

For publication

Chesterfield Borough COVID-19 Strategic and Community Recovery Approach

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	29 September 2020
Cabinet portfolio:	Leader Health and wellbeing
Directorate:	Executive Director Health and wellbeing

1.0 Purpose of the report

1.1 This report sets out for Members a proposed strategic approach to support the borough in recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The approach includes three key elements. One of these is the economic recovery plan that was approved by Council on 15 July 2020. The remaining two elements are;

- a proposal to adopt four targeted priorities to support the overall recovery; and
- a proposal to endorse a community recovery approach, focussed on working with partners across the borough in supporting and promoting community wellbeing.

1.2 Members are also recommended to note that as work is progressed with partners, in developing activities and work programmes to deliver against these targeted recovery priorities and the community recovery approach, it is anticipated that further resources will be required and further reports will be presented to Members for consideration.

1.3 To support the need for any urgent or short term initiatives to support community wellbeing, while the planning work is progressing, Members are asked to consider the allocation of one-off financial resources from the budget risk reserve.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the following four targeted recovery priorities to support the overall COVID-19 recovery across the borough;
- **Partnership and collaboration;** having a relentless focus in developing and delivering services and activities with our partners to deliver better outcomes for communities across Chesterfield
 - **Social Connectedness;** supporting and promoting activity that tackles loneliness and social isolation, including tackling digital exclusion
 - **Young people;** prioritising young people in everything we do, seeking out opportunities to support our young people to be the best that they can be
 - **Carbon reduction;** taking positive steps to deliver a green recovery
- 2.2 To approve that the Council promote these targeted recovery priorities across the borough with partners, as well as adopting them across the organisation to embed them as part of the delivery of Council services.
- 2.3 To endorse the 'Chesterfield community recovery approach – Supporting and promoting community wellbeing'; as set out in Appendix A, including the support for a direct focus on key impact areas and the cross-cutting commitments and enablers set out in paragraphs 4.14 to 4.15.
- 2.4 To note that as work is progressed with partners, in developing activities and work programmes to deliver against these targeted priorities and the community recovery approach, it is anticipated that further resources will be required and further reports will be presented to Members for consideration.
- 2.5 To approve the allocation of £30,000 to create an emergency community wellbeing fund that can be targeted at supporting communities, either directly by the council or through partner agencies, including the voluntary and community sector, to assist in managing the ongoing response and recovery associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 2.6 To approve the use of the budget risk reserve to fund the £30,000 emergency fund.

3.0 Reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 The unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the borough has led to the Council putting in place response and recovery activities to support the overall community within the borough. This report seeks to set out both a strategic and a community recovery approach to support this critical work going forward.

4.0 Report details

Introduction

- 4.1 The impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the short, medium and long term effects will be felt by the world for many years to come. One of the key challenges that we must address as a society is the increasing inequalities that are forecast to occur. This is because the virus itself, and the significant effects on other health conditions and the downturn in the economy we know, will impact hardest on those that already have the least.
- 4.2 The scale of the task may be daunting, however the response to the pandemic and the resilience of our communities has itself been unprecedented and humbling.
- 4.3 This report sets out for Members a proposed strategic approach to support the borough in recovering from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The approach includes three key elements. One of these is the economic recovery plan that was approved by Council on 15 July 2020. The remaining two elements are;
- a proposal to adopt four targeted recovery priorities to support the overall recovery; and
 - a proposal to endorse a community recovery approach, focussed on working with partners across the borough in supporting and promoting community wellbeing.

Targeted recovery priorities

- 4.4 Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic the response to the impacts at a local level has been unprecedented, particularly from our

voluntary and community sector organisations and the large numbers of volunteers that deliver this activity. However, the scale of the task in terms of the numbers of individuals, communities and businesses that need assistance is daunting and will only be tackled by prolonged and determined action.

4.5 As the lockdown has eased, the Derbyshire Local Resilience Forum has established a Strategic Recovery Group to lead the work of public, private, voluntary and community sector agencies across the County to develop more detailed plans for restoration and recovery. A number of key documents have been approved and three key sub-groups have been created to develop a strategic Derbyshire wide recovery approach; these sub-groups cover Health and Welfare, Community recovery, and Economy. The work of these groups is informing the work of the Council and its partners in a range of areas. However, by definition, this is strategic work covering a number of different organisations and systems across the County geography.

4.6 As work has progressed in developing the Councils economic recovery plan and the proposed community recovery approach included within this report, three broad work areas have emerged to guide our activities and those of our partners; these are not new themes, but in looking at COVID-19 recovery they seem more relevant than ever;

- Community wellbeing
- Economy and skills
- Sustainability and environment

4.7 In considering our partnership working ethos and these themes, Cabinet are recommended to adopt four targeted recovery priorities that can provide a key focus for our activities as we seek to tackle some of the widening inequalities in our society; with a view that working towards these priorities will become part of our culture and DNA. The Council would also seek to work closely with our partners across the borough to gain support for these priorities.

4.8 The targeted recovery priorities are proposed as:

- **Partnership and collaboration;** having a relentless focus in developing and delivering services with our partners to deliver better outcomes for communities across Chesterfield

- **Social Connectedness;** supporting and promoting activity that tackles loneliness and social isolation, including tackling digital exclusion
- **Young people;** prioritising young people in everything we do, seeking out opportunities to support our young people to be the best that they can be
- **Carbon reduction;** taking positive steps to deliver a green recovery

4.9 Putting these priorities at the heart of everything we do and incorporating them into the way that we work could give us that step change that is required to really start to tackle the impacts of COVID-19.

Chesterfield community recovery approach – supporting and promoting community wellbeing

4.10 As individuals and communities, we have a simple underlying ambition, ‘to live healthy and fulfilling lives’. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a seismic effect on all of our abilities to achieve this ambition. We must work relentlessly and resiliently together to tackle the impacts and the widening inequalities gaps that this pandemic is likely to cause, and to keep our focus on regaining that overall outcome; to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

4.11 Over the past few months the Council and its partners have been working together to gather and analyse information and have collaborative discussions to develop an approach that can focus activities to support our communities to adapt and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The work has been led by a strategic partnership group, the Chesterfield COVID-19 Strategic Health and Wellbeing Group, that has come together to provide a link between the Derbyshire Local Resilience Forum work and the approach being delivered more locally in Chesterfield.

4.12 Appendix A sets out the proposed community recovery approach – supporting and promoting community wellbeing. It includes information on the significant partnership work that was carried out during the initial response stages of the pandemic, and sets out the

longer term impact areas (Table A4.1) that we need to tackle if we are to avoid the widening inequality gaps that are likely to occur.

4.13 The community recovery approach has two strands, which are set out in Appendix A, section 5.0, and in paragraphs 4.14 and 4.15 below, these are;

- Impact areas for direct focus
- Cross-cutting commitments and enablers

4.14 ***Impact areas for direct focus***

There are three key impact areas that have emerged as priorities for Chesterfields community recovery work to directly focus on;

- **Material insecurity** - supporting individuals and families that are feeling the effects of material insecurities, such as food, housing, financial hardship
- **Population mental health and wellbeing** – supporting vulnerable individuals that need clinical mental health support, recognising that increasing numbers of people are struggling with specific mental health and wellbeing issues stemming from the increasing challenges brought about by COVID-19
- **Social connectedness** – supporting those significant numbers of individuals that are showing signs of loneliness and that lack social connection, and without support will begin to suffer from more significant mental health difficulties

A significant amount of work is progressing across the partnerships in Chesterfield and Derbyshire to understand the impacts of COVID-19 in more detail and to develop targeted activities to tackle these impacts. The Strategic Group will have a key role in influencing the work of the individual partnership groups to ensure that activities are targeted at tackling these issues.

