



EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT COVER SHEET

Title of Report:	COVID-19 Emergency Planning Recovery Update (January 2022)	To be marked with an 'X' by Democratic Services after report has been presented
Meeting of:	Corporate Management Team: 14th December 2021	X
	Leader and Deputy Leaders: 20th December 2021	X
	Leader's / Leader of the Opposition's Advisory Group / Independent Alliance Advisory Group: 5th / 6th January 2022	X
	Cabinet: 17th January 2022	
	Scrutiny Audit and Value for Money Council Services Committee Scrutiny Community Regeneration, Environment and Health and Well Being Committee	



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

Essential Signatories:

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

Monitoring Officer: **Chris Ebberley**

Date Signature

Chief Finance Officer: **Sal Khan**

Date Signature

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Cabinet

Date: 17th January 2022

REPORT TITLE:	COVID-19 Emergency Planning Recovery Update (January 2022)
PORTFOLIO:	Leader of the Council
HEAD OF SERVICE:	Sal Khan
CONTACT OFFICER:	James Abbott (Corporate & Commercial Manager) Ext. No. x1244
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Non-Specific

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 5.2.6 of this report.

3. Background

- 3.1. The World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the outbreak of coronavirus disease COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11th 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.
- 3.3. Locally the Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF) with effect from 24th April 2020 has been facilitating a Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG) and works to support partners, communities and stakeholders to deliver the recovery activity associated with impacts arising from COVID-19.

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 2022)

5.1. Current COVID-19 Position

5.1.1. National Position

- 5.1.1.1. The Government continues to issue guidance to help people understand situations where there is a greater risk of catching or spreading COVID-19 and the steps that can be taken to stay safe and protect others.

- 5.1.2. New measures were previously announced by Government in response to the Omicron variant, including face coverings in shops and on public transport, PCR tests on or before day 2 for all international arrivals and self-isolation for contacts of suspected Omicron cases, including for those who are fully-vaccinated.

- 5.1.3. It was subsequently [announced on 8th December 2021](#) that:

- From 10th December mandatory face covering rules are extended to most indoor settings.
- From 13th December the guidance is for people to work from home if they can. Anyone who cannot work from home should continue to travel to their workplace.

- From 15th December the introduction of mandatory certification for certain settings. This will mean a requirement to show vaccination status or a recent negative test to enter certain high risk settings.

5.1.4. These measures are in addition to:

- A continued push on testing, with a focus on testing to enable. This includes people testing before they meet others, socialise or go to crowded or enclosed places.
- A continued push on vaccines and boosters. Being fully vaccinated is the best way for people to protect themselves against catching COVID-19.
- Continued messaging on ventilation. Let in fresh air when meeting indoors.

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

5.1.6. Local Position

5.1.6.1. Mandatory face covering rules will apply to the Town Hall, Brewhouse and Market Hall (when not utilising food / drink outlets).

5.1.6.2. From 13th December the Government guidance is to work from home where possible. For Council staff, that means for the majority that were able to work from home before the 'return to the office' in September, are doing so again from 13th December (see paragraph 5.6.2 for further information).

5.1.6.3. Customer Service Centres, previously open on an appointment only basis, closed from 13th December.

5.1.7. Local Authorities and partners such as local Clinical Commissioning Groups continue to work closely with local communities to ensure as many people as possible take up the offer of vaccines and testing. For example, ongoing support to communications campaigns in a bid to increase take up.

5.1.8. The impact of the coronavirus pandemic in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent prompted the Strategic Co-ordinating Group to again declare the situation a major incident on 6th January 2022.

5.1.9. As at 6th January 2022 3.47% of the Council's workforce are absent due to Covid-19. To date no Council services have been affected as a result of the Omicron variant however the Council continues to monitor the impact of Covid-19 on a daily basis.

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. There has been a number of initiatives implemented by Central Government on a national basis which contribute to the recovery from the COVID-19 emergency. This has included a range of schemes for businesses; opportunities for young people; schemes relating to education and employment; support for homeowners; and temporary changes in taxation. Information on Government schemes and associated 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. Locally the SRF with effect from 24th April 2020 has been facilitating a Recovery Co-ordinating Group (RCG) and works to support partners, communities and stakeholders to deliver the recovery activity associated with impacts arising from COVID-19.

5.2.4. The Council will continue to work with its partners on preparedness for and prevention of future lockdowns to mitigate the impact on the ongoing recovery of the area, as well as ensuring the recovery process continues should a lockdown occur. The Council continues to take an active role in the strategic response and recovery coordinating groups facilitated through the LRF with its partners.

5.2.5. This report considers the progress towards recovery and aligns this progress to the work of the RCG recovery activities and opportunities within the Borough. These are considered in the context of the four thematic areas of focus as shown below:

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

5.2.6. 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)

- An allocation of £894,692 of Additional Restrictions Grant money from Government has been confirmed.
- Businesses impacted by the Omicron variant are being encouraged to contact the Council following Government announcements that it is set to introduce new grant schemes to assist businesses that are experiencing difficulties as a result of this variant.
- The Council has launched Vulnerable Renter Payment Scheme, to support residents in rented accommodation who have experienced financial hardship during the pandemic.
- The Council has agreed to waive car parking charges on all Council owned car parks on Saturdays 4th, 11th and 18th December 2021.
- In early April the Council launched a £100,000 grant scheme for new and growing businesses. Approximately £71,000 has been allocated from the fund across ten allocations to local businesses leveraging £160k of private sector investment.
- On 11th November 2021, the 2021 winners were crowned at the East Staffordshire and South Derbyshire Business Awards.
- The offer from Government to transport bodies of contingency face coverings for use by passengers and workers at zero cost has been extended.
- This festive period the Burton Market Hall and Place welcomes a series of markets.
- The Brewhouse Arts Centre has announced plans to host a range of events up until March 2022 as part of the ongoing Stay Local campaign.
- As part of the efforts to improve the look of our local high streets and encourage shoppers to return, the Brewhouse team, has launched a new project working with four schools.
- The Council is developing a dedicated business e-newsletter.

Physical and Psychological Health of the Community (para 5.5)

- Planning for Burton's second outdoor sculpture trail, taking place in 2022, is galloping ahead. Following the success of Burton Swans in 2020, the same Making Trails team, supported by the Brewhouse Arts Centre is organising the Big Burton Carousel.
- The Council will host a wide range of 'Christmas in Burton' events throughout the festive period.
- The Brewhouse Arts Centre will also host a wide range of festive performances.
- The Council continues to work closely with its leisure operating partner to monitor and encourage recovery in participation levels across a range of physical activities.
- This year the Council has undertaken a review of Health & Activity strategy and delivery in the Borough.
- The Council has been allocated a total of £10,000 DHLUC Protect and Vaccinate funding to help accommodate people sleeping rough and to help increase vaccination uptake amongst people sleeping rough.
- The Council is supporting the Government in communicating a DLUHC letter to landlords around the importance of ventilation in indoor spaces via the landlords' forum and through Trent and Dove Housing.
- The Council has supported the communication of a range of services available in the area for mental health issues

Infrastructure and the Environment (para 5.4)

- Stay Local face coverings will be issued to the Community & Civil Enforcement team to distribute to shoppers for free. Renewed Stay Local signage will be appearing on local high streets.
- The Council is planting over 2000 trees on our parks and open spaces across the borough and is looking for volunteers to help.
- The Council has recruited a Mobile CCTV Enforcement Officer alongside the introduction of mobile CCTV cameras to clampdown on those fly tipping in the Borough.
- Members of the public were invited to join a "Sounding Board" to advise the Council on its consultation approach and methodology for the High Street Linkages project. Both rounds have now closed for comment and a final consultation on the outline plan was launched on 13th December.
- The refreshed Masterplan for Uttoxeter was previously approved by Full Council. During the summer, the Council undertook a 7 week further consultation on the priority sites identified within the Masterplan. The report detailing the findings of the consultation can be found on the Council's website.
- The Council continues to work with colleagues from Staffordshire County Council on a "place branding" proposal.
- During the 2021/22 financial year the Council will be looking to review and update the Brownfield and Infill Regeneration Strategy in line with new Government guidance and policy. This is expected to come forward to Cabinet for review in March 2022.

