

SSDC Covid-19 Recovery Strategy

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Purpose of the Report

1. This report sets out the strategy, rational and approach that South Somerset District Council (SSDC) will take in the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following expert advice and best practice, it outlines the proposed structure for the Council operating model during this phase and the key focus areas to base the recovery upon.
2. This report and strategic document seeks the approval of this council to approve the Recovery Strategy and to proceed with implementation.
3. Attached to this report is the proposed Recovery Strategy and the overview document of the key work streams involved in the recovery plan.

Forward Plan

4. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of July 2020.

Public Interest

5. This report is of interest to the public as it seeks to approve the Council Recovery Strategy, which impacts on how our council services will recover and continue to work going forwards; and the wider recovery of our economy and communities.
6. This District Executive report is the council's strategic document outlining the rational and approach in recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic across South Somerset. It also explains the objectives we seek to achieve, work streams, focus areas and resources required.

Recommendations

7. That the District Executive approves:-
 - a. the SSDC Emergency Recovery Strategy (Summary) at Appendix 1 and
 - b. the SSDC Recovery Strategy at Appendix 2 with supporting documentation in the manner outlined in this report, and
 - c. delegates authority to the Director for Commercial Services and Income Generation, to proceed with the implementation, as proposed within the attached strategy document.

Background

8. The Covid-19 pandemic has been a disruptor to normal life with some services stopping, demand for health and care services increasing, and additional response services stood up. Our general community life and wellbeing severely tested and normal freedoms have been adversely impacted; and the outlook for the UK economy become increasingly uncertain.

9. Unlike a more conventional recovery from a major incident, e.g. flooding, the time period and potential fluctuations that will occur over the coming months will be a new recovery challenge that we will need to deal with. For example;
 - Fluctuating movement and activity restrictions depending on future peaks and outbreaks that may be uneven across the region and unpredictable.
 - Services may be 'switched on and off' within the recovery period
 - The recovery period may be at least 12-18 months, or until widespread immunity achieved via a vaccine
 - Different population segments will have different need for restrictions i.e. Shielded population may have greater restrictions for longer.
10. Against this backdrop, the recovery strategy to COVID 19 is complicated and multi-dimensional and requires an agile and adaptive mode of working to match it. Our **Recovery** can be defined as the process of rebuilding, restoring and rehabilitating following this emergency and our plan to get back to 'normal' community functioning. However, it is also an opportunity to rebuild a better, **new horizon** for communities making the most of the opportunities presented by the disruption and subsequent ways of working to create a 'new normal' that sets a path towards longer term strategic goals.
11. This 'new normal' will require dedicated, collective and focussed leadership, alongside our communities, our businesses and our public services for some time and it is likely that we are, to an extent, already moving to a new way of working for our places.

Report Detail (South Somerset Recovery Strategy)

12. The recovery planning process will be influenced by the central government strategy that is emerging, but the South Somerset District Council recovery action plan is to be designed and specifically tailored to help the people of South Somerset bounce back quickly, once lockdown restrictions start to be lifted.
13. There will also be alignment to regional political structures including Avon & Somerset Local Resilience Forum (ASLRF) and the Heart of the South West LEP. This will work alongside both the District and County Councils (including Somerset County Council Multi Agency Recovery Co-ordination Group) to bring the recovery and new horizons to our economy and communities. This will provide political leadership both at a regional and local level connecting the various places and communities right across South Somerset.
14. The Recovery Plan will cover the 5 key themes that is aligned with the District Council Corporate Plan, this are;
 - Economy
 - Healthy, self-reliant communities
 - Environment
 - Places where we live
 - Protecting core services
15. As part of the work for recovery planning, South Somerset District Council will consider data on the potential economic, environmental and social impacts of the pandemic; and what this impact will mean when taking action on issues such as investment, business support, community enabling and support, environmental planning, housing and regeneration to name just a few.
16. At the end of this process, a report containing recommendations on the actions that will guide the recovery and lessons learned from this pandemic for the District will be published.

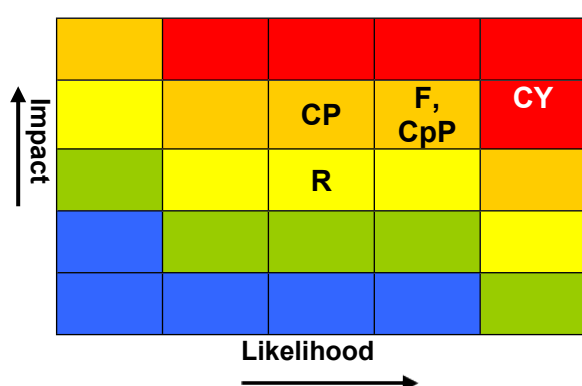
Financial Implications

17. As part of the Council wide recovery plan a review of the financial health of the council is being undertaken which will result in a revised Medium Term Financial Plan and Financial Strategy. The overall financial assessment of the Council will include a review of reserves and the financial risk register.
18. This is anticipated to come forward for approval by District Executive in August 2020.

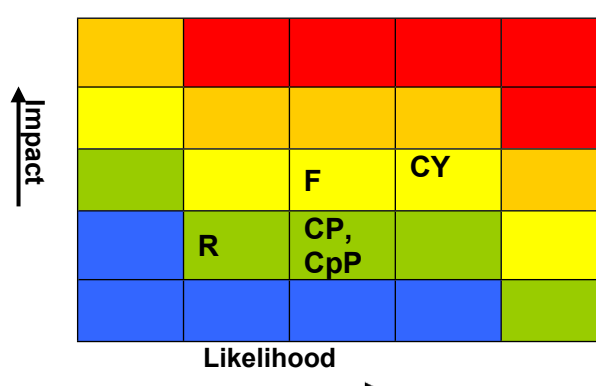
Risk Matrix

The risk matrix shows risk relating to the Corporate Plan headings.

Risk Profile before officer recommendations



Risk Profile after officer recommendations



Key

Categories		Colours (for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)	
R	= Reputation	Red	= High impact and high probability
CpP	= Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange	= Major impact and major probability
CP	= Community Priorities	Yellow	= Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY	= Capacity	Green	= Minor impact and minor probability
F	= Financial	Blue	= Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

- a) The reputational risk could and should be seen as a positive as the Council will be demonstrating its desire to respond effectively to the COVID-19 pandemic to support and aid local council taxpayers, as well as the wider community and economy.
- b) The Recovery Strategy will contain an impact assessment with details of the risks that have been identified and what mitigation action has been, or will be, taken to minimise and address such impacts on our community.
- c) An appropriate exit strategy will be developed from the recovery phase, at the appropriate time, within the detailed recovery action plan showing how the response activities could cease and the impact that would have upon the future support function to aid our community and economy.

Overall it is considered that the risk associated with implementing the Recovery Strategy is low. That the initial proposed recovery activities and resulting impact on the Council will be beneficial; and at this stage essential for supporting our community and economy.

Council Plan Implications

Outcomes linked to SSDC Corporate Priorities:

The Recovery Strategy has been designed based on the corporate plan themes and objectives. It will follow the operating framework of establishing actions plans for the 5 corporate themes by working within the focussed Communities of Practice (CoPs) cells populated with relevant service employees that have appropriate skills and knowledge from across the Council and represented politically by the Portfolio holder for the individual CoPs. Existing Corporate Plan priority action plans will be reviewed, renewed, and re-prioritised. Essentially, this means that some priorities will inevitably be delayed as a result of Covid 19 impacts, other priorities will become more important than ever and now the first to be delivered. However, there may well also be some new opportunities as a result of Covid -19, that become a priority action to help drive Recovery forward in South Somerset.

The strategy aims to meet the outcomes of all the Council's corporate priorities.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

Right now, the coronavirus pandemic is the global priority. We all need to work together to save lives and keep our communities together. But the climate and nature emergencies will still be there when the spread of Covid-19 is brought under control. With the right recovery, this could be an opportunity to build upon and improve matters highlighted in the Climate Emergency recognised by South Somerset District Council in May 2019 addressing the climate crisis, at the same time as we recover from the pandemic.

The South Somerset District Council Recovery Strategy will explore how the epidemic has unintentionally proven that we can dramatically decrease pollution levels in a short period of time and see significant improvements in spaces for nature. The report and strategy will use intelligence and data collected from COVID-19 (including SSDC's own annual carbon calculator) and build in new actions to address the wider environment implications across South Somerset. It will seek to retain and build on the positive environmental implications and also retain the momentum and desire for positive change in our communities.

These actions will be held within the Environment Community of Practice (CoP) and officers will ensure work is aligned with the Environment Strategy and progress is made against the Environment delivery plan and recovery plan.

Equality and Diversity Implications

An Equality Impact Relevance Check Form has been completed in respect of this project which has shown that there will not be any negative impacts for people from the Protected Characteristics. A full Equality Impact Assessment is therefore not required. A copy of the Equality Impact Relevance Check Form is attached as Appendix 3 to this report.

Privacy Impact Assessment

At this time there are no material implications on personal privacy.

Background Papers

- SSDC Corporate Plan
- Appendices to this report

Appendix 1: SSDC Covid-19 recovery plan summary document

Appendix 2: SSDC Covid-19 recovery and new horizons strategy document

Appendix 3: Equalities impact relevance check form