

## **Council Priority: Effective and Responsive Services – Recovery Plan**

### **National and Local Context**

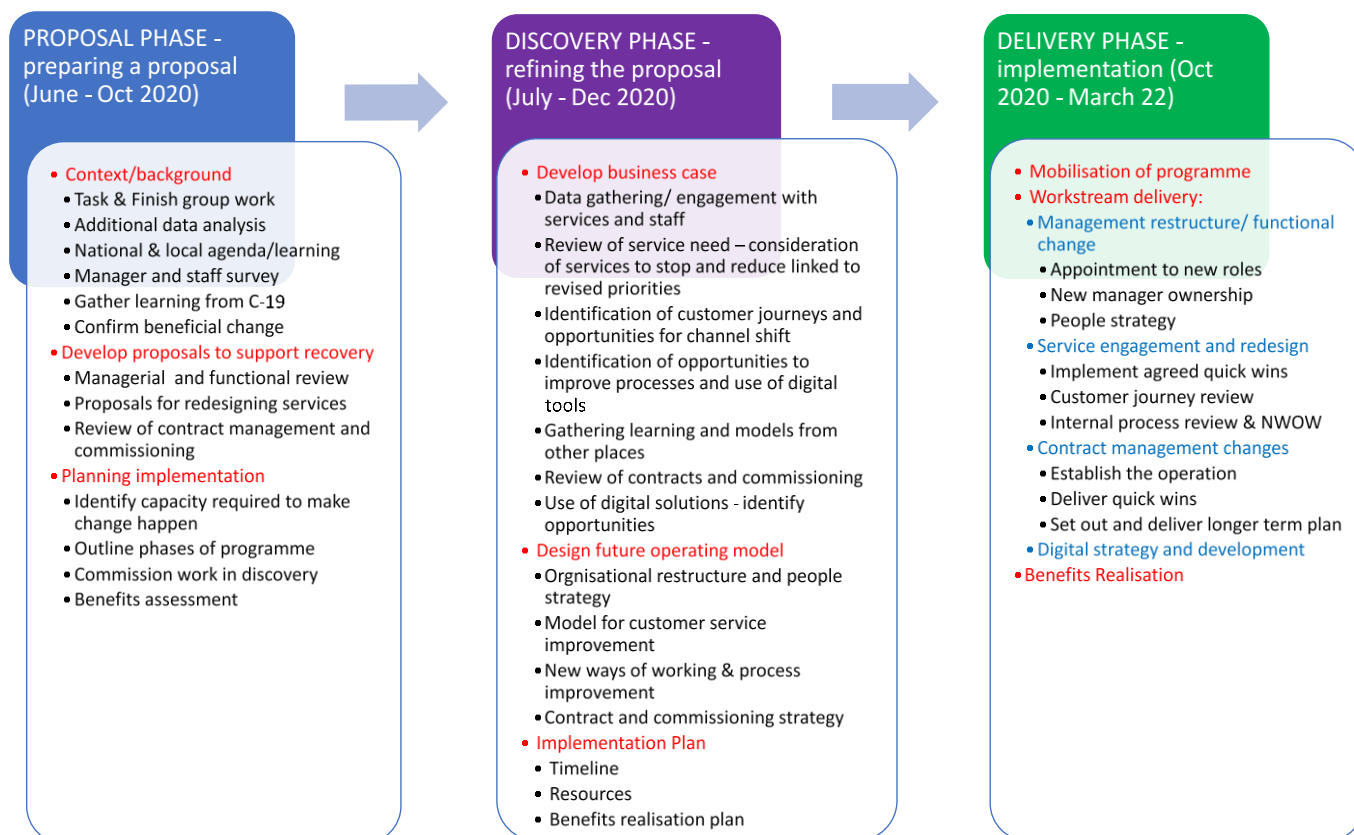
1. This Appendix sets out the efficiency challenge underpinning changes to our services and the systems, processes and structures that deliver them. It summarises the challenges the Council has responded to in ensuring services remain effective and responsive during the pandemic. It provides examples of the work the Council has done to adapt and develop new services that respond to changing requirements and the needs of residents, customers and businesses. It includes short, medium and long term actions to aid recovery and ensure the Council can respond to the continued challenges and opportunities it faces.
2. The current Covid-19 pandemic has forced unprecedented change on the Council in the way that it operates. The Council has needed to adapt and respond to new and unforeseen risks while delivering at considerable speed.
3. The financial challenge is considerable and means that we need to deliver revenue savings of £1m over four years in addition to the use of reserves. This means the efficiencies programme will need to deliver £250,000 per year (see Appendix D). In tandem with these savings, learning from the last 5 months strongly supports the need for the Council to have the structures, systems and processes that can shift strategic direction, adapt operationally and deliver to new needs and expectations.
4. The pandemic has caused difficulties for residents, businesses and the Council. It has demonstrated some opportunities to work differently that could boost productivity and generate cashable efficiency savings. There are activities the Council will need to stop, changes in services it will need to respond to and systems and processes that will need to be more efficient. The challenge and opportunity is to take advantage of digital approaches and technologies so that the Council becomes increasingly effective in meeting changing customer, resident and government expectations. This means the need and opportunity is not simply to do things digitally but to do things differently and to do different things. The intention to bring together sustainability and economic development is a good example of this type of approach.
5. The Council has begun to respond to changing user expectations and needs by exploiting the new technologies and capabilities it has developed over the last three years. Where possible, key line of business systems have moved to the cloud using open interfaces that make these systems more easily linked together. This means, for example, that data doesn't need to be stored in multiple systems but can be shared so that there is just 'one version of the truth' reducing errors and improving efficiency. This has enabled more flexible working practices, simplified integrations with other systems and significantly improved resilience.
6. In response to Covid-19, the Council has strengthened its digital capability, supporting a predominantly remote workforce. This brings benefits in terms of productivity, reduced travel time, and less time spent making offsite visits. Officers will be tasked with capturing these efficiencies to ensure they are not lost over time.

