

## **Appendix One: Draft Recovery Plan**

### **Introduction**

The government is easing the country out of lockdown and its overarching approach to recovery has been published in a 50-page recovery strategy (our Plan to Rebuild: The UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy). With this in mind, the council needs to turn its attention from emergency response to the 'recovery phase'.

The concept of recovery may be understood differently by different people and that is understandable. This is not a normal recovery due to the scale of the Covid-19 impact. Normally we would return over time to business as usual, but in this situation, this will not happen and so we are in uncharted waters. This recovery is unique.

Recovery may require some form of realignment of services and processes of the council, with short, medium and long-term choices to make. To help the council be clearer in its approach, a plan is being developed which will evolve over time.

### **What is the Recovery Plan?**

It is an attempt to address the different phases of recovery as we move through them. At the time of writing these phases are still not entirely clear, but we are assuming immediate (June – Sept), medium term (October - March 2021) and longer term (March 2021 +).

The plan sets out what the council intends to do throughout the process of recovery, accepting that there will be different responses depending on local, specific circumstances. Recovery will not be linear, and we may have to return to emergency response depending on if another spike hits. It also needs to be sustainable for the longer term. There is much we still don't know about what Government will decide around lockdown phases, withdrawal of support etc. as such the plan needs to be flexible and our approach agile so it can adapt to change.

So in that context, a plan is being prepared as robustly as possible, balancing the need to sustain core services, to continue with the Administration's programme of change and to meet the pressures of what will be a changed social and economic environment.

Coronavirus has amplified some of the issues the borough faces – struggling high streets, health inequalities - but it has also shown the strengths that it has – community spirit, quality open spaces. The Recovery Plan aims to address the underlying issues but also build on the strengths.

### **Why do we need a Recovery Plan?**

To help focus and prioritise the council's approach and ensure that is a safe, sustainable, managed recovery. Also, as a statement to the borough and wider partners, of its commitment and the role it has to play.

As we move into the recovery phase(s) we will need to do this not only within the national framework, but also at a county level. In accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the County Council, along with District councils, have a statutory responsibility regarding recovery, with the county taking the lead as it effects more than one district. However, the council, working within this broader context, needs to develop its own response for its own activity, but also more broadly in relation to Swale's communities and economy.

The framework will be used to assess both the impact and opportunities as a result of the pandemic, particularly in regard to changing trends and behaviours, social and environmental evolution, but also economic, social, environmental and health impacts. Work is currently being undertaken at a Kent level on this and will be available by the end of July. Findings can be built into the Plan as we move forward.

### **What are the priorities for the Recovery Plan?**

The Administration made clear its priorities last May. These are now articulated through its emerging Corporate Plan. The pandemic has magnified these priorities and enhanced their relevance and importance for the borough and so the Recovery Plan focuses itself around these in terms of action related to recovery. These priorities for recovery are set out below with high level actions as they evolve in Table One.

**Economic Improvement:** Support our local economy so that it can survive and be strong, resilient, dynamic, and adaptable to change. Encourage a local economy that fosters good, clean, sustainable growth. Play our part in helping meet some of the immediate challenges the boroughs' economy now faces but also take advantage of the untapped potential, for longer-term benefit.

**Affordable Housing:** Provide sustainable housing for local people by pursuing all viable opportunities for increasing the supply of affordable and social housing across the borough. Work in partnership to respond to those in need of housing, anticipating demand as we move out of lockdown.

**Climate and Environmental Emergency:** Seize the opportunities arising from the pandemic to a renewed commitment to investing in our environment and addressing climate change. Explore new approaches as a result of behavioural change and its impact on the environment.

**Communities and Social Inclusion:** Enable our communities to be resilient and cohesive. Capitalise on the community spirit engendered through the pandemic and our changed relationship with the voluntary and community sector as a result – supporting it to bring about social change and quality of life. Focus on the vulnerable groups hardest hit by the pandemic, and address health and wellbeing implications arising from it.

