. The team has been supporting and informing the Business Resilience Forum and also providing economic analysis of impacts and recovery options.

## **5.5 Environmental Health and Trading Standards**

- 5.5.1 Shielding and child care requirements have made a significant impact on the number of officers that are available to be deployed. Home working equipment is also limited and currently 10 staff of 32 have full homeworking capability although a further 13 are shortly to receive equipment. All planned inspections of food businesses, farms, caravan sites, weigh bridges, animal feed, petrol stations, private water samples, risk assessments of private water suppliers and farms, food samples, advisory visits, non-health related pest control and non-health related complaints were stopped on lock down. Active investigations where the officer has to interact with individuals have also had to be stopped and some are on hold until the retail sector is back in operation. Complaints are assessed for the risk to health and prioritised accordingly. All initial contacts are by phone.
- 5.5.2 The Trading Standards team has also been managing many new complaints and queries from the public who have bought services/holidays etc that they can no longer utilise due to the lock down. Issues include refunds and their consumer rights.

## **5.6 New Activities:**

- 5.6.1 Excess Deaths – As the pandemic progressed within the UK the team was tasked with identifying and implementing suitable storage for deceased whilst awaiting burial and to work with undertakers on their processes, providing training and support.
- 5.6.2 New Legislation Enforcement - The Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 came into force on the 27<sup>th</sup> March. This legislation in addition to social distancing requires certain types of premises to close, a limited number to open with “click and collect” and others where the public can attend but in limited numbers and with strict social distancing enforced. The sections that do not deal with the public social distancing and travel are enforced by the Environmental Health and Trading Standards teams with support by the police. The teams have delegated powers over businesses and their staff and the police over private individuals. A local protocol was developed with the police and an on call system, 7 days per week, has been in place across relevant staff that have full homeworking access since this legislation came into force.



- 5.6.3 Inspections to ensure compliance with the Health Protection legislation (above) have been done by telephone but as staff have witnessed growing areas of non-compliance, site visits are now being conducted and more will be required as further businesses resume operations. Currently the only enforcement action that can be taken is serving a prohibition notice which closes the business. Officers will be working with business in providing guidance and support to ensure the staff and public are as safe as possible with the understanding that every individual must play their part.
- 5.6.4 Numerous requests for guidance on the legislation have been received from businesses and the public with regard to compliance.
- 5.6.5 New Contact Tracing – To support the NHS and assist in the control of the spread of the virus the Environmental and Trading Standards Teams are being trained to undertake contact tracing of positive cases. This will not just be for Moray infections but as part of a wider team across Grampian.
- 5.6.6 New Hand Sanitiser Safety – Trading Standards have been required to check the hand sanitisers that are new to the market to ensure they meet the required standard of disinfection, adequate warning labels and the age group these are targeted at. Many local distillers have supported their communities by providing supplies of sanitiser which required compliance checks.

## **6. FINANCIAL SERVICES**

- 6.1 During the lockdown response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Financial Services focussed on delivering those services essential to support the critical services being delivered by Council colleagues in front-line services and to support the measures taken by Scottish Government to support businesses during this time.
- 6.2 The methods of service delivery have been adjusted to comply with the requirements of social distancing and to minimise the staff travel footprint. This has been achieved by home working where that can be enabled by the technology available for home working and by rigorously rota-ing staff who require to work from HQ and keeping the evolving job requirements under constant review.
- 6.3 Banking and Insurance, Treasury Management, Accounts receivable**
- 6.3.1 The Council cannot make any financial transactions – including paying staff – without the involvement of the Banking team. A significant amount of the work of the team can now be carried out from home. Segregation of duties of members of the team is an important security measure and this has been complied with throughout the lockdown period.
- 6.3.2 The Council requires to ingather money to support its business and work on this continues, albeit it at a reduced volume following suspension of many chargeable services. Where services are paid by Direct Debit, the Payments service manages requests for these to be suspended. The volume of these requests has increased during the lockdown period. Work is ongoing to develop new processes that allow the team to create, amend or suspend invoice production to suit the differing requirements of services.

## **6.4 Accounts Payable and the Buying Team**

- 6.4.1 With many of the Council's services suspended for the period of the lockdown, the volume of purchasing transactions has reduced considerably. The team has focused on the prompt payment of invoices, reducing the payment target from the suppliers normal terms and conditions (frequently 30 days from the invoice date) to support local businesses by providing cash flow. This is dependent on budget managers authorising payment, and a number of amendments to the authorisation process have been agreed for the lockdown period, recognising that staff availability might be restricted and that authorisation may have to be carried out remotely. The buying team have also helped source scarce supplies. All council purchases which are not made through stock control systems are made through the Buying team. The nature of the equipment needed for the buying process – scanners etc – has meant that this team has been working in HQ on a rota basis.
- 6.4.2 An important addition to the usual payments made by the Council has been payment of grants for small businesses. The grant applications are assessed by the Revenues section. A process for requisitioning payments was agreed between the 2 sections and this involved the processing of faster (ie same day) payments, a time consuming, laborious process but one which resulted in ensuring that monies were paid to local businesses quickly. In addition to the business grants the team are now processing payments for Food, clothing and self-employed hardship grants.

## **6.5 Procurement**

- 6.5.1 Ordinary procurement activity has been suspended, unless a procurement is required to support a critical function. The procurement focus of the Council has been on supplier support, with an agreed process for suppliers to request support, eg up-front payment or continuation of payment even if supply is not made to ensure supplier capacity is still available after the lockdown.