### **Proposals to support recovery 20/21 to 21/22**

7. Our proposals to support recovery are intended to address four key efficiency issues. How does the Council:
  - (i) change its operating model and methods of working to benefit from recent learning and deliver efficiencies?

- (ii) become more responsive to its environment, learn, adapt and develop services faster as expectations and needs change?
  - (iii) become more efficient and effective in how it delivers services to residents, customers and businesses?
  - (iv) deliver the change required while also responding to the financial challenges?
8. The scale, breadth and technical requirements of the work will require a series of related and linked activities to be completed. These will be coordinated through an efficiency review programme which will be organised into key workstreams and include a strong focus on benefits realisation; it will draw on external experts working alongside our own staff.
9. The service offer will need to be reviewed to consider opportunities to reduce or stop services where priorities have changed; of course, this may be offset by new requirements which have arisen from Covid-19. Operational processes will need to be developed to deliver efficiency based on effective use of technology and new ways of working. Contact with residents, customers and businesses will need to be revised to reflect changing needs and expectations enabled by effective use of technology and increased use of online processes for routine transactions.
10. The planned phases of the efficiency review are shown below, with some activities running concurrently.

### Efficiency Review Programme in Outline:



11. The review will broadly split into three phases each overlapping the other. The initial phases of the work will be Proposal and Discovery. Some of this is already under way and will enable detailed data gathering to inform the development of business cases and implementation plans. Business cases will define the new operating models and ways of working which guide the redesign of services over an 18-month period to March 2022. The Discovery work will also inform the Council's approach to contracts and commissioning. This will identify contract, partnership and shared service opportunities. These will be implemented at a timetable to be agreed and dependent on recommendations and current contract end dates.
12. During the Discovery process, some processes can be refined immediately, leading to potential future savings. The implementation will aim to engage with services in turn so that the maximum benefit can be achieved in service redesign. However, the implementation will also focus in its early stages on quick wins and organisation-wide improvement which can be delivered speedily.