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

- The Council is now operating its meetings using a mix of in-person, virtual and hybrid interaction, with formal committee meetings being safely conducted at the Town Hall.
- From 13th December the Government guidance is to work from home where possible.
- The Council's refreshed Corporate Plan for 2021/22 went live from April 2021 which has a number of recovery aspects embedded throughout the Plan.
- Following the development of the Council's new Digital Strategy in 2020, this year will see the Council implementing a number of important aspects from the Strategy to take forward a range of digital opportunities.
- In recent weeks the Open Spaces team have started to utilise the What3words app to help identify the location of items reported by residents.
- The Council has helped promote Staffordshire County Council's resident survey to assist them in understanding how the pandemic continues to affect residents.
- The proposed Towns Fund work will feature an emphasis on walking and cycling to create 'easy in-easy out' of our town centres. This will also feature encouragement to work from home into the future.

5.3. Local Economy and Business

- 5.3.1. Applications for the Additional Restrictions Grant scheme Phase 3 have ended following the fund being exhausted, however a further allocation of £894,692 of Additional Restrictions Grant money from Government has been confirmed. £265,000 of this award has been allocated, including £250,000 to support the Staffordshire County Council apprenticeship scheme, and £15,000 to two businesses under the New Business Fund scheme.
- 5.3.2. The Council is considering how best to further utilise the Additional Restrictions Grant funds to support local businesses that may be impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 situation in light of the recent changes to Government advice and guidance. Grant guidance has been received and the Council is devising local schemes for hospitality and leisure grants and for other businesses that are experiencing difficulties as a result of the Omicron variant. Businesses that operate within East Staffordshire Borough Council are now encouraged to submit [Expressions of Interest](#), and information from all respondents is being collated and used to assist the Council in determining the eligibility criteria for its Additional Restrictions Grant schemes.
- 5.3.3. The Council has launched Vulnerable Renter Payment Scheme. This new scheme has been launched by the Council to support residents in rented accommodation who have experienced financial hardship during the pandemic. Applications can be made between 1st December 2021 and 25th March 2022 for a one-off payment for rent arrears. The scheme has a fixed budget meaning once the available funding has been spent the scheme will close to new applicants.
- 5.3.4. The Council has agreed to waive car parking charges on all Council owned car parks on Saturdays 4th, 11th and 18th December 2021. This offer is in addition to the “free after 3” parking offer which already allows free parking in the Coopers Square and Burton Place car parks in Burton upon Trent and the Maltings car park in Uttoxeter every day after 3pm.
- 5.3.5. In early April the Council launched a £100,000 grant scheme for new and growing businesses. The Council’s Business Springboard Boost scheme aimed at supporting growing businesses has received high levels of interest from the local business community. This scheme is about growing businesses to help stimulate the local economy. New businesses can access up to £5,000 of funding and existing businesses can access up to £10,000, with a match of 60% available. The fund is now open for business and is competitive on a first come first served basis and will be kept open until the available funding is fully allocated. To date approximately £71,000 has been allocated from the fund across ten allocations to local businesses leveraging £160k of private sector investment.
- 5.3.6. 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. For example, the Council has supported the promotion of an East Staffordshire Business Support Webinar, due to be held in December 2021, aimed at updating local business on the business support on offer through the Council and the

Growth Hub, including the Business Springboard Boost and Enterprise for Success schemes.

- 5.3.7. On 11th November 2021, the 2021 winners were crowned at the East Staffordshire and South Derbyshire Business Awards. This event returned for 2021, having been postponed in 2020. Over 260 guests were in attendance including representatives from the sponsors and all 20 finalists, providing the opportunity to network and celebrate business success across the region.
- 5.3.8. The Environmental Health Team are providing advice and guidance on COVID-19 Controls to all businesses, along with focussed visits to shops, supermarkets and shopping centres to ensure that any additional legal requirements, such as the requirement to wear face coverings are being implemented. Officers are also working closely with the Test and Trace service to ensure that communications reach anyone that needs to self-isolate but cannot be reached by telephone.
- 5.3.9. The offer from Government to transport bodies of contingency face coverings for use by passengers and workers at zero cost has been extended until 31st December to reflect the current expectation and recommendation that people wear face coverings in crowded areas such as public transport. This is also intended to help reduce transmission rates during the winter period. Further relevant information is available from the Council's [Taxi and Private Hire COVID-19 advice webpages](#).
- 5.3.10. This festive period the Burton Market Hall and Place welcomes a series of markets, including the ever popular Craft Market on Saturday 4th December, as well as a new Food and Drink market, developed in conjunction with 'Street Food Social', on Saturday 11th December.
- 5.3.11. The Council and the Brewhouse Arts Centre has announced plans to host a range of events up until March 2022 as part of the ongoing Stay Local campaign which is aimed at helping the local area recover from the Coronavirus pandemic. The Stay Local campaign is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund as part of the Welcome Back Fund.
- 5.3.12. The Council has continued to encourage residents to 'Stay Local' in recent campaigns to support businesses in the Borough. The 'Stay Local' campaign, which features a range of local business owners, was designed to promote the town centres and other high streets and shopping areas across the Borough. Local businesses can download the 'Stay Local' resources from the Council's website, to help promote their business and demonstrate how they are adhering to safety guidance. The campaign toolkit also features a range of assets for local residents to use to show their support.
- 5.3.13. As part of the efforts to improve the look of our local high streets and encourage shoppers to return, the Brewhouse team, through the Welcome Back Fund has launched a new project. Working with four schools to create images inspired by climate change, the children's work will be transformed into 2D designs and printed on vinyl that will brighten up around eight shop windows across Burton and Uttoxeter from February 2022.

5.3.14. The Council is developing a dedicated business e-newsletter, providing an opportunity to communicate directly to businesses and could be used to promote funding opportunities, changes in legislation, case studies, COVID-19 advice, opportunities for sponsorship etc. It is anticipated that this will be launched in January 2022.

5.4. Infrastructure and Environment

5.4.1. Following announcements of the reintroduction of mandatory wearing of face coverings in shops from 29th November 2021 new Council Stay Local face coverings will be issued to the Community & Civil Enforcement team to distribute to shoppers for free. Renewed Stay Local signage will be appearing on local high streets.

5.4.2. The Council is planting over 2000 trees on our parks and open spaces across the borough and is looking for volunteers to help. The Horticultural team at the Council will be planting a mixture of standard and whip trees throughout the winter months as part of our Friends of Renewing East Staffordshire's Trees project. Planting trees is an important part of the Council's policy to improve the environment and reduce its carbon footprint.

5.4.1. The Council has recruited a Mobile CCTV Enforcement Officer alongside the introduction of mobile CCTV cameras to clampdown on those fly tipping in the Borough. The cameras will be located at well-known hotspot areas to target those found to be offending and in response to requests from members of the public, partnership agencies and other service users. The cameras are able to record daily for 24 hours and can rapidly be moved around the Borough as a deterrent to any potential fly tipping offenders and other forms of Anti-Social Behaviour.

5.4.2. Over the coming months business cases compliant with the Treasury Green Book guidance for each of the seven Towns Fund interventions being proposed (University Learning Hub; High Street Linkages; Library & Enterprise Hub; New Pedestrian & Cycle Crossing over the River Trent; Trent and Mersey Canal Towpath Improvements; Cycle Network Enhancements; College Specialist Education Offer) will be created and assessed, with any developed business case being presented for approval in early 2022.

5.4.3. As part of the Council's work on the Burton Towns Fund programme, members of the public were invited to join a "Sounding Board" to advise the Council on its consultation approach and methodology for the High Street Linkages project. The purpose of the project is to look at the High Street land between Bargates and Market Place and how that area could be enhanced through new uses and activity, with improved linkages between the High Street and Washlands. Through the Sounding Board, members of the public were able to inform and co-design the survey methodology for the Stage 1 survey, an initial "call for ideas" aimed at identifying the aspirations of those who live, visit or work in Burton, as well as the more detailed Stage 2 survey. Both rounds have now closed for comment and a final consultation on the outline plan was launched on 13th December. The consultation will be open until 10th January 2022 and can be found on the project website: <https://burtonprojectd.commonplace.is/proposals/stage-3-proposal-consultation>

5.4.4. The Council is also supporting its partners in communicating their consultation exercises relating to the Towns Fund projects they are leading, such as Staffordshire County Council.

5.4.5. Between July 2021 and September 2021, the Council worked with consultant partners URBED to engage with stakeholders and residents of Uttoxeter on the next steps for the Uttoxeter Masterplan. Over a period of seven weeks, residents were asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the town, whether the themes identified in the Masterplan are appropriate, and what principles would be important to them in the regeneration of the four priority ideas in the Masterplan. During this time, the Council held a number of public drop in events at activities such as the Makers Market and Lark in the Park and issued nearly 11,000 leaflets to residential properties in and around the town. This resulted in a response rate of 684, which can be considered representative of the town. The report detailing the findings of the consultation can be found on the Council's website, alongside the Uttoxeter Masterplan: <https://www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/burton-town-regeneration-programme/regeneration/uttoxeter-masterplan>

5.4.6. The Council continues to work with colleagues from Staffordshire County Council on a "place branding" proposal. At a high level, this work explores ideas and possible options for how East Staffordshire can leverage and compliment the newly launched Staffordshire place branding work through the development of a local narrative that speaks to the East Staffordshire's individual sense of identity, place, heritage and future. This project will commence in February 2022 and run into May/June 2022.

5.4.7. During the 2021/22 financial year the Council will be looking to review and update the Brownfield and Infill Regeneration Strategy in line with new Government guidance and policy. This is expected to come forward to Cabinet for review in March 2022.

5.5. Physical and Psychological Health of the Community

5.5.1. The Council has announced it is providing fuel poverty advice through the 'Beat the Cold' project. With the rising energy costs and colder temperatures many people may be finding it increasingly difficult to heat their home. Keeping warm over the winter months can help prevent colds, flu or more serious health conditions. 'Beat the Cold' is an independent charity working to reduce the incidence of cold related illness and fuel poverty. They support households that are struggling to afford to keep their home warm, or whose health would be affected by living in a cold home, and provide access to heating and insulation measures to vulnerable and low income households.

5.5.2. Planning for Burton's second outdoor sculpture trail, taking place in 2022, is galloping ahead. Following the success of Burton Swans in 2020, the same Making Trails team, supported by the Brewhouse Arts Centre is organising the Big Burton Carousel. Next summer, 30 carousel horses, individually decorated by artists and sponsored by local businesses, will form a trail around the town centre creating a fun, free day out for all the family. The Big Burton Carousel will raise money for the Burton and district branch of the mental health charity Mind. At the

end of the trail, the horses will be auctioned off and all the proceeds will go towards supporting Mind's vital work.

- 5.5.3. The Council will host a wide range of 'Christmas in Burton' events throughout the festive period, which started on Sunday 21st November with the return of the annual Christmas lights switch on event in Burton Market Place. The following weekend, the Brewhouse Arts Centre and Burton Market Hall joined forces to host a Festive Family Funday, which included a giant pop up cinema on Sunday 28th November.
- 5.5.4. The Brewhouse Arts Centre will also host a wide range of festive performances, including the interactive family show, Santa's Best Ever Christmas on Friday 17th December and fresh from their sell out performance at The Roundabout, Comedy Club 4 Kids will present a Christmas Special on Saturday 18th December.
- 5.5.5. 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, and it is pleasing to note that financial performance continues to exceed the approved forecasts.
- 5.5.6. This year the Council will undertake a review of Health & Activity strategy and delivery in the Borough. This review will consider a range of elements including the new Sport England Strategy, the Together Active Strategy and the strategies of our Leisure Operator. This will allow the Council to position itself effectively within the local leisure landscape and to direct strategic health and activity delivery in the area through its delivery partners.
- 5.5.7. The Council continues to promote within the Borough the Commonwealth Games being held in the region in 2022. For example, various communications opportunities have been supported such as the recruitment of Games volunteers, advertisement of the West Midlands ticket ballot through its website and social media channels.
- 5.5.8. A Parks Working group has been formed to aid engagement relating to COVID-19 considerations and promote the safe, healthy use of parks. Membership of this group also includes Staffs Police, Burton Albion Community Trust and Everyone Active.
- 5.5.9. A number of the proposed interventions considered in the Towns Fund work would contribute to health and wellbeing aspects, including delivering a number of improvements to Burton's cycling network (bringing forward the majority of the short and medium term proposals in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan) and improvement of the walking and cycling path between the major development at Branston Locks and the town centre through the Shobnall Playing Fields area.
- 5.5.10. The Council's approach to rough sleeping has been bolstered by successfully securing DLUHC "Protect and Vaccinate" funding for a number of bespoke interventions; this continues to manage and mitigate the physical and