## **6.6 Accountancy**

- 6.6.1 Accountancy was not deemed to be a key support service in the initial stages of lockdown. However, it was recently confirmed that there has been no relaxation on the requirement for the Council to draft annual accounts and remit to the External Auditor by the end of June and as a result the service has recently been deemed to be time critical, resulting in the allocation of laptops to professional staff. This will facilitate production of the accounts. All the team are working from home and have been very resourceful in finding ways to continue working, albeit it at a slower pace due to limited technology.

## **7. HOUSING AND PROPERTY SERVICES – Response to COVID-19**

- 7.1 The main service areas involved in the Council's critical service COVID 19 response include homelessness; the support of vulnerable households; support to vulnerable tenants; emergency housing repairs and maintenance; gas servicing; and the repair of void properties. Activity from 9 March to 8 May 2020 is as follows:

## 7.2 Homelessness

7.2.1 Initially, the Council saw a reduction in the number of homeless presentations at the start of lockdown. Presentations were lower than normal but one significant difference has been that only a few households able to move out of temporary accommodation. Gradually the supply has started to fill and this is a position that has been replicated nationally. At this time, the main risk for Moray is running out of temporary accommodation. The Scottish Government has recognised this problem nationally and has recently issued guidance setting out the steps that local authorities can take to ensure throughput. The most practical way to address the problem is the use of void housing stock (increasing the supply of temporary accommodation and allocating existing voids). Currently the Council has 26 void properties and 19 temporary accommodation units vacant. Officers are currently developing a suite of draft procedures in accordance with evolving guidance that will allow it to make the step change from throughput under lockdown to throughput as this is relaxed.

7.2.2 The number of homeless presentations for each week since lockdown is detailed below:

<b>Week Ending</b>	<b>13/3</b>	<b>20/3</b>	<b>27/3</b>	<b>3/4</b>	<b>10/4</b>	<b>17/4</b>	<b>24/4</b>	<b>1/5</b>	<b>8/5</b>
<b>Presentations</b>	5	7	6	5	4	7	7	6	12

## 7.3 Housing Support

7.3.1 Vulnerable groups include those at risk of homelessness (Housing Options); those currently receiving a housing support service (Housing Support Teams); and those in sheltered housing (Sheltered Housing Wardens Service). In recognition of COVID 19, contact with these households has been maintained by telephone and onward referrals if further action is required. Since lockdown, 226 households (non-council tenants) have contacted the Council about their current housing situation. Weekly telephone contact has also been maintained with 104 households who receive a housing support service. Sheltered Housing Wardens and Care Services (where appropriate) are in daily contact with those living in sheltered housing (141 households).

## 7.4 Tenancy Support

7.4.1 The Area Housing Teams continue to maintain telephone contact with council house tenants. Tenants continue to contact the Council for a range of urgent housing issues and there is also regular contact made by housing officers with tenants where there appears to be financial difficulties within the household. The main purpose of this contact is to provide reassurance and to signpost (where necessary) tenants to services/agencies which may be able to offer them financial assistance. An average of 1075 separate interactions are taking place with tenants on a weekly basis.

## 7.5 Building Services

- 7.5.1 Building Services (DLO) have continued to provide an Emergency/Urgent Repairs Service for council housing. From 9 March 2020 to 8 May 2020, the DLO completed 790 emergency repairs and 430 urgent repairs. A total of 771 gas services were also completed during the period although 42 missed their statutory 12 month service date due to tenants' self-isolating. A total of 23 boilers have been replaced (emergency replacements) and 2 urgent heating upgrades were completed on health grounds.

## 8. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

**(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))**

There are no direct implications arising from this report. All action taken is consistent with the Corporate Plan and LOIP and prevailing guidance.

**(b) Policy and Legal**

None

**(c) Financial implications**

Financial implications have been considered as part of the development of responses to the Covid pandemic and are reported to the Chief Financial Officer, as reflected in the report to the Emergency Cabinet on 21<sup>st</sup> May.

**(d) Risk Implications**

None from the report. A number of the measures described have been put in place to address risk. There are ongoing risks as the Council continues its emergency response, moves into recovery and begins to reinstate services. These will be considered and addressed as planning for the whole programme of work and individual service issues progresses.

**(e) Staffing Implications**

Staffing implications were provided in the first report in this series for the Education, Communities and Organisational Development Portfolio. Staff redeployments and home working arrangements are broadly set out in the report.

**(f) Property:** None directly arising from this report. However, a number of council properties are being used differently from normal to support the council and community response to the emergency.

**(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact:** None directly arising from this report, although a number of the measures put in place in response to

the COVID pandemic have been to respond to socio economic and equalities issues.

**(h) Consultations**

The Heads of Service in the department have all contributed to this report.

**9. CONCLUSION**

- 9.1 The COVID pandemic has resulted in an unprecedented change to the delivery of council services. For critical services, immediate changes were required to enable as much as possible to be delivered remotely, which has resulted in new ways of working and modified services. There will be many lessons to be learned from this and as the council moves towards recovery, planning and review has commenced to ensure that these lessons are taken forward into future service delivery models.**
- 9.2 It has also been necessary to design and deliver new services and solutions. There has also been a transformational shift to remote services and homeworking which will be influential in future service and job design.**
- 9.3 It is likely to be some time before a new normal prevails. A number of the service changes established in the emergency response will have to continue for some time. Meanwhile, services such as economic development and housing are considering the new landscape and evolving to deliver services in new ways as society adjusts to living with COVID, and other services will be re-activating to resume their normal roles. This will prove challenging to deliver in tandem and planning is underway to ensure a measured programme of work with a clear vision that builds in flexibility and resilience as this COVID pandemic continues to unfold.**

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Background Papers:

Ref: