

Cheltenham Borough Council

Cabinet – 14 May 2020

Covid-19 Recovery Strategy

Accountable member	Leader of the Council, Councillor Steve Jordan
Accountable officer	Chief Executive, Gareth Edmundson
Ward(s) affected	All
Key/Significant Decision	Yes
Executive summary	<p>Covid-19 presented a challenge to Cheltenham Borough that it had not seen since the Second World War. The impact on our economy, our communities, our Borough and our Council will be significant and long lasting.</p> <p>Across Gloucestershire, there has been a collective effort across all partners to protect, shield and support our communities. We give grateful thanks to all key and frontline workers and volunteers that have worked tirelessly to support us. Everyone has played their part to observe social distancing, help flatten the curve and reduce the numbers affected. Many in our community have sadly lost loved ones to Covid-19 and this has brought grief to families and tested the resilience of our communities.</p> <p>As a Council, we will continue to work tirelessly to respond to Covid-19 and to support our Borough. But it is also important that our Borough is able to rebuild and recover from Covid-19 in a way that harnesses the creativity, skills and resolve that we have collectively demonstrated in the last weeks and months and uses this to make Cheltenham stronger in the years to come.</p> <p>In 2019, Cheltenham Borough Council agreed an ambitious Corporate Plan and Place Vision that outlined our commitments to making Cheltenham the Cyber Capital of the UK, improving our town, building more homes and making Cheltenham a greener and more vibrant place for everyone. Those ambitions are more important now than ever before and it is important that we renew our commitment to these endeavours as we recover from Covid-19.</p> <p>Cheltenham has developed a draft Covid-19 Recovery Plan for our Borough that helps to set a clear framework setting out how we can ensure that Cheltenham is an even better place to live, work and visit after Covid-19. We want to consult with our partners locally and nationally on this plan to seek their views and request they commit their support. We aim to use it alongside our other key corporate documents as a platform to reignite our economy, help our town thrive, deliver innovation, strengthen our communities and help us tackle deprivation and child poverty with a renewed focus.</p>

Recommendations	<p>The Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recognise the extraordinary collective and sustained effort of organisations communities and individuals across Cheltenham to respond to Covid-19. 2. Note the Covid-19 Recovery Strategy in Appendix A 3. Recommend any changes to the draft strategy 4. Recommend that a consultation is undertaken with key local and national partners on the Draft Recovery Plan and that a final strategy is brought back to a future Cabinet Meeting for formal agreement.
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Financial implications	<p>The full impact of Covid-19 is as yet unknown. So far Cheltenham has received a total of £1.21m in funding from Central Government to cover both the impact of increased expenditure and loss of income that have been identified.</p> <p>As a result the Council's financial sustainability remains uncertain and will require close monitoring and potential intervention to ensure that the Council's short, medium and long term financial security is guaranteed.</p> <p>Contact officer: paul.jones@cheltenham.gov.uk</p>
Legal implications	<p>None at this stage but a wide variety of legal powers are available to support the delivery of the priorities set out in the draft Recovery Strategy including s1 Localism Act 2011.</p> <p>Contact officer: legalservices@tewkesbury.gov.uk</p>
HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	<p>Many employees have been impacted as a result of Covid-19, this includes a reduction in regular duties as well as many staff being re-deployed. This will continue to be the case for an, as yet, undefined period going forward. It is unknown at this stage when the Council will be able to return to business as usual operation.</p> <p>Contact officer: corry.ravenscroft@publicagroup.uk</p>
Key risks	See appendix 2
Corporate and community plan Implications	The Recovery Plan for Cheltenham aims to complement and support existing Corporate Plan and Place Strategy that have been agreed.
Environmental and climate change implications	The Covid-19 recovery plan offers a potential opportunity to expedite and invest in projects and other initiatives that may support Cheltenham achieving its climate change targets.
Property/Asset Implications	<p>Cheltenham's Recovery Plan may have implications for the use and function of some Council assets. However, this is, as yet, unknown.</p> <p>Contact officer: Dominic.Stead@cheltenham.gov.uk</p>

1. Background

- 1.1** Covid-19 has tested Cheltenham's communities, economy and way of life in a way that hasn't been seen since the Second World War. Our Borough has lost loved ones, business has been severely impacted and we've all had to re-learn a new existence that tries to retain our human connections while being apart.
- 1.2** We give our grateful thanks to the thousands of key workers and volunteers across health and front-line services both in Cheltenham and nationally that have responded so selflessly to keep the country going and to care, protect and shield us from Covid-19. We are proud to witness the strength and resilience of our town in the face of this challenge.
- 1.3** Overcoming Covid-19 involves more than finding a medical cure, so we must also focus on how we can rebuild our economy and communities stronger than before. In Cheltenham, we remain just as committed to making our Borough the Cyber Capital of the UK and helping our town thrive. But the challenge of this global pandemic requires a response that is more innovative and ambitious than we might have thought previously possible.
- 1.4** It is therefore important that Cheltenham create and agree a Recovery Strategy for our Borough, which will provide a collective platform and approach for us to work to this endeavour.