psychological health of the homeless community. The Council has been allocated a total of £10,000 to help accommodate people sleeping rough (£8,855) and to help increase vaccination uptake amongst people sleeping rough (£1,145).

5.5.11. The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has issued a letter directed at all landlords in England to communicate the importance of ventilation into indoor spaces to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 and encourage behaviours to help combat the virus. The Council is supporting the Government in communicating this locally via the landlords' forum and through Trent and Dove Housing.

5.5.12. It's important that you take care of your mind as well as your body and to get further support if you need it. The Council has supported the communication of a range of services available in the area for mental health issues:

- Call the Staffordshire Mental Health Helpline for a safe place to talk if you're feeling worried, stressed or low, or if you're concerned about someone else, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - Call: 0808 800 2234
 - Text: 0786 002 2821
 - Email: staffordshire.helpline@brighter-futures.org.uk
 - Online chat at www.brighter-futures.org.uk.
- Samaritans - a confidential crisis support helpline, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
 - Call 116 123.
- Ask for an urgent GP appointment if you need help urgently for your mental health, but it's not an emergency
- Call 111 to talk to a trained nurse for help and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- South Staffordshire urgent mental health helpline:
 - Call 0808 196 3002 (covers Stafford, Stone, Rugeley, Cannock, South Staffs, Lichfield, Burton, Uttoxeter, Tamworth).
- If you do not feel you can keep yourself, or someone else safe from immediate risk of harm, call 999.

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

5.6.1. The Council is now operating its meetings using a mix of in-person, virtual and hybrid interaction, with formal committee meetings being safely conducted at the Town Hall.

5.6.2. However from 13th December the Government guidance is to work from home where possible. For Council staff, that means for the majority that were able to work from home before the 'return to the office' in September, are doing so again from 13th December. For those members of staff that had a specific business related routine mapped out prior to September, with occasional office-based work, may return to an appropriate arrangement. As we move back to working from home, staff have been reminded to ensure they are taking steps to look after their wellbeing during their period of working from home. This includes:

- Maintaining regular contact with their manager and colleagues;
- Taking appropriate breaks;
- Ensuring that they identify appropriate working / non-working time;
- Contacting Mental Health first aiders, as well as managers, if they need support;
- Being aware of the things that can cause them poor wellbeing and the activities and resources that can help to address this.

5.6.3. The Council's refreshed Corporate Plan for 2021/22 went live from April 2021 which has a number of recovery aspects embedded throughout the Plan.

5.6.4. Following the development of the Council's new Digital Strategy in 2020, this year will see the Council implementing a number of important aspects from the Strategy to take forward a range of digital opportunities.

5.6.5. In recent weeks the Open Spaces team have started to utilise the What3words app to help identify the location of items reported by residents. The app breaks down every 3 metre square of the world into a unique combination of three words. Using the app has been very helpful for locations that do not have a postcode or relates to something specific on a park or open space. Narrowing down of a search area saves time and also ensures the team view the almost exact location or item.

5.6.6. The Council has helped promote Staffordshire County Council's resident survey. Last year they ran a survey about the impact that the pandemic was having on residents' lives, with a similar survey being open during October / November 2021. They would now like to understand how the pandemic continues to affect residents, what has changed for people, and how they feel about the future. Views will be important in helping understand what's important to residents and where they should focus.

5.6.7. The proposed Towns Fund work will feature an emphasis on walking and cycling to create 'easy in-easy out' of our town centres. This will also feature encouragement to work from home into the future.

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 Report.

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:
Caroline Elwood

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. Human Rights

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

11. Sustainability (including climate change and change adaptation measures)

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

12. Recommendation(s)

12.1. To note the update detailed within the report.

13. Background Papers

13.1. None

14. Appendices

14.1. None