4.15 ***Cross-cutting commitments and enablers***

To support the way in which these key impacts can be more effectively tackled, a range of cross-cutting commitments and enablers have been identified that are proposed to be adopted by the multi-agency partnerships. It is also proposed that the Strategic Group should look to develop and lead a range of more detailed actions to make progress in these areas. These cross-cutting enabling initiatives are to:

- Create strong communication channels and clear messages
- Value joined-up working across partners and agencies, from voluntary and community through to statutory bodies
- Recognise the voluntary and community sector as an equal partner
- Be data and insight led in developing solutions; listen to people and communities, as well as using technical data
- Develop accessible centralised digital platforms to enable the delivery of joined up services across organisations
- Focus the community recovery solutions on tackling the key impacts on individuals and communities; increases in material insecurity, mental health difficulties and social isolation
- Identify and plug resource gaps to ensure that all partners can support our community resilience network

4.16 It is proposed that the Chesterfield COVID-19 Strategic Health and Wellbeing Group, change its name to the Chesterfield Strategic Community Wellbeing Coordination Group, to better reflect the role of this group going forward. This strategic group will:

- provide a link between the Derbyshire Local Resilience Forum activities and those of the partnership groups across Chesterfield;
- provide a lead for the delivery of the cross-cutting commitments and enablers and
- provide links into the multi-agency partnership organisations to seek to ensure that the key impact areas and direct focussed activities to tackle the more specific impacts of COVID-19 are identified and delivered

4.17 Chesterfield Borough Council will continue to provide a key leadership role in bringing together key agencies to focus on supporting initiatives to improve community wellbeing across Chesterfield borough.

4.18 Cabinet are asked to approve the proposed community recovery approach set out in Appendix A, and summarised above, to provide a strategic approach for the borough, supporting and promoting community wellbeing to move beyond the impacts of COVID-19.

Next steps and resources

4.19 The next stage of this work will be to work in partnership through the Chesterfield Strategic Community Wellbeing Coordination Group to

develop more detailed work programmes, considering the delivery mechanisms and future resource requirements.

- 4.20 The partners on the Strategic Community Wellbeing Coordination Group have a number of pieces of work that they wish to progress that will help to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on individuals in particularly challenging situations. The analysis of these various scenarios will look to identify more specifically the help those individuals need to be able to access services and will look to map the end to end journey. This is aimed at identifying the gaps in service and what types and level of resources would be needed to enable us to best to address them.
- 4.21 As an interim measure members are recommended to approve the allocation of £30,000, from the budget risk reserve, to create an emergency community wellbeing fund that can be targeted at supporting communities, either directly by the council or through partner agencies, including the voluntary and community sector, in managing the ongoing response and recovery associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

5.0 Alternative options

- 5.1 Consideration has been given to developing a detailed community recovery action plan, but the number of partners involved in commissioning and delivering the broad spectrum of services and activities that are needed to support community recovery, would make such a plan extremely difficult to pull together and achieve. It was considered that developing an 'approach' that could provide a framework for organisations and partnerships to follow would be more appropriate to guide these activities.

6.0 Implications for consideration – Council Plan

- 6.1 The targeted recovery priorities and the community recovery approach have been developed on the basis of the Council Plan vision of 'Putting our communities first', and the proposals are therefore in line with the Council Plan.

7.0 Implications for consideration – Financial and value for money

- 7.1 A range of existing staff resources are targeted at working with partners, including voluntary and community organisations, to support health and wellbeing activities across the borough, as well as the significant numbers of staff delivering day to day services that support the community wellbeing of the residents and businesses across the borough.
- 7.2 The Council annually provides grants for voluntary bodies and for this financial year, 2020/21, the allocation has been £239,550. In addition, due to COVID-19 challenges, the Council approved 'rent free periods' for charitable and voluntary sector tenants at a cost of an additional £40,000.
- 7.3 During the COVID-19 lockdown, up to five members of staff were redeployed to work closely with Derbyshire Voluntary Action, to coordinate the work of volunteers who were carrying out daily tasks to support vulnerable people across the borough. In addition, other staff members were redeployed to work with a local pharmacy to delivery medical prescriptions to vulnerable people.
- 7.4 As referenced in paragraph 4.20 and reflected in the recommendation at paragraph 2.4 conversations are currently being progressed with partners to better understand and quantify the resource implications of the activities and work programmes that will need to be developed to deliver on the target priorities and the community recovery approach.
- 7.5 Pending the outcome of these conversations and the preparation of further reports for Cabinet / Council decision, it is proposed that £30,000 is allocated from the budget risk reserve to a Community Wellbeing Fund, which can be used to quickly target resources that may be needed to support our communities to respond to the continued challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.