## Efficiency Challenges

### Operating Model and methods of working

13. Guidance on social distancing in the workplace has required a significant shift in the working arrangements for staff and the management of the Council. Since the start of the pandemic there has been a focus on reducing the number of staff in the office and enabling home working to ensure the safety of staff. In the first weeks of the outbreak, the Council accelerated the programme to issue laptops and other mobile devices, now covering over 85% of the workforce. Coupled with accelerated implementation of Office 365 in only a few weeks, this has enabled staff to access software and documents, and to collaborate from home. As the lockdown period has extended and changed, this has developed into more flexible working patterns for a range of staff.

### Examples: Flexible working

Service Area	Shift in flexible working	Summary
Revenues and Benefits	↑ 5.5% to 50%	A range of home working efficiencies including reduced travel costs.
Health and Wellbeing	↑ 15% to 90%	Use of Teams as a platform to deliver virtual 1-2-1's and group sessions – saves on venue hire; Teams for meetings with partners has saved travel time;
Planning	↑ 6% to 95%	An increased home working pattern has not impacted productivity, performance or quality of work. Feedback from staff is that this flexibility is welcomed and beneficial
Digital and Technology	↑ 12% to 60%	New service management tools in the cloud now support remote working. This also provides resilience enabling digital support services to be delivered 24/7 off site if needed.

14. Similarly, responding to the pandemic has meant that senior managers within the Council have faced significant external and internal pressures. They have needed to ensure services continue to keep communities safe and healthy, revise resilience plans as guidance has changed and ensure the Council's staff are supported and safe. This has meant, due to the limited size of Council's workforce, that senior managers have been pulled into tactical and operational detail. In the short term this has enabled the operational changes needed but it is not sustainable given the continued pace of change.

**Responsive, learning and adapting services**

15. The initial lockdown and continued requirement to social distance has meant the Council has needed to adapt rapidly to different ways of providing existing services to meet changing resident, customer and business need. Some systems and processes have been adapted to respond to more service requests so that the customer is not required to come into the offices. This means digital channels have become increasingly important.
16. In order to maintain social distancing, the Council's reception has had restricted access from 24th March 2020. The Council has continued to support many vulnerable groups including homeless people and households. Like many organisations nationally, the Council has seen significant channel shift with increased use of the website, other virtual channels and some reduced telephone contact.
17. Over the course of the pandemic the Council has seen an overall 3% increase in communications with customers, residents and businesses. As lockdown measures have been implemented, we have seen a 76% drop in visits to reception. Reception has remained open for those unable to access Council services in any other way. This has predominantly been people presenting as homeless.
18. Revenues and Benefits have received no visits to reception. One reason for this is that evidence for a claim can, temporarily, be accepted digitally. There has been a 16% increase in digitally received work items. Significantly, despite the challenges in setting up new grant schemes and the subsequent increase in workloads, the service has maintained the 4-week processing time for benefits casework.
19. Housing Services have been able to concentrate on more casework by removing the drop-in service for all but the most vulnerable. This increased capacity is being focused on homelessness prevention. Even discounting discretionary Covid-19 cases, data shows that demand has increased following the crisis (approx. 13% more people in Temporary Accommodation). Since March this year the service has managed around 12% more homelessness prevention cases.
20. Partners and businesses are also adapting and changing the ways in which they deliver their services. This can provide further opportunity for the Council to learn and adapt services. For example, West Sussex County Council has had feedback from young people that they prefer keeping in touch with their social worker or personal advisor by text, WhatsApp, or video calls. Many young people are much more responsive to this approach, so that visits are more productive and held more frequently. The County Council has also been able to use video technology to maintain contact visits for families who have been able to better engage with staff using virtual contact and appreciate shorter more frequent contacts.
21. However, enabling the same processes and decision making through video conferencing and collaboration platforms is not the same as delivering efficient and scalable services. Further work is needed to ensure the Council has systems and services that will continue to adapt rapidly to needs internally and externally. There are opportunities to outsource some processes, as distinct from line of business systems, to use cheaper and highly interactable capabilities. This will also have the benefit of reducing duplicated capabilities and therefore costs in systems. For example, the Council is able to take advantage of joint development across Government to exploit the range of .Gov platforms.
22. Streamlining the customer service experience and making all services accessible and easy to use for everyone is an opportunity to not only make services accessible, but to rethink how the Council provides services and whether it is the best placed to do so. This element of responsive services will be picked up in the review of contracting and commissioning.

