

HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL
PUBLIC SERVICE PLAZA
CIVIC CENTRE ROAD
HAVANT
HAMPSHIRE P09 2AX



Havant
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Telephone: 023 9247 4174
Fax: 023 9248 0263
Website: www.havant.gov.uk

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Membership: Councillor Lloyd (Chairman)

Councillors P Bains, Briggs, Carpenter, Crellin, Francis (Vice-Chairman), Howard, Jenner, Kennett, Milne, Robinson, Sceal, Scott and Weeks

Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: Wednesday 31 March 2021

Time: 5.00 pm

Venue: Skype for Business - Skype for Business

The business to be transacted is set out below:

Gill Kneller
Chief Executive

22 March 2021

Contact Officer: David Penrose (Democratic Services Officer)
Email: david.penrose@easthants.gov.uk

Page

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interests

To receive any declarations of interests.

3 Chairman's Announcements

To receive any announcements.

4 Work Programme

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(i) The committee is invited to confirm and prioritise topics to form its work programme for the coming year.

(ii) The committee may establish sub-committees or task and finish groups*, appointing the Chairman in accordance with the Council's criteria and with such membership as it sees fit, to undertake scrutiny on a task and finish basis.

**At the first meeting each year of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, it will establish sub-committees or task groups and confirm the terms of reference specifically to consider the following areas (based on relevant existing portfolios of Portfolio Holders at the beginning of the municipal year) as an element of the Committee's annual work programme, and to report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on any recommendations:*

- *Business and Commercial Services, including any relevant strategic Partnerships*
- *Operations and Place Shaping, including regeneration issues.*

5 Review of the Council's Response to the First Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is invited to consider the attached reviews carried out by the Task and Finish groups in relation to reviewing the Council's response to the first wave of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

6 Date of Next Meeting

To note that the next meeting of the Committee will be at 5pm on the 23rd June.

GENERAL INFORMATION

IF YOU WOULD LIKE A VERSION OF THIS AGENDA, OR ANY OF ITS REPORTS, IN LARGE PRINT, BRAILLE, AUDIO OR IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE PLEASE CONTACT DEMOCRATIC SERVICES ON 023 9244 6231

Internet

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Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme

Item	Methodology			
	Task & Finish Group or themed meeting	Aims	Start	End date

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HAVANT BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council and Cabinet Forward Plan – 2020 - 2021

The Forward Plan sets out all Key Decisions that the Cabinet, Cabinet Leads or Officers will take and also includes items that will be submitted to the Council by the Cabinet for a formal decision. This Plan is regularly updated.

A decision is Key if the decision is likely to involve significant income or expenditure is likely to have a significant effect on more than one ward.

To contact the Lead Officers listed in the report:

- Phone- 023 92474174
- Email: All Havant Borough Council addresses are in the format firstname.lastname@havant.gvo.uk

Contact Information for all Councillors is available at

<http://havant.moderngov.co.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?FN=ALPHA&VW=LIST&PIC=0>

Cabinet Membership:

<http://havant.moderngov.co.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=128>

Cabinet Leads' Responsibilities

<http://havant.moderngov.co.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sched=doc&cat=13799&path=0>

Council Membership

<http://havant.moderngov.co.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=126>

Subject	Date First Published	Decision Maker(s) and Date(s)	Documents to Be Submitted	Key Decision	Cabinet Lead	Urgent	Open/Exempt
Revised Safeguarding Policy and new Modern Slavery Statement	18 January 2021	Cabinet 7 Apr 2021	Revised Safeguarding Policy and new Modern Slavery Statement		Councillor Alex Rennie Tracey Wood	No	Open
Transformation Update	26 February 2021	Cabinet 2 Jun 2021	Transformation	KEY	Leader of the Council (Councillor Michael Wilson) Chief Executive	No	Open
Conflict of Interest Policy	19 January 2021	Cabinet 2 Jun 2021	Conflict of Interest Policy		Cabinet Lead for People and Organisation Development (Councillor Lulu Bowerman) Daniel Toohey	No	Open
Hayling Island Emergency Planning Framework	23 March 2021	Cabinet 2 Jun 2021	Hayling Island Emergency Planning Framework		Councillor Lulu Bowerman Caroline Tickner	No	Open

Subject	Date First Published	Decision Maker(s) and Date(s)	Documents to Be Submitted	Key Decision	Cabinet Lead	Urgent	Open/Exempt
One Workforce	23 September 2020	Cabinet Council		KEY	Leader of the Council (Councillor Michael Wilson) Leader of the Council (Councillor Michael Wilson) Caroline Tickner Caroline Tickner	No	Open
Project Resource List	24 September 2020	Cabinet		KEY	Leader of the Council (Councillor Michael Wilson) Caroline Tickner	No	Open

