



REPORT TO: EMERGENCY CABINET 24 JUNE 2020

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR RECOVERY AND RENEWAL IN MORAY

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

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To report on the strategic approach proposed for corporate planning and delivery of the recovery and renewal phase in Moray in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to the Emergency Cabinet following decisions of the 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) and on 17 June that the Emergency Cabinet continues to meet until the simplified committee structure is put in place from 2 September.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Emergency Cabinet:

- i. Notes the process used to develop the draft Strategic Framework for Recovery and Renewal in Moray along with associated documents in Appendices 1-3;**
- ii. Agrees to consult, engage and involve the community on the vision, aims, outcomes and principles proposed in the Strategic Framework as set out in the report;**
- iii. Agrees the staged programme set out in the Appendix 1, this to be subject to quarterly review and reiteration as processes for recovery and renewal continue to develop at a national and sectoral level;**
- iv. Notes the high level process being used to plan for effective operational recovery of services in line with national guidance; and**
- v. Agrees that members of the Emergency Cabinet will act as a working group to inform and influence progress with regular updates to the Council and work stream updates to relevant committees.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following guidance, support and direction issued at a national, United Kingdom and sectoral level, Moray Council has been responding to the COVID- 19 global pandemic for many weeks. Reports detailing work done in response were submitted to the Emergency Cabinet on 21 May, 10 June and 17 June with a final report on the Public Protection Response to follow.
- 3.2 Having dealt with the immediate response to COVID- 19 and the government led lockdown, consideration has been given to how the Council can maintain the resilience of critical services, reintroduce other services (where appropriate or nationally directed) and plan for longer term recovery and renewal.
- 3.3 As part of our approach to recovery, it will be necessary to take a strategic look at how the pandemic situation may change life on an ongoing basis for our residents, businesses and the Council as an organisation. It is likely that a new “normal” will need to be established. It will take time to resume service delivery; some services may be reduced for some time to come, the focus of services may change and some may not return. The way we do things will change with a move to more on-line transactions for our customers and more homeworking for our employees.
- 3.4 There is still much uncertainty about the pandemic, exactly when the final two lockdown phases and each aspect within them will be engaged and whether the parameters for physical distancing will remain unchanged in the coming weeks. As positions emerge nationally, this will be fed into our response and recovery planning. Meantime, work to formulate a local approach to recovery has begun. This work is still at an early stage at corporate level, but at service level some services are at an advanced stage in their planning such as planning for the return of schools in August. The framework set out in this report will be progressed through a series of iterations and further developed as the national picture continues to emerge.
- 3.5 In parallel with planning for recovery and renewal, the Council must remain in the response phase for many services, and this combined with the spatial and other constraints on recovery will create significant pressures for what is a depleted workforce while a number of staff are shielded, self-isolating, or otherwise unable to work.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR RECOVERY AND RENEWAL

- 4.1 Recovery from an emergency is a complex and long running process that will involve many more agencies and participants than the response phase. It is not only a process of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating the community following an emergency but should also be recognised as providing an opportunity to regenerate an area, transforming and revitalising it – hence reference to recovery should be viewed as also including renewal.

- 4.2 **The Spheres of Recovery** - The pandemic will have major impacts in all spheres of life, from the humanitarian/social/care for people aspect, the environment and infrastructure through to the economy. As the COVID -19 pandemic has had quite distinct impacts as an emergency, with limited if any lasting damage to the environment (and even some improvements) and core physical infrastructure, at a governmental level attention has largely been focussed on recovering from the health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic. The degree of national policy prescription in each of these spheres is likely to differ, so for example national work streams have been engaged for some time for recovery of our schools but in economic terms, while national supports continue, much of the local response is likely to be tailored based on the nature of the impacts in Moray and our sectoral composition. In light of this, early work has started on the economic recovery process with a paper going to the Emergency Cabinet sitting as a Sounding Board on 14 May 2020 and then on to Moray Economic Partnership on 27 May 2020 for further review at its meeting on 24 June 2020. Work in the humanitarian/social/care for people sphere in response to COVID-19 has largely been directed at a national level, but the community engagement process described later in this report will inform the recovery phase in Moray. Generic work is also ongoing to create a strategic framework for specific aspects of recovery at Grampian Local Resilience Partnership and at National levels through Solace, COSLA and other groupings and the Framework will be adjusted as this work progresses.
- 4.3 **Existing Policy and Strategy** - The current crisis will undoubtedly have long lasting and severe impacts on Moray's citizens and economy and to that extent the context in which the latest Corporate Plan 2019-2024, the LOIP, the Children's Plan, Moray Economic Strategy and similar high level strategies were created has shifted significantly and may remain substantially altered. Projects and action plans associated with each of these strategies will need to be reviewed in light of the current crisis and synchronised with recovery planning over time. However, whilst also creating new challenges, as COVID-19 will broadly act to accelerate and deepen many of the issues and constraints previously identified in Moray society, existing strategies are still relevant, albeit continuing with implementation of them as business as usual is unlikely to create the clarity of focus needed for the early stages of recovery.
- 4.4 **Applying a COVID Lens to Recovery and Renewal** - In terms of emergency and strategic planning, when faced with the need to take urgent but measured action to progress recovery even while the wider policy landscape is still evolving, the first step is to identify the vision for recovery. Experience demonstrates that this will be a critical factor in the eventual performance of any response. The vision acts as a frame of reference for that urgent activity, forming the lens through which impacts will be assessed, actions planned and success measured, but it should only depart from underlying strategy in so far as this is necessary because of COVID changes.

This approach to recovery – creating a frame of reference with a high level vision/objectives/principles to guide the process – is the same approach being taken by agencies and governments around the world, programme development broadly following this outline:

- Identify vision/objectives/high level principles for recovery
- Assess impacts, order by reference to scale or other relevant factors and identify needs arising from the impacts
- Create an Action Plan to meet identified needs, prioritising the most significant impacts, with clear lines of responsibility/accountability and resourcing

4.5 **The Vision for Recovery and Renewal** - A strong platform for recovery is in place through the strategies referenced previously. These focus broadly on an inclusive society which supports the vulnerable and disadvantaged with a particular focus on our children, a cohesive and collaborative society where communities are empowered, a vibrant economy and being sustainable both financially and environmentally. But arguably before we can start to tackle such broad objectives again, we must begin by addressing the most immediate and significant of the health, social and economic harms created by the crisis, all with one eye on building in increased resilience as there is no clear end point for the current pandemic.

4.6 The challenge of balancing core aspirations with the need for urgent activity targeted at the highest priorities was discussed at a series of meetings of the Council's Senior Management Team during May and early June in order to develop a high level strategic approach. Discussions included consideration of best practice emerging elsewhere as well as the Council's Emergency Planning Policy and national positions being adopted in this area. Through these meetings, a consensus emerged that corporate capacity would be a significant challenge as response and recovery proceeded in parallel against a developing national background. As a result, rather than spreading activity across the full range of aspirations set out in the Corporate Plan 2019-2024 with the risk of poorer outcomes, a better approach for Moray was to develop a bridging or transitional vision for recovery and renewal, focussing on the most pressing issues in the period until the end of the current calendar year in particular, synchronising that bridging vision and planning with the original corporate vision and plans on a phased basis from January 2021 onwards. This is summarised in the opening paragraph of the Strategic Framework at **Appendix 1** as follows:

"Working together through our Recovery and Renewal Strategy we will build a bridge to our core vision which is of a life of opportunity for all where people can thrive in vibrant communities to enrich our future.

We will make this transition by:

Delivering a strong, agile and inclusive recovery, flexing and innovating to regenerate the area so that Moray emerges more resilient and primed to deliver our corporate priorities."

4.7 A set of aims, outcomes and guiding principles were also created to underpin that vision, these being intended to set the parameters for recovery work.

4.8 Common aims for recovery and renewal across services were identified as follows:

- **Understand** the impact of COVID-19 in Moray

- **Support** the ongoing impact of living with COVID-19 as far as possible
- **Learn** from the positive changes so that they are captured and built upon for the future
- **Re-engineer** the strategic policies and actions needed to ensure we will deliver our outcomes in the new environment

4.9 Principles were also identified which resonate strongly with those already in the Corporate Plan, but focussing on aspects most relevant to recovery and renewal, the existing corporate values being retained:

Existing **Corporate Values**: Fair, Ambitious, Improving, Responsive

The principles for recovery and renewal proposed are:

Collaborative – We will ensure that affected communities (of interest, geography, impact and others) are fully involved in the recovery and renewal process so that they have trust and confidence in our ability to deliver our shared vision for the area and its people

Empowering* - To emerge stronger and more resilient, we must work with our communities to build cohesion and mutual support

Equitable* – We will endeavour to be fair to all people and groups, recognising that the impacts of Covid 19 have affected some aspects of our community more significantly than others

Sustainable – This reflects three aspirations: Our plans must be achievable in a time when financial and staffing resources are under significant pressure; their impact must be enduring and we must work to protect our environment for the future

Entrepreneurial – To not only recover but prosper in a changed and dynamic environment, we must be adaptable, using the disruption caused by Covid 19 positively to create new and better systems and approaches and we must also be open to taking considered risks

* these are also principles in the current Corporate Plan.

5. **RECOVERY PROGRAMMING AND THE FOUR PHASES OF RECOVERY**

5.1 **The Recovery Programme** - As the national position on COVID-19 continues to evolve, programming arrangements have to be flexible. To address this, a high level corporate programme is set out in **Appendix 1** which is broken down into 4 stages which correspond broadly with national thinking on short, medium and long term recovery. However, as noted previously, some aspects of operational recovery will be driven by national directions and policy and so services are currently at different places within stage 2, with some fully recovered, some providing only basic services as part of the response to COVID-19 and others not yet resumed at any level. By the end of this stage however, action planning will start to be drawn back into the service planning process previously agreed, and realigned with revised strategies in stage 3. The programme will be reviewed quarterly so that it keeps pace with and continues to reflect the developing position nationally. The structure being used to deliver recovery and renewal is shown in **Appendix 2**. This reflects the work streams identified to date. The programme will be managed through

the Project Management Office and a performance management framework to reflect the interim objectives will be prepared and reported in the coming weeks.

- 5.2 **The Recovery Phases** - The phasing set out in the Scottish Government's Route Map will also inform recovery planning at an operational level. To give an indication of how recovery of council services fit in the Scottish Government Route Map, a similar document has been prepared at **Appendix 3** which sets this out. It should be noted that a phase may open at national level which allows certain services to be resumed, but locally recovery is not yet possible. This may be for a number of reasons including redeployment. Clearly however, every effort will be made to align local recovery with national phasing.
- 5.3 As we move through the phases, service recovery at an operational level is managed by the Recovery and Renewal Management Team, its place in the structure shown in **Appendix 2**. Process maps and templates have been created to ensure that the dependencies for recovery are considered as planning progresses including the need for Trade Union consultation and engagement, the need for supporting services such as accountancy and HR, the impact of social distancing and hygiene on workspaces etc. Lessons learned in response are also considered to inform the basis of recovery. An early example is the booking system introduced for the Household Waste Recycling Centres. This is working well and will help to avoid the road safety concerns experienced with several of the sites at peak times in previous years.

6. **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

- 6.1 To be most effective, recovery is best approached from a community development perspective, with the active participation of affected communities and strong reliance on local capacities and expertise. It is not simply a matter for statutory agencies. The approaches to locality planning and the COVID-19 community resilience response will stand Moray in good stead for this aspect of recovery and proposals for consultation with partners and engagement with our communities.
- 6.2 The process for consultation and engagement proposed is as follows:

Purpose

Inform, consult, engage and involve the community in the Council's proposed Recovery and Renewal Strategic Framework and ongoing recovery plans and activity

Aims

- To understand the needs within the community better
- Citizens have influence on the policy and priorities adopted
- Build trust and develop involvement

Outcomes

- The Recovery and Renewal Strategic Framework is finalised taking account of the community views and feedback

- The experience of the community during the COVID-19 pandemic is used to inform more detailed recovery work
- Proposals are developed for further engagement and involvement of the community in recovery work

6.3 Consultation and engagement will in the main take place remotely using video conferencing, online discussion and similar methods. There is also scope to carry out some socially distanced face to face engagement with the more vulnerable and hard to reach through the volunteers who are supporting individuals and families in our communities who have been particularly affected by the impact of Coronavirus (COVID 19).

6.4 The process will be undertaken in two stages:

6.4.1 **Checking the Strategic Framework**

During this stage working with the community resilience teams, feedback from community planning partners, community organisations and groups active during the pandemic will be sought on the draft vision, outcomes and principles. This feedback will then be used to finalise the Strategic Framework.