**Renewing Local Democracy and making the council fit for the future:** Improve the council's engagement with communities and stakeholders across the borough to get buy in for a collective recovery. Be innovative in our ideas on how we do things as an organisation given the cultural, behavioural and environmental changes the pandemic presents.

### **Overarching/ Cross Cutting Themes**

In addition to the priorities above, there are some overarching/ cross cutting themes that run throughout the approach to recovery:

**Working in collaboration:** The council is committed to working in collaboration with a wide range of partners to facilitate and enable recovery. The changed social and economic circumstances have provided an opportunity look again at the role public sector organisations, like the council, plays. There is no single agency responsible for 'delivering' recovery - we will need to work together. Success will depend on coordination across a range of partners and a communitarian approach to partnership working based on shared objectives, across the public, private and community sectors in Swale.

**Communications and messaging:** It is important that we communicate effectively and timely and get our messaging right so people know what the council is doing and how it is able to support them. Making the most of our assets and using the attributes of each area of Swale to promote places and the borough as a whole as a great place to visit and invest will be key to recovery. Recognising and promoting positive outcomes including reduced traffic and pollution, better work/life balance, community spirit.

**The Local Plan Review:** This major project pulls all other strands together. Driving good, sustainable growth through the Local Plan Review will address all the priorities – economic improvement, affordable housing and good design and standards, community infrastructure, climate change agenda and so on.

**How will we deliver?**

In terms of delivery structure and governance, Cabinet subgroups for priority areas have been established, that currently meet at least monthly. We will also feed into the Kent wide recovery structure. At a local, ward level, we will engage through the new area committees along with parish and town councils as well as a range of key stakeholders. There is also a members' forum being held to engage on the plan on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020.

The council will need to be mindful that recovery, as with response, has a huge potential impact on the Council's finances. Delivery will need to be within the financial parameters of the Medium-Term Financial Plan and ensure the ongoing financial viability of the council. There has been government and other external funding provided to the council up to this point, and this may or may not continue.

Actions have already been undertaken to prepare a detailed estimate of the projected revenue budget impact so far of the pandemic. A base position has been established which will be subject to regular review through the recovery phases, and impacts are based on a variety of assumptions, some for a limited period and others assuming an ongoing impact through the year.

**What is our exit strategy out of recovery?**

At the time of writing it is hard to know when recovery will end. This will become more certain as we move out of lockdown and further down the road to recovery that Government has set out. What is known is that any withdrawal of support or focus will need to be managed sensitively and at the right time, working locally and collaboratively.

**Table One: Actions for focus**

Priority	Areas of Focus – Short term June – Sept 20	Areas of Focus – Medium Term Oct 20 – March 2021	Areas of Focus – Long Term March 2021 +
<b>Economic Improvement</b>	Deliver the various business grant schemes	Business support - sector specific eg SME, Tourism as well as business start-ups	Investigate the evolution of a 'one business account' approach within the Council
	Link into any emerging regional/ national schemes Job brokerage scheme Future Jobs Fund model (KCC) Regional Growth Fund Scheme (KCC) SELEP Scale up programme	Link into any emerging regional/ national schemes Job brokerage scheme Future Jobs Fund model (KCC) Regional Growth Fund Scheme (KCC) SELEP Scale up programme	Link into any emerging regional/ national schemes Job brokerage scheme Future Jobs Fund model (KCC) Regional Growth Fund Scheme (KCC) SELEP Scale up programme
	Endorsement of the Economic Improvement Plan (EIP)  Deliver EIP short term actions	Implement the EIP actions	Implement the EIP actions
	Endorsement of the Visitor Economy Framework (VEF)  Deliver VEF quick wins	Implement the VEF actions	Implement the VEF actions
	Deliver the Opening up the High Streets Project across Sittingbourne, Sheerness, Faversham and Leysdown	Develop the wider Sittingbourne High Street Project	Develop high street place making and strategic visioning

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Areas of Focus – Short term June – Sept 20</b>	<b>Areas of Focus – Medium Term Oct 20 – March 2021</b>	<b>Areas of Focus – Long Term March 2021 +</b>
	Continue to explore FE opportunities and opportunities for retraining	Continue to explore FE opportunities and opportunities for retraining	Continue to explore FE opportunities and opportunities for retraining
			Look at the opportunity for business start-ups/ incubator space/ commuter provision
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	Assess the impact on demand for housing service as a result of changes to Government support	Work in partnership to secure TA and affordable accommodation once Section 21 notices reintroduced	Insist on affordable housing as part of the planning process
	Deliver landlord tenancy sustainment work and prevention work	Deliver landlord tenancy sustainment work and prevention work	Deliver landlord tenancy sustainment work and prevention work
	Deliver rough sleeping and hidden homeless project	Deliver rough sleeping and hidden homeless project	Deliver rough sleeping and hidden homeless project
	Progress the development of the Mormon site and Fountain Street	Assess options for Cockleshell walk	Prescribe building standards and quality through the local plan
<b>Climate and environmental emergency</b>	Deliver the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Action Plan	Deliver the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Action Plan	Deliver the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Action Plan
	Swale House refurbishment	Detailed planning for the project	Construction work on site
	Clean Air Zone	Consultants commissioned to develop a proposal	Implementation subject to KCC
	Green staff travel plan	How to reduce business mileage and commuting mileage	Actions implemented after staff and trade union consultation

Priority	Areas of Focus – Short term June – Sept 20	Areas of Focus – Medium Term Oct 20 – March 2021	Areas of Focus – Long Term March 2021 +
	Work with Children and Families Ltd to recruit a Fuel and Water Poverty worker	Implement work programme for the Fuel and Water Poverty worker to help residents who may be struggling financially and are in fuel poverty.	Implement work programme for the Fuel and Water Poverty worker to help residents who may be struggling financially and are in fuel poverty.
	Park Improvement projects to encourage greater activity and access to green space and the health and wellbeing outcomes that brings	Park Improvement projects to encourage greater activity and access to green space and the health and wellbeing outcomes that brings	Park Improvement projects to encourage greater activity and access to green space and the health and wellbeing outcomes that brings
	Active Travel Project tranche 1	Active Travel project tranche 2	Agree the Transport Strategy through the Local Plan
<b>Communities and Social Inclusion</b>	Develop a health and wellbeing recovery plan	Implement a health and wellbeing recovery plan	Implement a health and wellbeing recovery plan
	Continue to deliver community support hub	Continue to deliver community support hub	
		Undertake targeted interventions (door knocking) with our most disadvantaged families and communities	Work in partnership to tackle mental health and improve the scope of such services
	Preparation for holding small community engagement events in local areas as per govt guidance	Run small community engagement events in local areas as per govt guidance	Run small community engagement events in local areas as per govt guidance
	Work with Swale foodbanks to ensure a coordinated effort of support	Work with Swale foodbanks to ensure a coordinated effort of support	Work with Swale foodbanks to ensure a coordinated effort of support

Priority	Areas of Focus – Short term June – Sept 20	Areas of Focus – Medium Term Oct 20 – March 2021	Areas of Focus – Long Term March 2021 +
	Grant support and work with Swale CVS, CAB, to support communities	Grant support and work with Swale CVS, CAB, to support communities	
	Run the member community grant scheme	Run the member community grant scheme	
	Developing an ongoing volunteer scheme building on those who helped with community hub	Implement the scheme	Implement the scheme
	Deliver work programme of the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer and the Health and Wellbeing Officer	Deliver work programme of the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer and the Health and Wellbeing Officer	Deliver work programme of the Community Engagement and Social Inclusion Officer and the Health and Wellbeing Officer
<b>Renewing local democracy and making the council fit for the future</b>	Introduce Area Committees	Evolution of Area Committees	Area Committees established and sustained
	Planning the introduction of Cabinet Committees	Cabinet Committees introduced	Cabinet Committees functioning
	Redesign and risk assess Swale House to comply with Govt guidance for safely getting people back to the office. Determine process of getting staff back in phases	Continue phased return of staff Review introduction of opening reception and getting other services back	Embed homeworking/ flexible working within the culture of the Council in the longer term.
	Explore the use of technology and digital for home working and holding virtual meetings		