23. In doing so the Council will recognise the importance of digital inclusion, which has taken on a new urgency. All services have seen an increase in the willingness and expectation to engage digitally and by phone, however, a limiting factor is digital exclusion. For example, some clients for health and wellbeing programmes do not have the technology to access services and these are not easily adapted to work on the phone where demonstrations of exercises or techniques are critical.
24. To ensure a focus on those in most need, moving routine transactions to digital processes will enable resources to be focused on those in most need where physical interactions are the only way of delivering the service.

### **Efficient and effective**

25. The Council currently has contracted services in place for services including waste collection and recycling, cleansing, leisure and landscapes. Most of the larger contracts are managed in the Commercial Services & Contracts division. There are also a range of building related contracts in Corporate Estates & Facilities. Large, long term contracts are in place for Leisure Services (Places Leisure), Waste Collection & Street Cleansing (SERCO), and Landscapes maintenance (IDVerde).
26. There is an opportunity to expand on this base of expertise with a focus on applying contract management disciplines rather than technical, service-related knowledge. This would be with the aim of identifying opportunities to leverage contracts to deliver savings and efficiency. There may be the opportunity, given changes in the contracting market, to work together with the market to improve performance through agreeing mutual objectives for continuous improvement and sharing gains. For example, we are already aware that '1-2-3' cycle of waste disposal, including food waste, has increased recycling rates in other parts of the country as well as providing efficiencies in the costs of disposal.
27. Expert advice will be sought to test the Council's current contract management arrangements and to consider options. This may include merging similar services to achieve process and transactional savings in larger scale contracts (e.g. Public Realm/Environmental Services). Specialist work will be required to consider the future management of leisure services. Some areas of the Council's business, which require but have a variable demand for specialist or technical skills, may also be considered.
28. The Discovery work will include an appraisal of options for improvements in quality and efficiency in the Council's management of procurement and contracts. This will propose strategy and improvement to ensure the Council is using the market effectively to achieve value for money in service provision, including:
  - (i) opportunities for greater contract provision of services where this may deliver efficiency;
  - (ii) use of shared services and partnering;
  - (iii) maximising the benefits of framework contracts such as SCAPE;
  - (iv) the opportunity and benefit of joining them up the Council's existing contracts;
  - (v) using procurement to deliver social value in line with its priorities, including use of local suppliers and using sustainable solutions.

**Examples: Service adaptations and efficiencies**

29. The rapid changes in our context have meant we have needed to develop and deliver new services with short notice and adapt and iterate as new requirements and guidance are developed. We have responded well, diverting resources from previous priorities.

<b>Service Area</b>	<b>Service Adaptations</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Revenues and Benefits	Process changes to reduce need for customer visits	Easing of DWP and MHCLG restrictions on original documents has enabled photographic proof to be submitted. This has reducing the need for customers to come (saving them time and money) and freed up customer services staff time.  E-forms have improved to provide simpler workflows speeding up processes and improving the customer experience supporting them to transact more online which is cheaper for the Council
Health and Wellbeing	Wellbeing coaches	1:1 lifestyle support programme has been adapted to be delivered virtually. This has enabled a new channel for delivery reducing the need for participants to travel and reduced venue costs.
	Weight off workshop	The first virtual 6-week group is halfway through the programme with improved retention - 100% of participants. A new platform also provides access to online exercise offering new services for minimal costs to participants.
Planning (Development Control)	Virtual meetings	Pre-application advice meetings although more recently we have been transferring these to Zoom/Teams.  Design Review Panel has been held via Zoom, rather than face to face.
	Notices	Under temporary government guidance planning notices can be issued virtually and this has saved both time and money.
Digital and Technology	Increased integrations across back office systems	Linking telephony and Teams to enable outbound calls to be made via Teams. This has enabled more flexible working and patching on of customers to meetings where they do not have the available technology.
	Revised web pages and use of .gov. processes	Integration of Gov.notify to enable mass communication for services at a lower cost. This covers digital, print and messaging services.  Reductions in internal emails and calls. Staff report more efficient collaboration – able to collaborate on documents and presentations in real time rather than sequentially.
	Rapid deployment of collaboration tools	Supporting staff with remote support software that works on either personal or Council equipment. This means staff can be supported wherever they are and that software distribution methods don't require Council equipment.

## Effective and Responsive Services – Recovery Plan 2020/21 and 2021/22

<b>SHORT TERM</b>	
<b>1. Operating model and methods of working</b>	
(i)	Identify additional capacity and expertise to assist with organisational design
(ii)	Managerial/functional review to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify initial tranche of staff savings;</li> <li>• Support revised corporate plan medium and long term.</li> </ul>
(iii)	Implement immediate learning from Covid-19 response to support operational effectiveness including working patterns and productivity, digital literacy, remote and flexible working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research with Senior Managers and staff survey.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Responsive learning and adapting service</b>	
(i)	Identify additional capacity and expertise to assist with service design:
(ii)	Proposal for redesigning services using revised service plan work as template; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial data gathering on customer contacts, service volumes and performance;</li> <li>• Identify customer journeys and opportunities for channel shift;</li> </ul>
(iii)	Identify learning from Covid-19 response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BUL's task and finish group;</li> <li>• Managers interviews and staff surveys.</li> </ul>
(iv)	Plan and implement interim process and systems changes to support delivery of the revised Corporate Plan actions.
<b>3. Efficient and effective</b>	
(i)	Identify additional capacity and expertise to assist review of contract management and commissioning; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial candidates for opportunities for greater contract provision of services where this may deliver efficiency;</li> <li>• Maximising use of frameworks to reduce time to market.</li> </ul>

## MEDIUM TERM

### 4. Operating model and methods of working

- (i) Management restructure;
- (ii) Review of service need and impact on organisational structure to:
  - Support revised corporate plan;
  - Support new ways of working;
  - Reflect revised contract and commissioning strategy.
- (iii) Develop interim People Strategy to:
  - Identify capacity required to deliver 21/22 Service Plan with estimated income levels;
  - Support Covid-19 ways of working;
- (iv) Ensure staff have effective development and training programme to support new ways of working.

### 5. Responsive learning and adapting service

- (i) Identify candidates to improve processes and use of digital tools;
  - Identify process outsourcing opportunities (.Gov capabilities – ‘Notify, Pay’); and
  - Further standardisation of digital tools (for example, partnering on web components,
- (ii) Develop and implement model for customer services improvement.

### 6. Efficient and effective

- (i) Contracting and Commissioning Strategy to inform medium- and long-term efficiency objectives;
- (ii) Establish contract management operational changes to support new strategy;
- (iii) Use procurement to deliver recovery priorities for example, social value in line with priorities, including use of local suppliers and using sustainable solutions



**LONG TERM****7. Operating model and methods of working**

- (i) Review and implement further service structural changes to deliver second tranche of savings, reflect findings of service design, changing demands and contract and commissioning reviews to:
- Support new corporate plan;
  - Support new ways of working;
  - Reflect revised contract and commissioning strategy.
- (ii) Complete new People Strategy including:
- Revised Policies on Home and flexible working.

**8. Responsive learning and adapting service**

- (i) Establish ongoing service redesign process and capabilities;
- Design board to include all service representation;
  - Establish Product Management approach for joint ownership of systems and processes that support services.

**9. Efficient and effective**

- (i) Implement strategy including revised contracting arrangements.