8.0 Implications for consideration – Legal

- 8.1 The Localism Act, 2011, gave local authorities the general power of competence and aims to better enable councils, communities and individuals to act on local priorities and set out how such engagement should take place. It strengthens the leadership role that local

authorities have to act as community leaders and its role as a key partner working together with other public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations to support local communities.

- 8.2 District councils also have an important role in supporting the responsibilities of upper tier authorities on health improvement (Health and Social Care Act 2012) as providers of key services which have a direct impact on the health of the local population.
- 8.3 Chesterfield Borough Council recognises it's key role in safeguarding children and protecting vulnerable adults. Our safeguarding policies, procedures, training and decision making are in compliance with Government national guidelines "Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children", the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children Partnership's procedures and the Derbyshire Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board procedures.
- 8.4 There is also a wider duty under the Equality Act 2010 when deciding how to exercise functions to do so in a way that is designed to reduce inequalities resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

9.0 Implications for consideration - Human resources

- 9.1 None arising directly from this report.

10.0 Implications for consideration - Risk management

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Partners are not able to work constructively together	High	Medium	Chesterfield has a history of very successful working through collaborative relationship building. A continued focus on the need to maintain strong and resilient partnerships will be required.	High	Low

Service delivery and work programmes are not aligned with the targeted priorities and no progress is made to mitigate the widening inequality gap	High	Medium	Portfolio holders and CMT provide a leadership role to the organisation and develop policies and guidelines to support staff	High	Low
Resource constraints for organisations across Chesterfield lead to lack of engagement in the priorities and recovery approach	High	High	Partners will need to work together to identify resources and support one another where possible.	High	Medium

11.0 Implications for consideration – community wellbeing

- 11.1 The fundamental basis of this report is about how we can help our local communities to have healthy and fulfilling lives. This report focuses on working to embed a set of targeted priorities and a community recovery approach through working in collaboration with public, voluntary and community, and business partners across the borough.
- 11.2 The targeted priority of social connectedness - supporting and promoting activity that tackles loneliness and social isolation, including tackling digital exclusion, is particularly important in supporting community wellbeing.

12.0 Implications for consideration – Economy and skills

- 12.1 The economic recovery plan, that was approved by Cabinet on 15 July 2020, sets out the key activities that the Council will be leading on to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on the local economy.
- 12.2 One of the key areas of activity is around supporting young people into the work place; this will be a key activity that supports the targeted priority for young people - prioritising young people in everything we

do, seeking out opportunities to support our young people to be the best that they can be.

13.0 Implications for consideration – Climate Change

13.1 Considering how all that we do impacts on climate change, promoting carbon reduction and sustainability is another targeted priority that is proposed in this report, ensuring that we continue to take positive steps to deliver a green recovery.

14.0 Implications for consideration – Equality and diversity

13.1 Ensuring that the targeted recovery priorities and the community recovery approach are all-encompassing will be a key strand in developing the work programmes going forward. A cross section of partners, including key voluntary and community sector organisations, have been involved to date in helping to develop this work, and discussions will continue as we look to respond and support all parts of the community.

Decision information

Key decision number	973
Wards affected	All wards

Document information

Report author	
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Background documents	
These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
<i>This must be made available to the public for up to 4 years.</i>	
Appendices to the report	
Appendix A	Chesterfield community recovery approach – Supporting and promoting community wellbeing