Subject	Date First Published	Decision Maker(s) and Date(s)	Documents to Be Submitted	Key Decision	Cabinet Lead	Urgent	Open/Exempt
Land Fortifications	18 August 2020	Cabinet		KEY	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Lead for Planning, Hayling Seafront Strategy and Commercial Services (Councillor Gary Hughes) Natalie Meagher	No	Open



**Review of Council's
Communications Response
to the First Wave of the
COVID19 Pandemic**

Communications Review

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The following is a synopsis of the proceedings and recommendations made by the Covid 19 Scrutiny – Communications Task and Finish Panel (“the Panel”) to consider the Council’s communications during the first wave of the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 1.2 In view of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy, people’s health, lifestyles and livelihoods, there is perhaps nothing more important than the way a Council communicated.
- 1.3 The Purpose of this review was to:
- assess how successful the Council had been in communicating with residents and ensuring residents had received up to date, accurate and accessible information throughout the Covid 19 pandemic.
 - make recommendations to the Governance, Audit and Finance Board on improvements and future actions on communicating with the public and helping them find the information they need during the pandemic
- 1.4 To achieve this the Panel agreed to focus on the following areas:
- a) which channels of communication had the Council utilised during the Covid 19 pandemic?
 - b) How had the Council tried to communicate with residents who do not use the internet?
 - c) To what extent had the Council communicated with areas within the Borough where it is has proved difficult to encourage a response e.g. Leigh Park and Wecock?
 - d) What had the response been to date and what lessons had been learnt?
 - e) What problems had been experienced?

2.0 The Panel

- 2.1 The Review was undertaken by a Panel which included the following members:

Councillor Lloyd (Lead Councillor)
Councillor P Bains (part of the review)
Councillor Francis

Councillor Howard
Councillor Jenner
Councillor Milne
Councillor Raines
Councillor Scott
Councillor K Smith

- 2.2 The Panel would like to record its gratitude to the Members and Officers of Havant Borough Council for making themselves available to meet with the Panel. Full details of these members and officers may be found in the Background Papers.

3.0 Methodology

- 3.1 The Panel's activity was in 4 parts:

(a) Review of Background Information

Throughout the review the members of the Panel had access to the report on the Council's Covid 19 response submitted to Cabinet on 1 July 2020 and to the resource pack established by the Local Government Association, which included examples of how other Councils had reacted to the Covid 19 pandemic.

(b) Interviews with the relevant officers

(c) Results of a Councillor Survey

(d) Arriving at recommendations

The Evidence Considered

4 Who did the Council Target?

- 4.1 The Council targeted the following audiences:

- Residents – particularly vulnerable residents
- Businesses – particularly those needing support
- Staff
- Councillors
- Other stakeholders

5 What channels of communication did the Council use during the Covid 19 pandemic?

- 5.1 The Council used a wide range of communication methods to contact and keep residents and business informed throughout the first wave of the pandemic. These methods can be divided into digital and non digital.

5.2 Digital

Website

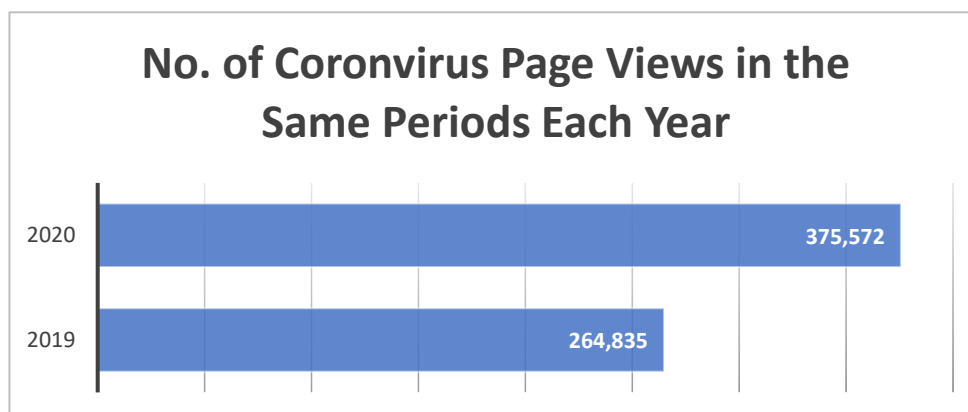
- 5.2.1 The Council's website was instrumental in providing information directly to residents and could be easily updated to reflect the constant changes in government advice and guidance. Therefore it was crucial that it was fully accessible to everyone during the first wave of the pandemic.

The main focus of the communications strategy was on the website which could be easily updated to reflect the constant changes in government advice and guidance. The Council created three main pages dedicated to coronavirus information all prominent on homepage

- Council service updates - <https://www.havant.gov.uk/coronavirus>
-
- Support for businesses - <https://www.havant.gov.uk/coronavirus-business-support>
-
- Support for vulnerable people - <https://www.havant.gov.uk/vulnerable-people>

- 5.2.2 The pages were updated in line with changes in government advice and changes to the services provided by the Council. For example, the service update page was revised every day to give updates on the status of HBC's services and some non-council services e.g. the page was used to update residents on the current status of schools and waste recycling tips in the Borough. When the list first started it included details of 10 services but by 19 August 2020 this had increased to 30 services. The website notice on the homepage was used to promote key messages.

- 5.2.4 As at 18 August 2020, the coronavirus information on the website had 83,126 page views with 43,717 page views within the first three weeks on the coronavirus information going live on the website. The following graph shows how this number of views compared with view in the same periods in 2019 and 2020.



Social media

- 5.2.5 The greatest value of social media was the ability to foster and engage with a community not usually reached. Therefore, in addition to using the website, the Council sought to engage residents and business using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- 5.2.6 Since the start of the coronavirus outbreak, there has been a sharp increase in engagement and reach on the Council's social media accounts. The Council's Facebook account had received 558 new followers in March/April 2020 with a total of 4,406 likes. The Panel was advised that the Council's twitter account had a similar trend.

Facebook daily averages ¹				
Period	Posts per day	Reach	Impressions	Number of followers
Before 1/3/2020	1.3	2,407	3,172	3,848
After 1/3/2020	2.7	6,387	7,582	4,406
Twitter daily averages ²				
Period	Tweets per day	Impressions	Engagements	Number of followers
Before 1/3/2020	1.4	991	13	3,303
After 1/3/2020	2.7	1,344	38	3,650

E- Newsletters

- 5.2.7 E-newsletters are another valuable method of keeping residents/business informed of the ever changing situations and advise of grants/help available. E-newsletters could be tailored to the untended audience's needs. During the pandemic Councillor and business e-newsletters had been produced.

Virtual Meetings

- 5.2.8 Virtual briefings were held with staff and councillors to impart information to a wide audience and at the same time make the audience feel engaged in the Council's response.

¹ Correct as at 19 August 2020

² ibid

5.3 Non Digital

Printed communications

- 5.3.1 The Panel noted that the Council recognised that not all residents or businesses had access to the internet and had therefore resorted to using printed leaflets and flyers to impart information:

Telephone

- 5.3.2 The Panel noted that the Council also used the telephone system as shown in paragraph 8.1.7 below.

Visits

- 5.3.3 The Panel received evidence that in some cases officers visited vulnerable residents who the Council failed to reach by other methods (see 8.1.7 below).

6 How Well did the Council Communicate with the Target Audiences?

6.1 Residents

- 6.1.1 Although the Council used a wide range of communication methods to inform and contact residents, its main focus was on digital communications methods as these could be easily updated to reflect the constant changes in government advice and guidance. Digital channels of communication were also favoured above printed material as printed leaflets were:

- a) most likely be discarded after being read or discarded because they were assumed to be junk mail, and
- b) most likely to be out of date by the time they were distributed.

- 6.1.2 Although it was difficult to estimate how many of the page views and social media followers reported in 7.1.3 above were residents, it was felt safe to assume that these figures did not relate to businesses alone.

- 6.1.3 The Panel noted that, in light of information provided by Insight that a large part of the population of Borough did not have access to the internet, the Council printed and distributed 55,500 leaflets at a cost of £5,500. The Panel acknowledged that this leaflet was delayed in order to enable Hampshire County Council to set up and supply details of the helpline for vulnerable residents.

- 6.1.4 The Panel considered that the design of the leaflet was incorrect, that it lacked essential messages relevant to neighbourhoods, lacked a sense of urgency and emergency, and was too late in getting to residents. An opportunity had been missed to ensure an early flyer with key information – albeit to watch for

announcements or giving an emergency number to call locally – had reached every household as soon as lockdown occurred. The Panel was also disappointed that the helpline telephone number was not more prominent in the leaflet.

- 6.1.5 The Panel acknowledged that in addition to the problems associated with leaflets as set out above, leaflets were costly. However, in the light of evidence received from the Chairman of the Panel on the effectiveness of leaflets distributed by her voluntary group, the Panel felt that instead of producing one leaflet, the Council should have distributed a series tailored to meet specific issues. The Panel welcomed the acknowledgement by the Leader that perhaps the Council had been too ambitious in trying to cover too much information within one document.
- 6.1.6 The Panel felt that more use should have been made of flyers or the radio to reach vulnerable residents.
- 6.1.7 The Panel was pleased to note that evidence submitted to the Covid 19 – Scrutiny of the Councils Community Task and Finish Panel revealed that officers working in the Council's helpline contacted vulnerable residents by telephone to ascertain what help was required. This scrutiny had also revealed that officers from this Council also visited vulnerable residents who could not be reached by any other means
- 6.1.8 It was difficult for the Panel to gauge how effectively the Council communicated with residents without evidence. However, the respondents to a survey of Councillors revealed that as residents they felt that the most effective channels of communication were volunteer Facebook pages, customer services, daily government press conferences, radio, HBC emails, Serving You and the council's website. In the event of a second wave only 11% of the respondents to the Councillors' survey were not confident that residents would receive appropriate and timely communication from the Council.
- 8.1.9 A majority of the respondents to the Councillors' Survey suggested that the following improvements should be introduced in the event of a second wave:
- a quicker response
 - all messages from the council during the lockdown should focus on delivering contact details rather than being used as a promotional tool.

