



EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT COVER SHEET

Title of Report:	COVID-19 Emergency Planning Recovery Update (March 2022)	To be marked with an 'X' by Democratic Services after report has been presented
Meeting of:	Corporate Management Team: 15th February 2022	X
	Leader and Deputy Leaders: 21st February 2022	X
	Leader's / Leader of the Opposition's Advisory Group / Independent Alliance Advisory Group: 2nd / 3rd March 2022	
	Cabinet: 14th March 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: 14th March 2022

REPORT TITLE:	COVID-19 Emergency Planning Recovery Update (March 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 (March 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. A move to "Plan B" restrictions was [announced on 8th December 2021](#), with England [returning to "Plan A"](#) with effect from 27th January 2022.

- 5.1.3. On Monday 21st February the Prime Minister set out the Government's plan for living with and managing COVID-19. All remaining domestic Covid regulations restricting public freedoms ended on Thursday 24th February,

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

5.1.5. Local Position

- 5.1.5.1. The SRF partners across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent have agreed to stand down the Major Incident that was declared on 6th January to help co-ordinate the response to Covid. The extraordinary pressure on health and care

services that led to the Major Incident being declared have now abated. However health and care services do remain under pressure with high demand.

5.1.5.2. The Council resumed its garden waste collection service from 3rd February 2022. The service had to be temporarily suspended from 13th January 2022 due to staff shortages, partly as a result of the pandemic, and to allow the Council to focus its resources on dry recycling and residual waste.

5.1.5.3. Customer Service Centres, previously open on an appointment only basis, closed from 13th December. Services continue to be available electronically and via telephone.

5.1.6. 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.

5.2. 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)

- As of 4th March a total of £1,206,000 worth of payments have been made to eligible individuals for Test and Trace Support Payments.
- As of 4th March 2022 the Council has processed 320 Additional Restrictions Grant (Omicron) and Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant applications.
- Following the Government's announcement regarding the £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate, the Council is waiting for further guidance plus the relevant funding to enable payments to be made.
- In April 2021 the Council launched a £100,000 grant scheme for new and growing businesses. Approximately £80,705 has been allocated from the fund across twelve allocations to local businesses leveraging £179k of private sector investment.
- The Council has commenced a series of Retail & Hospitality Forums for Burton and Uttoxeter based High Street businesses in those sectors, where they can hear from Growth Hub advisors and the Council on business support and funding opportunities.
- Burton Market Hall has announced that they will be hosting an increased schedule for its Craft Markets during 2022. The Market Hall has also announced that it will be again participating in the National Young Traders Market competition, whilst hosting regular Young Traders Markets during 2022.
- 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.
- 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 five schools and community groups
- The Council has developed a dedicated business e-newsletter.
- East Staffordshire has been identified as one of the areas to receive support from the High Street Task Force and the Council will be putting forward Uttoxeter to participate in the programme.

Physical and Psychological Health of the Community (para 5.5)

- The Brewhouse has launched its bumper spring programme of events.
- Burton Market Hall will also host a number of family activities this February Half Term.
- 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 has announced it is providing fuel poverty advice through the 'Beat the Cold' project.
- 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.
- 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 Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board has launched a public conversation on their new draft strategy to improve the health and wellbeing of people who live and work in the county
- 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.
- Meadowside Leisure Centre was the venue for an open day held by You1st Emotional Support on Friday 4th March.

Infrastructure and the Environment (para 5.4)

- Nine Staffordshire councils have pledged to work closer together and pursue a County Deal with Government under its 'Levelling Up' agenda.
- The Council is planting over 2000 trees on our parks and open spaces across the borough and is looking for volunteers to help.
- 20 Hornbeam trees have been planted to create the Queen's Jubilee Avenue, to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee.
- 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.
- Initiatives from the Uttoxeter Masterplan will be brought forward over the course of 2022/23.
- 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.
- As part of the Climate Change Action Plan the Council will be setting up a Member Climate Change Group in the next financial year. The Council has engaged with the Parish Council Forum on the Climate Change Action Plan

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

- The return to "Plan A" means that Council staff will return to the hybrid working arrangements they practised from September to early December
- 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.
- The Council's Corporate Plan for 2022/23 is due to be refreshed at the Council meeting in March 2022.
- 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.
- The proposed Towns Fund 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. Relevant grants continue to be administered by the Council. The Additional Restrictions Grant (Omicron) scheme application process is live for businesses operating/trading from properties located within the Borough and which have been severely impacted by coronavirus restrictions and the rise of the Omicron variant. This Grant is available to businesses in the Hospitality, Leisure or Accommodation business sectors which are not assessed for business rates or businesses that provide services or supplies to the hospitality, leisure or accommodation business sectors whether the applicant is assessed for business rates or not. Businesses in the Gyms & Sports or Personal Care sectors may also apply whether assessed for business rates or not. Qualifying criteria must be met. Applications must be received on or before 18th March 2022.
- 5.3.2. The Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant application process is live for a single one-off payment for businesses operating/trading from a property that is assessed for business rates (i.e. there is an entry in the Rating List). This Grant is available to businesses in the Hospitality, Leisure and Accommodation sectors only. The amount paid will depend on the rateable value of the property. Applications must also be received on or before 18th March 2022.
- 5.3.3. As of 4th March 2022 the Council has processed 320 Additional Restrictions Grant (Omicron) and Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant applications.
- 5.3.4. Following the Government's announcement regarding the £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate, the Council is waiting for further guidance plus the relevant funding to enable payments to be made. When these are received, the Council can then take steps to arrange payment as soon as is practicable. At present, the Government has indicated that persons liable to pay Council Tax at a property which is designated as their sole/main residence and where the property is assessed in Bands A to D should qualify. For persons who are not liable to pay Council Tax (e.g. those who live in a house in multiple occupation) or where their sole/main residence is in a property assessed in Bands E to H, they may receive assistance under a discretionary scheme, the rules for which will be devised by the Council.
- 5.3.5. As of 4th March a total of £1,206,000 worth of payments have been made to eligible individuals for Test and Trace Support Payments.
- 5.3.6. The Council has launched Vulnerable Renter Payment Scheme. This 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.
- 5.3.7. In early April 2021 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 £80,705 has been allocated from the fund across twelve allocations to local businesses leveraging £179k of private sector investment.

5.3.8. 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. The Council has also commenced a series of Retail & Hospitality Forums for Burton and Uttoxeter based High Street businesses in those sectors, where they can hear from Growth Hub advisors and the Council on business support and funding opportunities.

5.3.9. The Environmental Health Team are continuing to provide advice and guidance on COVID-19 Controls to all businesses and during the recent Plan B restrictions provided additional focussed advice to affected businesses. 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.

5.3.10. Burton Market Hall has announced that they will be hosting an increased schedule for its Craft Markets during 2022. There are six craft markets planned throughout the year, starting on Saturday 5th February 2022. Shoppers can expect a wide range of makers and traders from across the local area, selling a range of hand made and unique items.

5.3.11. The Market Hall has also announced that it will be again participating in the National Young Traders Market competition, whilst hosting regular Young Traders Markets during 2022. The national Young Traders Market competition is organised by the National Market Traders Federation and aims to provide a platform for market traders of the future to develop their small and start-up businesses. The competition consists of local events held across the UK, with champion traders progressing into regional finals and national finals, representing their local area. 2021 saw Molly Thirtle, who operates Molly Designs, claim a champion place in the Burton upon Trent local event, before progressing through to the regional finals to claim a place in the national final. Applications are now open for the 2022 events, for any young trader aged 16-30 years. Young Trader Markets are planned for 5th March, 2nd July (National Finals Qualifying Event) and Saturday 5th November.

5.3.12. 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, which ends 31st March 2022. The Brewhouse and Arts team are currently putting plans in place to repeat some of the successful events during Summer 2022 that were funded through the Welcome Back Fund in 2021, for example the outdoor pop-up theatre to continue to re-engage residents and visitors with our Towns and High Streets.

5.3.13. 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.

5.3.14. 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 five schools and community groups to create images inspired by climate change issues, 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.

5.3.15. The Council has developed a dedicated business e-newsletter, providing an opportunity to communicate directly to businesses and can be used to promote funding opportunities, changes in legislation, case studies, COVID-19 advice, opportunities for sponsorship etc.

5.3.16. East Staffordshire has been identified as one of the areas to receive support from the High Street Task Force and the Council will be putting forward Uttoxeter to participate in the programme.

5.4. Infrastructure and Environment

5.4.1. Nine¹ Staffordshire councils have pledged to work closer together and pursue a County Deal with Government under its ‘Levelling Up’ agenda. Staffordshire council leaders are pledging to work closer than ever on the economy, skills and training, climate change and improved public services, building on their effective joint working to help residents and businesses through the Covid-19 pandemic. They are drawing up ambitious plans to create more jobs and opportunities for Staffordshire people, improve public health, and tackle the challenges of waste and recycling. These plans could be delivered faster with extra funding and support available through a County Deal.