6.4.2 **Defining Issues and Building Collective Approaches to Recovery in our Moray Communities.**

In order to inform further planning and help set the agenda for recovery, feedback will be sought covering the points below. Relevant key statistical information that has been gathered to date on the impact of Coronavirus (COVID 19) in Moray will be shared:

- Document and appreciate experiences in our communities during Coronavirus (COVID 19)
- Capture learning to inform future improvement and adaptations for service delivery and for any future lockdown
- Identify the key issues for communities to be addressed in recovery in Moray
- Prioritise the issues to address first
- Identify solutions and opportunities for community action and involvement or co-design
- Build consensus with communities around proposals for recovery and resilience

This feedback will be used to develop more detailed planning and structure further community engagement on particular issues.

7. **GOVERNANCE**

7.1 Progress with recovery will be reported through full council at a programme level and the two new composite committees at a work stream level. However, looking at best practice established in other areas including Edinburgh and Highland Councils, informal working groups including members also form an important part of the governance arrangements, providing an avenue through which members may inform and influence planning at an early stage as it evolves. There are a number of ways in which

this could be achieved but as members were previously identified to sit as part of an Emergency Cabinet during the response phase of the COVID pandemic, and this Cabinet will have a continuing role as a sounding board for the Chief Executive, it is proposed that the Cabinet also acts as the working group for the Recovery and Renewal Programme.

8. FINANCE

- 8.1 The financial impacts of the pandemic have been the subject of previous reports to the Emergency Cabinet and will also feature in reports submitted to the Cabinet meeting scheduled for 1 July 2020, including the impact of the pandemic on the year end outturn for 2019-2020 and on financial planning for the current and future years.

9. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

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

This report outlines how recovery planning for COVID-19 can be realigned with the Corporate Plan and LOIP over time, while remaining true to the core values and most pressing objectives set out in these documents.

(b) Policy and Legal

National policy guidance is being reviewed regularly as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to affect services and planning for recovery has taken account of the recovery Route Map and latest guidance issued by the Scottish Government as it relates to local circumstances.

(c) Financial implications

Financial implications are being recorded as COVID-19 costs and monitored and reported regularly. Every effort is being made to adapt and design services without incurring additional costs, but for new services this is unlikely to be possible.

As each stage of recovery is prepared, costings will be prepared for consideration against the available options. Additional costs will be recorded and reported through the financial monitoring reports prepared by the Chief Financial Officer.

There are no other direct costs as a result of this programme at this stage.

(d) Risk Implications

Risk identification and management is a key part of the role of the Recovery and Renewal Management Team, and issues will be identified in the project management processes set up for each work stream. Risks identified at a strategic level will be incorporated into the Council's Risk

Register and internal audit will have a role to play in taking an overview of risk management in the recovery process.

There are numerous risks involved in the recovery process including:

- Health and safety of citizens and service users and employees
- Council premises, physical and cyber security
- Supply chain risk
- Technology and information
- Financial and economic risk
- Governance
- Serious organised crime, fraud
- Legal and commercial including the evolving national context

(e) Staffing Implications

There are no direct staffing implications from this report. Specific workforce issues will be considered as part of the detailed work being undertaken in recovery.

(f) Property

Property issues are part of the planning process in light of social distancing policy and will be kept under review. With an increase in home working and more online contact with our customers, there may be options to rationalise our estate beyond the levels previously considered possible when social distancing is eased.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

Equity, fairness and inclusion are highlighted as key considerations in recovery nationally and are also highlighted in the proposed Recovery and Renewal Framework. Recovery planning across the council will require the preparation of Equality Impact Assessments to inform progress and these are already underway for services which are undergoing material redesign as they are recovered. Community engagement will be delivered in ways which recognise the need to include hard to reach groups, many of whom will have experienced the most severe impacts of the pandemic.

(h) Consultations

The Council's Senior Management Team (CMT/SMT) were involved in creation of the Framework and CMT have been consulted on the terms of this report. The Community Support Team and Depute Director (Education, Communities and Organisational Development) provided the engagement proposals set out in the report. The Equal Opportunities Officer was consulted and is in agreement with the contents as regards his area of responsibility, and ongoing consultation with the trade unions has also been instigated.

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 As the immediate response to the COVID-19 pandemic has now passed, at least in the current wave, the council must develop and implement a

new programme of work to ensure that we adapt to living with COVID-19 as effectively as possible, learning from our experiences and preparing the ground for recovery and renewal.

- 10.2 This report sets out the structures and processes through which it is proposed to progress this programme of work. These will be regularly reviewed and aligned with developing national and sectoral recovery programmes so that, working with our partners and communities, we can deliver recovery and renewal outcomes that meet the needs and expectations of those who live, work and enjoy our area.**

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Background Papers:

Ref: