



**EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT COVER SHEET**

<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>COVID-19 Emergency Planning Recovery Update (March 2023)</b>	To be marked with an 'X' by Democratic Services after report has been presented
<b>Meeting of:</b>	Corporate Management Team: <b>15<sup>th</sup> February 2023</b>	X
	Leader and Deputy Leaders: <b>21<sup>st</sup> February 2022</b>	X
	Leader's / Leader of the Opposition's Advisory Group: <b>1<sup>st</sup> / 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023</b>	X
	Cabinet: <b>14<sup>th</sup> March 2023</b>	
	Scrutiny Value for Money Council Services Committee Scrutiny Community Regeneration Committee Scrutiny Environment and Health and Well Being Committee	



<b>Is this an Executive Decision:</b>	NO	<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	NO
<b>Is this in the Forward Plan:</b>	NO	<b>Is the Report Confidential:</b>	NO
<b>If so, please state relevant paragraph from Schedule 12A LGA 1972:</b>			



**Essential Signatories:**

**ALL REPORTS MUST BE IN THE NAME OF A HEAD OF SERVICE**

Monitoring Officer: **John Teasdale**

Date ..... Signature .....

Chief Finance Officer: **Sal Khan**

Date ..... Signature .....

**EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**Report to Cabinet**

**Date: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>COVID-19 Emergency Planning Recovery Update (March 2023)</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>Finance and Treasury Management</b>
<b>HEAD OF SERVICE:</b>	<b>Sal Khan</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>James Abbott (Corporate &amp; Commercial Manager) Ext. No. x1244</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>Non-Specific</b>

**1. Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide a review of the local framework of activities that contribute to the Borough's recovery from the impacts arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

**2. Executive Summary**

- 2.1. Recovery aspects have been summarised in this report by considering the themes of: Local Economy and Business; Infrastructure and the Environment; Physical and Psychological Health of the Community; and Embedding New Best Practice and Supporting Communities to Adapt to New Norms of Behaviour.
- 2.2. The Council and its partners continue to act effectively to support recovery from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic emergency.
- 2.3. A full summary of the activity can be seen in the summary table provided in paragraph 5.2.5 of this report.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1. The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the outbreak of coronavirus disease COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020.
- 3.2. By law, category one responders (which includes all local authorities) have duties to plan and prepare for emergencies. Planning for civil emergencies and ensuring continuity of its own services is therefore a fundamental and ongoing element of East Staffordshire Borough Council's normal operation. The Council has a range of resilience plans in place to mitigate the impact of any emergency incident, for example service specific business continuity plans. It is also part of the SRF which is made up of multiple agencies who work together to plan and prepare for localised incidents and civil emergencies.

### **4. Contribution to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1. This report contributes to all three Corporate Priorities as it is relevant to all Council services.

### **5. Recovery Phase Update (January 2023)**

#### 5.1. Current COVID-19 Position

- 5.1.1. The Government has removed remaining domestic restrictions in England.
- 5.1.2. Although restrictions have been removed, infection and health complications from COVID-19 remain a risk.
- 5.1.3. There are still ways that everybody in Staffordshire can help stop the spread of infection and keep our communities safe:
  - Stay at home if you can if you're displaying Covid-19 symptoms
  - Get your vaccine or booster if you are eligible
  - Consider wearing a face covering in crowded, enclosed spaces such as on public transport and shops
  - Meet people outdoors or let fresh air in if meeting indoors
  - Continue to wash your hands or use sanitiser regularly throughout the day

- 5.1.4. The Government has [further information on their website](#)

#### 5.2. Overview

- 5.2.1. A civil emergency can be considered in two distinct phases. "Response" encompasses the actions taken to deal with the immediate effects of an emergency, whereas "Recovery" is the process of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating following an emergency.

5.2.2. Information on Government advice and guidance can be accessed via <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>. The Council continues to support the communication of Government schemes to residents and businesses within the Borough through an ongoing information campaign via its usual communication channels, such as its social media channels and [website](#).

5.2.3. The Council will continue to work with its partners on preparedness for any future emergencies and on the ongoing recovery of the area. The Council will continue to take an active role in any strategic response and recovery coordinating groups facilitated through the LRF with its partners as necessary.

5.2.4. This report considers the progress towards recovery in the context of the four thematic areas of focus as shown below:

<b>(1) Local Economy and Business</b>	<b>(2) Infrastructure and the Environment</b>
<b>(3) Physical and Psychological Health of the Community</b>	<b>(4) Embedding New Best Practice and Supporting Communities to Adapt to New Norms of Behaviour</b>

5.2.5. The following table provides a summary overview with full detail on the contributions to recovery provided in the subsequent sections of this report:

### **Local Economy and Business (para 5.3)**

- The Council has applied reductions to 242 accounts totalling £3,306,983.68 to Business Rates payers that were eligible for the Covid -19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF).
- As of 30th November 2022, the Council has issued payments totalling £6,485,100 to 43,234 to Council Tax payers eligible for the Council Tax Energy Rebate.
- The total paid under the CTER Discretionary scheme by the closing date of 30th November was £205,957.
- The Council previously announced a further £100,000 investment to support local new and growing businesses; and local groups and organisations have also been encouraged to take advantage of the £100,000 Community Regeneration Fund.
- Advice and support continue to be provided to local businesses through the ongoing activities of the Enterprise Team
- Burton Market Hall has recently announced the dates for a series of speciality markets throughout 2023. The markets include a number of craft and produce markets, as well as a special young traders market
- Burton Market Place is hosting a jobs fair on Wednesday 15th February from 9:30am - 12:20pm, with the Council assisting in the promotion of this event.
- The Council has also supported WMJobs who have recently launched their Local Government Career Guide.
- The Council monitors attendances and footfall for Burton on a quarterly basis considering numbers from the shopping centres, leisure centre, car parks and market hall with the latest available data shown in paragraph 5.3.14.

### **Infrastructure and the Environment (para 5.4)**

- The submission of four projects from the Burton Towns Fund programme was agreed in March and summary documents for the projects have now been submitted to Government. Approval for these projects has recently been given by Government.
- Two bids from Staffordshire to the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 (LUF2) have been approved by Government, with funding going towards Staffordshire County Council's bid to improve the A38 Branston Interchange junction, the A34 and introduce new, electric-powered buses.
- The Council has announced the launch of a public consultation exercise on the Maltings Regeneration Project over an 8 week period.
- The Council will also work closely with partners to progress the Uttoxeter Sports Hub and explore opportunities to bring in financial assistance to expedite the creation of the Sports Hub
- The Council introduced its Parks Development Plan in 2020, and has recently reported progress around the Borough's parks and open spaces.
- The Council has commissioned 'thinkingplace' to work with it to develop a forward-looking place narrative for Burton upon Trent. The next stage in the work is a launch event on 2nd March 2023 at Burton Albion Football Club.

### **Physical and Psychological Health of the Community (para 5.5)**

- Uttoxeter Leisure Centre is set to extend its fitness suite in April as part of a circa £200,000 refurbishment. The centre will also welcome a brand new, dedicated group cycling studio.
- As part of Everyone's ongoing commitment to improving quality and services to customers, they are investing capital into the fitness area at Meadowside Leisure Centre. The new floor layout provides additional matting with functional equipment aiming to be installed in the near future.
- Shobnall Leisure Complex has completed works to the throwing cage that will allow them to keep "Trackmark" status.
- Everyone Active are also co-ordinating the refurbishment of the "Changing Places" room at Meadowside and create a brand-new Changing Places room at Shobnall.
- The Brewhouse has announced an exciting Spring/Summer season including live theatre, music, comedy, exhibitions and workshops.
- Work on a new town centre cycleway in Burton which will connect to a wider network to support sustainable and active travel began on 6th February. The Station Street/Borough Road route between the town centre and railway station will be the first section of future planned sections which will improve connectivity
- The Council has continued to participate in the development of the Better Health Staffordshire programme.
- The Council is working closely with several local organisations to provide residents with a number of warm spaces this winter, in an effort to combat the increasing cost of living.
- The Council is looking for volunteers to join Friends of Stapenhill Cemetery to help develop and maintain Stapenhill Cemetery.

### **Embedding New Best Practice and Supporting Communities to Adapt to New Norms of Behaviour (para 5.6)**

- The Council continues to operate its meetings using a mix of in-person, virtual and hybrid interaction, with formal committee meetings being safely conducted at the Town Hall.
- A cost of living support page has been published on the Council's website.
- The Council's Corporate Plan for 2023/24 is due to be refreshed at the Council meeting in March 2023.
- The Council continues to build on its Digital Strategy objectives. The Council's website content management system is being upgraded. Additionally, the Council is implementing a new an elected Member intranet, and are investigating if there is a business case for a Council mobile application.
- The Council's regeneration work has featured an emphasis on walking and cycling to create 'easy in-easy out' of our town centres, and encouragement to work from home into the future and Active Travel.

### 5.3. Local Economy and Business

- 5.3.1. The Council has applied reductions to 242 accounts totalling £3,306,983.68 to Business Rates payers that were eligible for the Covid -19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF).
- 5.3.2. As of 30<sup>th</sup> November 2022, the Council has issued payments totalling £6,485,100 to 43,234 to Council Tax payers eligible for the Council Tax Energy Rebate of £150 per household. Payments have been made directly into bank accounts from the details we hold for Council Tax payers that pay by Direct Debit. For those Council Tax payers that do not pay by Direct Debit, we have paid via BACS transfer, post office voucher or by direct allocation to their Council Tax account.
- 5.3.3. Council Tax payers who live in properties with a Council Tax Band of E, F, G, or H aren't entitled to the Council Tax Energy Rebate, unless they meet the criteria of the Council's Discretionary Energy Rebate scheme as published on the Council's website. The scheme closed to applications on 14th November 2022.
- 5.3.4. CTER Discretionary scheme (pre amendment) - £150 payments were made to 131 customers who fell into the following groups: in receipt of means tested benefits or disability benefits on or after 1 April 2022, occupied a property in ESBC and had not received a CTER payment from another Council.
- 5.3.5. CTER Discretionary scheme (post amendment) - £150 top-up payments were made to 313 customers who fell into the following groups: in receipt of means tested benefits or disability benefits on or after 1 April 2022, occupied a property in ESBC and had not received a CTER payment from another Council, where a resident was otherwise exempt or disregarded for Council Tax purposes due to severe mental impairment plus further top-up payments of £23 to 6,059 household where the liable resident was in receipt of Council Tax support on or after 1 April 2022, irrespective of the Council Tax Band
- 5.3.6. The total paid under the CTER Discretionary scheme by the closing date of 30<sup>th</sup> November was £205,957.
- 5.3.7. The Council previously announced a further £100,000 investment to support local new and growing businesses, building on the success of the first Business Springboard Boost scheme. The grant fund scheme is designed to help local businesses grow and flourish, supporting them to achieve their ambitions and simultaneously stimulate the local economy. New businesses can apply for funding from anywhere between £500 and £5,000 with existing businesses up to £10,000, which must be matched by the businesses own funding. The Council has allocated the majority of these monies.
- 5.3.8. Local groups and organisations across East Staffordshire have been encouraged to take advantage of the Community Regeneration Fund, a 12 month long scheme (or until funds are fully allocated) to support the ongoing regeneration of the Borough. The fund is designed to help deliver regeneration projects that help improve local areas. The total amount of funding available through the scheme is £100,000, with successful applicants receiving grants between £1,000



and £16,000. At least 20% of the total cost of the project will need to be funded from other sources or by the applicant.

5.3.9. Advice and support continue to be provided to local businesses through the ongoing activities of the Enterprise Team, which includes promoting within the Borough business funding, support schemes, workshops and activities available nationally or through partners such as the Local Enterprise Partnerships including the Business Springboard Boost and Enterprise for Success schemes.

5.3.10. Burton Market Hall has recently announced the dates for a series of speciality markets throughout 2023. The markets include a number of craft and produce markets, as well as a special young traders market, in support of the national Young Traders Market campaign organised by the National Market Traders Federation. A full list of events and further information is available from the [Council's website](#).

5.3.11. Burton Market Place is hosting a jobs fair on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> February from 9:30am - 12:20pm, with the Council assisting in the promotion of this event.

5.3.12. The Council has also supported WMJobs who have recently launched their [Local Government Career Guide](#).

5.3.13. The Council monitors attendances and footfall for Burton on a quarterly basis considering numbers from the shopping centres, leisure centre, car parks and market hall. The latest available information is as below:

### Attendances

July-September 22 v July-September 21

Service	Attendance/ Footfall	Stall Sales	Occupancy
Brewhouse	3,861 +108%		
Market Hall	40,989 +2%	467 +0%	46% -10%
Town Hall	2,865 +300%		
Town Centre	3,450,251 +58%		