2. Covid-19 Draft Recovery Strategy - A Local New Deal for Cheltenham

(Appendix 1).

- 2.1** The impact of Covid-19 on Cheltenham is unprecedented, unique and far reaching, yet our response to this challenge has brought out the best in the people and organisations in our Borough and beyond. The determination, skills and creativity exhibited locally in Cheltenham provides optimism that we have the capacity and ability to rebuild stronger than before.
- 2.2** Appendix 1 sets out a strategic plan for recovering from the challenge of Covid-19. It recommends that Cheltenham has both the capacity and creativity to drive local solutions that will expedite our Borough's recovery and provides a framework for local and national partners to join and commit to this endeavour. The document contains the following key principles and priorities:

Principles:

- We will achieve inclusive growth so all our communities can benefit and prosper from investments made in the borough
- We will be commercially focused where needed and become financially self-sufficient to ensure we can continue to have a stronger role in investing for growth
- We will use data and technology, including insight from our customers, residents, businesses and visitors to help us make the right business decisions
- We will provide strategic co-ordination across Cheltenham's agencies, partnerships and networks to drive social and economic recovery
- We will invest in and develop our people so they can continue to provide excellent services to residents and are prepared to meet the opportunities and challenges ahead
- We will ensure our decision making and investments take into account our aspiration for making Cheltenham Carbon Neutral

Priorities:

- Revitalising our economy
- Wellbeing and strong communities
- A modern, efficient and responsive Council
- Working with our service delivery partners
- A secure financial future

3. Consultation and feedback

3.1 It is recommended that the Council undertakes a wide, but rapid, engagement on the Draft Strategy and includes all local and national partners in the engagement to offer the opportunity for discussion and feedback. Examples of consultees include (this is not an exhaustive list):

- Commissioned partners (e.g. Cheltenham Trust, Ubico, Publica, CBH)
- Local Economic Partnership
- Cheltenham BID
- Local and regional Councils
- Local Government Association
- Government departments
- Gloucestershire Voluntary & Community Network

3.2 The document will also be made available publicly for feedback. However, due to the need to begin to implement recovery and continue the essential Covid-19 response it is expected that this consultation period will be relatively short prior to the plan being formally agreed. A short report on consultation and feedback will be presented with the final plan for approval to cabinet.

4. Recovery Strategy Agreement and Implementation

4.1 The Executive Director for People and Change is the lead Executive for Cheltenham's Recovery Work-streams. The Recovery Strategy will support both Cheltenham's work in this regard but the wider partnership working with strategic partners and the work of the Local Resilience Forum response. This will ensure coordination and limit duplication.

4.2 It is proposed that a report is brought back to Cabinet containing a final draft for agreement following engagement and feedback with partners.

4.3 An agreed strategy will provide the Council with the framework to develop a robust action plan, help inform future decision making and ensure resources are aligned to focus on areas that will make the biggest difference to our residents, communities and businesses.

4.4 Following agreement the plan will complement and reinforce other key corporate documents and provide a clear framework for Cheltenham in the short and long-term.

Report author	Contact officer: Gareth Edmundson, Chief Executive Gareth.edmundson@cheltenham.gov.uk
Appendices	1. Draft Recovery Strategy 2. Risk Assessment
Background information	None

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
1	<p>Risk of not having a recovery strategy: The severe impact Covid-19 had on residents, communities and businesses means the Council must have a clear strategy and plan to ensure its efforts have the maximum of impact to support recovery efforts of the borough and Gloucestershire.</p> <p>By having a clear focus on the approach to recovery will mean valuable and limited resources will be deployed on initiatives that will make the biggest difference.</p> <p>A clear strategy helps to inform decision making and alignment of resources</p>	GE	April 2020				<p>SMART Action Plan and managed via Clearview</p> <p>Senior Cabinet & Officer Sponsorship</p>	<p>Develop strategy Seek political support Gain feedback from strategic partners Once approved develop SMART action plan</p>	May 2020	GE	No
<p>Explanatory notes</p> <p>Impact – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical)</p> <p>Likelihood – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability)</p> <p>Control - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close</p>											

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