6.2 Businesses

- 6.2.1 The Council had a critical role in supporting business in the short term and re-building the economy in the medium to long term. It was essential that communications from the Council sustained businesses through this period

6.2.3 As at 30 June:

- 17 bulletins sent to those signed-up to receive business news with 86% engagement
- Facebook - 39 posts - 101,292 reach – 5,450 engagements
- Twitter - 40 tweets - 19,320 reach - 466 engagements

6.2.4 To keep local businesses up to date on the fast-changing situation and reopening of businesses the Council produced business e-newsletters, which were sent on an almost weekly basis to highlight grants and other significant issues for local businesses. As at 19 August 6,300 people were receiving these e-newsletters.

6.2.5 Posters were also displayed on sites around the borough. These posters had been revised to comply with changes in government guidance.

6.2.6 The above forms of communication were reinforced with email bulletins and social media posts and a dedicated webpage for customers on how to keep safe outside in the borough.

6.2.7 Although a survey of Councillors indicated that the respondents considered that there should be better communication with businesses, a survey commissioned by the Covid 19 Scrutiny – Business Support Response Task and Finish Panel found that 79% of the respondents found it easy to find the information and forms to apply for a business support grant.

6.3 Councillors

“A councillor’s primary role is to represent their ward or division and the people who live in it. Councillors provide a bridge between the community and the council. As well as being an advocate for your local residents and signposting them to the right people at the council, you will need to keep them informed about the issues that affect them”³

6.3.1 The Panel was eager to ensure that the Council also sought to keep Councillors up to date with developments during the first wave of the pandemic to enable them to fulfil their community role.

6.3.2 The main communication methods utilized were

- 23 editions of Serving Councillors
- Virtual Councillor briefings
- Video of Leader and shared on social media

6.3.3 These methods were used to update the Councillors on the Council’s response to the pandemic with Serving You including weekly key statistics. The peak opening rate of Serving You was 76%.

³ Local Government Association - Councillors’ Guide

- 6.3.4 The Panel welcomed the innovative way the officers communicated with Councillors. However, it felt that Councillors should have had a briefing as soon as lockdown occurred, albeit through a chain of communication such as County Councillors being informed, who in turn could have telephoned their HBC councillors or similar.
- 6.3.5 The Councillors' survey indicated that the channels of communications from the Council that proved most effective were general communications from the Council and briefings with the Leader. Overall other comments made for this question included a desire for a Question and Answer function to have taken place in order for Councillors to be briefed but also be able to receive answers to outstanding questions.
- 6.3.6 Councillors who responded to the survey also found the following forms of communication most effective when fulfilling their role as a Councillor during the pandemic:
- direct contact with the volunteer groups
 - Facebook pages offering information for the groups
 - frequent updates from the Leader (LGA)
 - comms trickled down from HCC
 - radio
 - daily news updates broadcast on the BBC
 - conversations between Councillors directly, other council's websites
- 6.3.7 Although 61% of the respondents to the Councillors' survey did not agree that the communications received from the Council exceeded their expectations, 61% of the respondents considered that the information received was relevant.
- 6.3.8 The respondents to the survey and the Panel identified the following improvements
- communications were timely given the rapidly changing situation
 - communications should be more easily understood
 - communications should be more inclusive for Councillors and have the same focus on Councillor welfare as provided for staff (see 6.4 below)
 - more information provided to Councillors should be given

6.4 **Staff**

- 6.4.1 Throughout the pandemic, a majority of the staff worked from home which posed challenges in providing the same level of service and maintaining staff welfare.

- 6.4.2 The Panel was pleased to see that regular all-staff emails had been sent to keep staff informed. As the situation had evolved these communications focused on matters such as working from home, staff welfare and support for managers. In addition, regular corporate communication tools such as Kneller's News and TeamTalk had been held with over 200 staff participating in each of these sessions when held.
- 6.4.3 The Panel was pleased to note that in a staff survey 93% of respondents indicated that they strongly agreed that they were kept informed on how the council was responding to the coronavirus pandemic through staff communication channels such as the weekly email, Kneller's News and Team Talk.