#### 5.4. Infrastructure and Environment

- 5.4.1. The submission of four projects from the Burton Towns Fund programme was agreed in March and summary documents for the projects have now been submitted to Government. Approval for these projects was given by Government in August. A Project Team consisting of project managers, architects and engineers has been commissioned to help take the High Street Linkages project forward.
- 5.4.2. Two bids from Staffordshire to the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 (LUF2) have been approved by Government, with funding going towards Staffordshire County Council's bid to improve the A38 Branston Interchange junction, the A34 and introduce new, electric-powered buses. The Council's own bid to LUF2 was not taken forward, with the Government setting out a desire to see a wider geographical spread of successful bids across the Country as well as targeting funding towards the South East region and Burton already receiving more than £30m in investment across the funds. Plans for the High Street Museum proposal will be brought to a meeting of Full Council in September 2023, where Members will consider the wider funding package available to the project and agree the next steps for taking it forward, potentially including a LUF3 bid.
- 5.4.3. The Council has announced the launch of a public consultation exercise on the Maltings Regeneration Project over an 8 week period, which opened with a face to face session on 28<sup>th</sup> January at Uttoxeter Town Hall. Building on previous consultation feedback since 2020, the Council has developed a number of concept layouts for how the new site could be regenerated. The survey and detail on all the planned face-to-face sessions are available on the [Council's website](#).
- 5.4.4. The Council will also work closely with partners to progress the Uttoxeter Sports Hub and explore opportunities to bring in financial assistance to expedite the creation of the Sports Hub, alongside the £500,000 Section 106 contribution, previously secured by the Council.
- 5.4.5. The Council introduced its [Parks Development Plan](#) in 2020, and has recently reported progress around the Borough's parks and open spaces. This last year saw Burton upon Trent enter the "In Bloom" nationals for the first time, reaching a silver gilt level and rubbing shoulders with famous places such as Canterbury and Bath. The Council also won the best young person's project award in the West Midlands for its partnership with Fountains School. Students from the school's Sixth Form run The Potting Shed, selling plants to the public, allowing students to learn gardening skills, develop their customer service manner and take part in activities which will help to prepare them for the world of work. Additionally, over the last few months dog bag dispensers have been installed throughout many of the Borough's open spaces.
- 5.4.6. The Council has commissioned 'thinkingplace' to work with it to develop a forward-looking place narrative for Burton upon Trent. The next stage in the work is a launch event on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 at Burton Albion Football Club. Attendees will be among the first people to hear the exciting new approach for Burton, and to find out how we can all work together to shout about what makes Burton an outstanding place to live, work and visit. It's an opportunity to hear from local leaders and find out how to help take the Place Brand forward.

## Physical and Psychological Health of the Community

- 5.4.7. The Council continues to work closely with its leisure operating partner (Everyone Active). The Council continues to monitor and encourage recovery in participation levels across a range of physical activities. Performance and recovery of the leisure facilities and services continue to be reported to senior officers and Members on an ongoing basis.
- 5.4.8. Uttoxeter Leisure Centre is set to extend its fitness suite in April as part of a circa £200,000 refurbishment. The centre will also welcome a brand new, dedicated group cycling studio. The fitness suite will be extended into the current group exercise studio and the whole area will be redecorated with a new look and feel. The extended space will include top-of-the-range plate-loaded resistance equipment, squat racks and dumbbells all provided by Life Fitness. With the additional equipment added, the gym will feature more than 100 stations.
- 5.4.9. As part of Everyone's ongoing commitment to improving quality and services to customers, they are investing capital into the fitness area at Meadowside Leisure Centre. The new floor layout provides additional matting with functional equipment aiming to be installed in the near future.
- 5.4.10. Shobnall Leisure Complex has completed works to the throwing cage that will allow them to keep "Trackmark" status. This has been funded partially through the Council (via S106 monies), the athletics club and Everyone Active. Everyone Active have also engaged with the wheelchair rugby club with ambition to hold sessions at Shobnall.
- 5.4.11. Everyone Active are also co-ordinating the refurbishment of the "Changing Places" room at Meadowside and create a brand-new Changing Places room at Shobnall. This will allow carers and those living with disabilities better opportunity to take part in health and exercise services at the sites.
- 5.4.12. The [Brewhouse](#) has announced an exciting Spring/Summer season including live theatre, music, comedy, exhibitions and workshops. The programme includes well-known comedians, a selection of theatre and music, and plenty of family shows and activities to keep all ages entertained.
- 5.4.13. A number of the proposed interventions considered in the Towns Fund work would contribute to health and wellbeing aspects.
- 5.4.14. Work on a new town centre cycleway in Burton which will connect to a wider network to support sustainable and active travel began on 6<sup>th</sup> February. The Station Street/Borough Road route between the town centre and railway station will be the first section of future planned sections which will improve connectivity east to west across the town. Further planned sections will connect to the town hall, canal, hospital, Shobnall Leisure Centre, schools, residential areas and the existing cycle network, including the National Cycle Network (NCN). The initial scheme is a joint one between the Council, Staffordshire County Council and cycling charity Sustrans. Funding for the £1.6million scheme has come from Government allocations to both the county and borough councils, as well as Sustrans.

5.4.15. The Council has continued to participate in the development of the Better Health Staffordshire programme. Having met with County Council colleagues who are working to implement the programme fully, Borough Council officers will be looking at ways to take the programme forward at the Borough level involving the range of appropriate stakeholders.

5.4.16. The Council is working closely with several local organisations to provide residents with a number of [warm spaces](#) this winter, in an effort to combat the increasing cost of living. These community based locations are to be completely free of charge and will offer residents a warm space to enjoy a hot drink.

5.4.17. The Council is looking for volunteers to join Friends of Stapenhill Cemetery to help develop and maintain Stapenhill Cemetery. Volunteer roles are available to suit all ages and abilities. This will help people get active whilst meeting likeminded individuals and helping maintain an important open space.

## 5.5. Embedding New Best Practice and Supporting Communities to Adapt to New Norms of Behaviour

5.5.1. The Council continues to operate its meetings using a mix of in-person, virtual and hybrid interaction, with formal committee meetings being safely conducted at the Town Hall.

5.5.2. A [cost of living support page](#) has been published on the Council's website.

5.5.3. The Council's Corporate Plan for 2023/24 is due to be refreshed at the Council meeting in March 2023.

5.5.4. The Council continues to build on its Digital Strategy objectives. The Council's website content management system is being upgraded. Additionally, the Council is implementing a new an elected Member intranet, and are investigating if there is a business case for a Council mobile application.

5.5.5. The Council's regeneration work has featured an emphasis on walking and cycling to create 'easy in-easy out' of our town centres, and encouragement to work from home into the future and Active Travel.

## 6. Financial Considerations

*This section has been approved by the following member of the Financial Management Unit: Lisa Turner*

6.1. The main financial issues arising from this Report are as follows:

6.1.1. As the focus of this report is on activities and opportunities for recovery, the financial position of the Council and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this position are not specifically considered within this report. The financial position of

the Council is reported through the regular Revenue and Capital Outturn Reports and the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2023/24 onwards sets out spending plans to support recovery.

## **7. Risk Assessment and Management**

7.1. The main risks to this Report and the Council achieving its objectives are as follows:

7.1.1. **Positive** (Opportunities/Benefits):

7.1.1.1. Sharing information across officer and Member portfolios on the current situation with recovery opportunities allows for a joined up overview of the challenges presented by the ongoing COVID-19 emergency.

7.1.2. **Negative** (Threats):

7.1.2.1. The situation and data relating to the recovery is constantly developing. It should be noted that where data is presented the associated dates for the validity of that data will be provided in this report.

7.2. The risks do not need to be entered in the Risk Register. Any financial implications to mitigate against these risks are considered above.

## **8. Legal Considerations**

*This section has been approved by the following member of the Legal Team:*  
**John Teasdale**

8.1. There are no significant legal issues arising from this Report.

## **9. Equalities and Health**

9.1. **Equality impacts:** The subject of this Report is not a policy, strategy, function or service that is new or being revised. An equality and health impact assessment is not required.

9.2. **Health impacts:** The outcome of the health screening question does not require a full Health Impact Assessment to be completed. An equality and health impact assessment is not required.

## **10. Data Protection Implications – Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)**

10.1. A DPIA must be completed where there are plans to:

- use systematic and extensive profiling with significant effects;
- process special category or criminal offence data on a large scale; or
- systematically monitor publicly accessible places on a large scale
- use new technologies;
- use profiling or special category data to decide on access to services;
- profile individuals on a large scale;
- process biometric data;

- process genetic data;
- match data or combine datasets from different sources;
- collect personal data from a source other than the individual without providing them with a privacy notice ('invisible processing');
- track individuals' location or behaviour;
- profile children or target marketing or online services at them; or
- process data that might endanger the individual's physical health or safety in the event of a security breach

10.2 Following consideration of the above, there are no Data Protection implications arising from this report which would require a DPIA.

### **11. Human Rights**

11.1. There are no Human Rights issues arising from this Report.

### **12. Sustainability** (including climate change and change adaptation measures)

12.1. Does the proposal result in an overall positive effect in terms of sustainability (including climate change and change adaptation measures) **N/A**

### **13. Recommendation(s)**

13.1. To note the update detailed within the report.

### **14. Background Papers**

14.1. None

### **15. Appendices**

16. None