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.

¹ The nine councils working together on the County Deal proposal are: Cannock Chase District Council; East Staffordshire Borough Council; Lichfield District Council; Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council; South Staffordshire Council; Stafford Borough Council; Staffordshire County Council; Staffordshire Moorlands District Council; and Tamworth Borough Council.

5.4.3. On 7th February, the Council were joined by volunteers, local councillors, the mayor of East Staffordshire and Wellings Funeral Services to plant an avenue of Hornbeam trees at Shobnall Fields. These 20 trees have been planted to create the Queen's Jubilee Avenue, to commemorate the Platinum Jubilee. As well as celebrating the Queens Jubilee, the project also supports the Councils drive to plant more trees in open spaces across the Borough. More projects to commemorate the Queen Jubilee will be announced in due course. Volunteers interested in joining future planting projects can apply by visiting: www.eaststaffsbc.gov.uk/open-spaces/volunteer

5.4.4. The Horticultural Team have been working with volunteers from local businesses, including Welling's funeral Directors, Alstom, and McDonalds to plant hundreds of trees around the local parks and open spaces during the winter period. In addition, a number of residents have volunteered and supported the initiative. As a result almost 2000 trees and tree whips have been planted across the borough.

5.4.5. As part of the Council's work to celebrate the Jubilee, the Brewhouse are working with numerous partners to put on a large, celebratory weekend, the Big Burton Jubilee, across the Washlands and Stapenhill gardens. The event will engage with and include work by community groups and local schools prior in the months prior to the event.

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. Initiatives from the Uttoxeter Masterplan will be brought forward over the course of 2022/23.

5.4.3. 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.

5.4.4. 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.

5.4.5. As part of the Climate Change Action Plan the Council will be setting up a Member Climate Change Group in the next financial year to focus on and help strengthen the Council's work on climate change. Additionally the Council has

had a discussion with the Parish Council Forum about the Climate Change Action Plan.

5.5. Physical and Psychological Health of the Community

5.5.1. The Brewhouse has launched its bumper spring programme of events. This includes an all new monthly Burton comedy club evening; a range of family shows during the February Half Term and Easter Holidays; and many more. For full details and to book online, visit, www.brewhouse.co.uk.

5.5.2. Burton Market Hall will also host a number of family activities this February Half Term, on Saturday 26th February. The activities will include two free clay 'make n make' sessions for children and families of all ages, as well as miniature train rides in the Market Place, courtesy of Burton's Riverside Miniature Railway,

5.5.3. 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. This 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.

5.5.4. 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.

5.5.5. 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. Everyone Active staff, customers and special guests joined forces in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support by completing an epic 24-hour swim at Uttoxeter Leisure Centre. Individuals were split into 30-minute slots in a bid to complete as many lengths as possible. Everyone Active colleagues achieved no fewer than 3,001 lengths and swimming the equivalent of England to France and back. The total lengths swum by customers and partners, including BBC Radio Derby's Charlie Burley, was 1,690. This helped to push the overall distance to 4,691 lengths or 73 miles. The event has raised more than £1,000 so far and it is hoped that total will continue to increase.

5.5.7. Meadowside Leisure Centre was the venue for an open day held by You1st Emotional Support on Friday 4th March. You1st carries out valuable work in the local community, offering a wide variety of services including mental health support, one-to-one support in the home and a food bank – Community Cans ‘Can’ Help. The open day launches the partnership with Everyone Active and took place from 11am-2.30pm, led by You1st CEO Lorna Smith.

5.5.8. 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, and Queen’s baton relay baton-bearer nominations through its website and social media channels.

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 Staffordshire Health and Wellbeing Board has launched a public conversation on their new draft strategy to improve the health and wellbeing of people who live and work in the county. People are invited to share their thoughts and ideas on the draft strategy, which aims to tackle the underlying causes of poor health and wellbeing across the county. The conversation has started and will be open until midnight on 20th February 2022. People can get involved either by [completing the online survey](#) or by emailing their thoughts on the strategy to StaffsHWBB@Staffordshire.gov.uk

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

5.6.1. The return to “Plan A” means that Council staff will return to the hybrid working arrangements they practised from September to early December in terms of presence in the office. Arrangements inside the office will be the same as they were during September to early December in terms of guidance on masks, sanitisation and lateral flow testing.

5.6.2. 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.

5.6.3. The Council's Corporate Plan for 2022/23 is due to be refreshed at the Council meeting in March 2022.

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. The Towns Fund 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 2022/23 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: **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