7.0 What Were the challenges and problems?

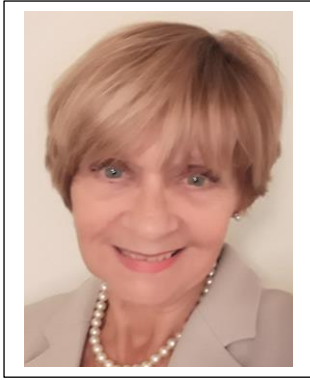
- 7.1 The main challenges and problems faced by the Council was
- having to respond to government messages, guidance and legislation which change rapidly
 - a reliance on other partners e.g. HCC for vulnerable resident helpline number
 - trying to communicate with businesses which had closed during the pandemic and were not operating from their business address
 - trying to reach residents, who had no or limited access to the internet

9.0 How Ready was the Council to Respond Another Local or national lockdown?

- 9.1 The Panel was advised that Council was working on identifying roles and responsibilities with the Local Resilience Forum in the event of another lockdown and that the Officers were investigating using other forms of communication such as radio to reach vulnerable people.



**Review of Council's
Community Support Response
to the First Wave of the
COVID19 Pandemic**



Foreword by Councillor Dianne Lloyd

Chair of the Operations and Place Shaping scrutiny board

Undoubtedly, every effort was made by all involved; from the officers of Havant Borough Council (HBC) and East Hants District Council (EHDC), the Council's partners and the many unsung heroes in the community who worked tirelessly to help and support those residents in our midst who, for many and various reasons, are vulnerable and in need of assistance.

Exceptional leadership was shown by the executive officers who convened a COVID19 team as early as February 25. By March 18 decisions were being made on all aspects of the lockdown which was then announced by the prime minister on March 23. Throughout the lockdown and beyond, communications were produced in innovative and responsive ways. From the more than once-a-day updates to the website, its redesign for easy and quick access, updates on the Council's Facebook page and the use of twitter, to the Serving Councillors e-letters and virtual face-to-face briefings for councillors, it's clear that a herculean effort on communications to residents, councillors and staff took place when they were most needed.

As a result of swift and certain decision making and action, the Local Response Centre (LRC) staffed by officers - 9am to 5pm, 7 days a week - from across the services in both HBC and EHDC, was ready to receive and act upon calls from the 0333 370 4000 Hantshelp4vulnerable helpline, set up by the lead authority, Hampshire County Council (HCC).

It was regrettable that the lead authority could not release the helpline number at the same time as the LRC went "live". This caused a delay in having the leaflet '*Your Council is here to help you*' printed. The Panel's view is that was a vital piece of communication because it was posted to every household in the borough, signposting how to get help if needed.

The level of outbound, welfare calls to non-shielded residents, who could be considered vulnerable but who had not made contact with the helpline, was admirable and must be applauded. Between 30 April and 21 May 5,597 calls were made and over 50 referrals for support, placed.

On May 7, the Lead Authority asked districts to make contact with those shielded residents who had not been heard from, by the helpline. In order to ensure everyone was alright, a team of four officers led by the Enforcement Manager for Neighbourhood Quality, ended up making home visits to 42 residents of HBC and 45 of EHDC. This shows outstanding commitment to serve the community and is an indicator of the work carried out by so few that has gone unseen by the many.

The combined forces of HBC and EHDC went even further. Nearly 8,000 calls were made to those shielded residents by 113 redeployed officers, in two phases. The first phase was a courtesy call which checked if the resident had enough support at that time. Phase two took place as the government food parcel deliveries were coming to an end, to make sure those residents were able to access food supplies. This initiative was not mandated as part of the community support process headed up by HCC. As such, executive officers are to be congratulated for it, and the way in which they were able to take the staff along with them in the desire to complete this hands-on community role.

The Civil Enforcement Team not only delivered food to the food banks to keep them supplied; they also carried e-Credit cards with which they could purchase essential supplies in cases of real food shortage emergency. This, together with all the other exemplary service by our officers, was vital to some of the most hardest hit in our society.

There were frustrations surrounding positions of readiness, the sharing of data between the lead authority and districts and the roles of some organisations during the lockdown. However, I am convinced the lessons learnt from this unprecedented event have enabled all those involved to strengthen their resources and relationships. Following on from the success of the effort expended in the first wave of the corona virus, and as we all move forward in this new, dynamic, normal way of life, those most at risk in our society will be supported as they need to be. Thank you.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The following is a synopsis of the proceedings and recommendations made by the COVID19 Scrutiny – Community Support Review Task and Finish Panel (“the Panel”) to consider the Council’s community support response during the first wave of the COVID19 pandemic.
- 1.2 In June this year Cabinet requested the Governance, Audit and Finance Board to undertake a review of the Council’s response to the COVID19 pandemic. This was accepted by the Board at the Joint Scrutiny Board held on 22 June 2020. Therefore, for the purposes of the Scrutiny Standing Orders set out in the Constitution, the Governance, Audit and Finance Board is, for this review, the Parent Board.
- 1.3 Due to the amount of work involved, The Governance, Audit and Finance Board (GAF Board) divided the scrutiny review into a number of areas and asked the Operations and Place Shaping (OPS) and Business and Commercial Services (BACS) Boards to help with this review by reviewing specified areas and reporting their findings back to GAF Board before the end of August. At the Joint Scrutiny Board held on 22 June, members of the OPS Board accepted this referral and agreed to complete the review and report back to the Board by the end of August 2020. The time for completion was extended by the Chairman of the Governance, Audit and Finance Board to enable the panel to undertake a thorough review.
- 1.4 This report should be read in conjunction with the separate document entitled “Background Papers to the Review of COVID19 Scrutiny” “Background Papers” and may be viewed on-line using the following link: [to be inserted)

2.0 Recommendations – Report on Community Support and Communications aspects of HBC’s Response to COVID19

- 2.1 The Operations and Place Shaping scrutiny board - acting as a Task & Finish Panel for this scrutiny topic only – recommends that:
 - 2.1.1 A register of all community volunteer groups is drawn up - which includes the contact details of each group’s coordinator – and is retained and reviewed-quarterly to ensure there is, at all times, a current list of any and all volunteer groups operating in the borough who could provide support to vulnerable residents.
 - 2.1.2 A ‘go to’ document showing best practices to be adopted by volunteers supporting vulnerable residents be produced in readiness for distribution to any and all community groups taking on this role in the borough to avoid piece-meal and late distribution of information.
 - 2.1.3 Every ward councillor – for Borough and County - be made aware quarterly and again in the event of any emergency which required support to be given to vulnerable residents, of the information in recommendation 1 above, so they can act as a resource of information for volunteer coordinators.
 - 2.1.4 During a period of community support, data showing the number of vulnerable residents being supported in each ward, or by each community volunteer group if they are covering more than one ward, is gathered on a weekly basis so that a complete picture of the extent of volunteer activity is known which can be used for ongoing and future planning purposes.

- 2.1.5 Text for a piece of printed communication material such as a flyer, be drafted in readiness, containing the information residents will need about how to access support if they find themselves requiring assistance during a period of restricted movement in the community. (At present the Hants4help phone line remains 'live'; in the future this helpline number could change).
- 2.1.6 The printed communication in 2.5 above should be printed and distributed to every household in areas of the borough that become subject to any national or local restrictions of movement in the community, at the earliest possible time to ensure everyone receives the same message, especially those residents who cannot use the internet.
- 2.1.7 Communication with councillors be made as soon as is feasible once any restrictions on movement in the community are agreed, giving them the detailed information about how support will be given to their residents (see 2.3 above).
- 2.1.8 Once councillors are given the information about how support in the community will be given in their ward, they should liaise with the relevant group / organisation in order to play their part signposting, advising and generally helping volunteer groups to support their residents. This should be encouraged by the Leader of the Council.
- 2.1.9 Councillors be included in the welfare checks. The Cabinet Lead for 'People' should ensure this happens in the event of any local or national emergency.
- 2.1.10 Any money allocated for 'school-holiday-time' food for children who are entitled to free school meals during term time, is targeted at those families, through their schools, for the school holidays.
- 2.12 *The Panel has been made aware that following developments by central government over the weekend 7th and 8th November 2020 on funding for school-holiday-food where children qualify for free school meals, it is anticipated that Hampshire County Council – who is responsible for education – will take the lead on this and a voucher scheme for those specific families implemented; however, scrutiny retains its right to review how these funds are disseminated to ensure these specific children's families are the recipients of the funding in the most appropriate and easily-accessible way.*

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The support provided by the Council has been exemplary and has been recognised by the residents of the Borough. However, there has been a failure in communicating the level of this support to ward Councillors.
- 3.2 The support has demonstrated the agility of the Council's staff to undertake work outside their specialisms.
- 3.3 An opportunity to involve and take advantage of the local knowledge held by ward Councillors has been missed.
- 3.4 The Panel is satisfied that provided that 3.1. and 3.2 are corrected that the Council is in a position to respond effectively to a second wave of COVID19.

4.0 The Panel

- 4.1 The Review was undertaken by the Operations and Place Shaping (OPS) scrutiny board, acting for this scrutiny only, as a Panel which included the following members:

Councillor Lloyd (Chair of the OPS scrutiny board and Lead Councillor in this Panel format)
Councillor Carpenter (part of the time of the review)
Councillor Howard
Councillor Jenner
Councillor Milne
Councillor Raines
Councillor Gwen Robinson
Councillor Scott
Councillor K Smith
Councillor B Francis – co-opted member

- 4.2 *The Panel would like to record its gratitude to the Members and Officers of Havant Borough Council for making themselves available to meet with the Panel. Full details of these members and officers may be found in the document entitled “Background Papers”.*

- 4.3 *The Chair of the Operations and Place Shaping scrutiny board, who chaired this Panel, would like to express her gratitude to the Head of Service for Housing and Community in particular, for her positive response to the content of this report, and for her expediency of actions regarding any and all matters over which the Panel made comment. The Chair would also like to thank the CEO and Director for supporting scrutiny in such a positive and responsive manner.*

5.0 Terms of Reference

- 5.1 The panel agreed to focus on the following areas:

- a) What is the challenge for providing community engagement and community development support?
- b) What is the quantifiable and qualitative impact (positive, negative) on the borough of Havant?
- c) To what extent has the Council worked with voluntary / mutual aid groups?
- d) What groups of vulnerable people have been impacted on more than others, and how does this compare to pre-COVID?
- e) What has our response been to date and what lessons have we learnt?
- f) What problems have we experienced?

- g) What does the future look like, and what is the phasing / timing of possible future impacts?
- h) What is the national, regional and partner response likely to be?
- i) What is within our control and what is not?
- j) Where is the current and future response to this articulated, managed and monitored? E.g. Corporate plan? Business Plans? Boards? Recovery Plans?
- k) What are the challenges for responding to new / emerging legislation in addition to the existing statutory functions for Environmental Health?

6.0 What was not included in the review

- 6.1 The purpose of this review was to scrutinise the level of the service delivery. The findings of the review, which relate to matters other than service delivery, will feed into the other reviews being undertaken into the Council's COVID19 response.

7.0 Methodology

- 7.1 The Panel's activity fell into 7 parts:

(a) Review of Background Information

Throughout the review the members of the Panel had access to the report on the Council's COVID19 response submitted to Cabinet on 1 July 2020 and to the resource pack established by the Local Government Association, which included examples on how other Councils had reacted to the COVID19 pandemic

(b) Interviews with the relevant officers

To discuss the Council's support to vulnerable people during the first wave of the COVID19 pandemic.

(c) Survey of Members of Havant Borough Council

To gain an understanding from HBC Councillors about the level of support needed and given in the borough, together with their experience and opinion about the communications from HBC to you and your residents.

The results of this exercise are set out in the Background Papers.

(d) Briefing Note from Community First

The Council was not, of course, acting alone. The success of its response relied upon how well it worked with its partners and in particular Community First.

Therefore, the Board wanted to learn from Community First how well information was shared, co-ordinated effort, and co-operated with that organisation in response to this pandemic.

(e) Briefing Notes from Hampshire County Councillors

The success of the Council's response depended on how well it worked with its County Council (HCC). Therefore, the Panel wrote to all County Councillors representing this Borough with the aim of learning their experience on how well the Councils shared information, co-ordinated and co-operated in their response to this pandemic.

(f) Briefing Note from Hampshire County Council's Cabinet Lead for Adult and Social Care

The Panel wished to learn from the Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health how well the Council worked with the County Council.

(h) Arriving at recommendations

8.0 Principles of the Review

8.1 Before the Panel arrived at its recommendations it decided that its deliberations should be underpinned by the following principles:

- (i) the recommendations should be based on a transparent and logical construct that is understandable and justifiable.
- (iii) all recommendations should be based on evidence; and
- (iv) any recommendations should be simple to administer.

8.2 The Panel has set out its deliberations in this report to assist Members and the public to understand its approach. While the Panel's recommendations are not mandatory it is hoped that if the Governance, Audit and Finance Board disagrees with the recommendations of this review that it would accept the Panel's logic. The recommendations presented in this report at the present time represent the view of the Panel and not the official view of Havant Borough Council.

Evidence Considered

9.0 Key Messages and Observations

9.1 Councillors' Concerns

- 9.1.1 A survey of Councillors indicated that 60% of the respondents considered that the support provided to vulnerable residents was average with 40% feeling it was below average¹. Although these results were a representative of 39% of the Councillors there did appear to be areas that needed improvement. Therefore, the Panel took a deeper look into the support provided and the framework within which this support had been provided.

9.2 Accuracy of the Data provided

- 9.2.1 Unfortunately, the data submitted to the Panel was incomplete as the officers could only report on where the formal network was involved with the referrals. The Council was aware that in some areas, such as Emsworth, groups took their own referrals. Although, Community First had requested this information from the Community Co-ordination Group, this information had not been forthcoming. Therefore, the findings of this Panel were based on the information available at the time of the review.
- 9.2.2 Although Community First had requested information from the Community Co-ordination Group, this information had **not** been forthcoming.

9.3 What is within the Council's control and what is not?

- 9.3.1 Although the Council had some flexibility on how it delivered support at a local level, its response was limited by the framework set out below. Havant Borough Council was therefore truly grateful to any and all support within the community that may have gone unnoticed.

Roles and Responsibilities Framework

National Level

- 9.3.2 At a national level the lead responsibility for providing overall multi-agency command, control, and co-ordination throughout the different phases of the pandemic lies with COBRA with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Public Health England (PHE) playing a key role.

Local Level

Lead Authority

- 9.3.3 For this emergency Hampshire County Council was the lead authority

Local Resilience Forum

¹ Full details of the survey results are included in the Background Papers

9.3.4 In Hampshire, as in all other areas of the country, a support hub for vulnerable people was established across Local Authorities. In the Hampshire area, County and City Councils, Public Health, District Councils, the Voluntary sector and faith communities worked together to some degree as part of the Coronavirus response called the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Resilience Forum (HLOW LRF). The forum coordinated responses, disseminates learning, escalated issues and provided mutual aid when protecting the most vulnerable in response to COVID19. This included provision of support for those who might struggle to access services, such as rough sleepers and all frail and vulnerable adults requiring help who may have been 'shielding' or experiencing social isolation.

9.3.5 The principle membership of the HLOW LRF is formed of those agencies designated as Category 1 responders within the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. These agencies are:

Basingstoke & Deane Council	NHS England South East (HTV)
Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service	NHS England South East (HTV)
East Hants District Council	Hampshire Constabulary
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	New Forest District Council
Eastleigh Borough Council	Hampshire County Council
Portsmouth City Council	Rushmoor Borough Council
Environment Agency	Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service
Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust	Solent NHS Trust
Fareham Borough Council	Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Public Health England South East	Southampton City Council
Gosport Borough Council	Hart District Council
South Central Ambulance Service - NHS Foundation Trust	Havant Borough Council
Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust	Isle of Wight Council
Test Valley Borough Council	Wight NHS Trust University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust
Isle of Wight NHS Trust – Ambulance Service	Winchester City Council

9.3.6 A Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) led the response to the pandemic and strategic objectives were defined from the outset. The role of the SCG was to coordinate efforts, to ensure that all programmes of activity delivered by the HLOW LRF supported the overall strategic aims and to report up to central Government.

The LRF was supported by:

- (a) The National Health Service
- (b) 11 Local Resource Centres (LRCs) - set up by district councils in partnership with local voluntary sector organisations, whereby groups and local councils, could draw on local volunteers. This combined effort provided local support to access food, prescription collection and other forms of support.
- (c) the County Council's Adult Health and Care Welfare Team where more complex needs and personal care requirements are identified. They could also draw on voluntary support from LRCs in addition to other care and support provision. They would pick up any issues related to adult safeguarding or domestic abuse and any urgent issues.
- (d) Community First - took a lead role on behalf of the Community Voluntary Services (CVS) network and voluntary sector to support the LRF and LRCs. Full details of the roles of Community First is set out in the Background papers.

This Council's Local Response Centre

- 9.3.7 A Memorandum of Understanding was agreed between the County, Community First and the Council stating that the Council would run the Local Response Centre with Community First able to support the Council in this role should it be required. Community First focused on the co-ordination of volunteers for some wards within the borough.
- 9.3.8 Community First supported some local groups with safeguarding and training. A copy of the Memorandum of Understanding is included in the Background Papers.
- 9.3.9 Havant Borough Council and East Hampshire District Council also set up a virtual call centre known as the Local Response Centre (LRC) and staff from both Councils were redeployed to answer calls from people seeking assistance in the Havant and East Hants areas. The centre was manned between 9 am and 5pm, seven days per week.
- 9.3.10 The purpose of the centre was to receive calls from the Hantshelp4vulnerable number, decide which ward the resident lived in and pass the details to the community group for that ward to ensure the needs of the resident - such as shopping, collection of prescribed medicine, the delivery of food parcels, dog walking, set-up a regular phone call for anyone feeling lonely and isolated etc – were going to be met by that community support group.
- 9.3.11 Where the needs of the resident were more urgent or complex, the staff member handling the call made a referral to other agencies, such as Adult Social Care and Community First.
- 9.3.12 *The Panel acknowledges the extent of the work done by the staff who manned the Local Response Centre and is grateful to them all for their decision-making and commitment to ensuring that every caller was helped appropriately.*
- 9.3.13 All residents in the Council area also received a newsletter advertising the contact details of the County's Hantshelp4vulnerable (the helpline) helpline number.

- 9.3.14 Many community support groups were contacted direct because they delivered their own flyers to households in their areas, which was the case in Stakes and Emsworth.

Hayling Island had a different approach which appointed a coordinator for many streets, to ensure anyone needing help could receive it from either the activity carried out on Hayling Island or that an onward referral as above, was made.

- 9.3.15 Community First worked well with the Council's officers and food banks in the borough.

- 9.3.16 *The Panel was impressed with the effort provided by so many different sources throughout the Borough.*

9.4 Homeless people and Rough Sleepers

- 9.4.1 Following a directive from MHCLG on 26 March 2020, for Local Authorities to safeguard homeless people from COVID19 by bringing them in off the street, officers block-booked six rooms at Buriton where the landlord had been incredibly supportive ensuring additional cleaning and safeguarding mechanisms were put in place for those placed there.

- 9.4.2 Twenty-one households were placed into B&B. Twenty households refused the offer and made alternative arrangements to house themselves.

- 9.4.3 Officers worked with more than 130 households over the period and as at 22 June 2020 there were 42 households still in emergency accommodation. Officers from HBC or staff from the Two Saints charity contacted all households in B&B on a weekly basis to ensure their well-being and update those who were in the process of 'move on' plans.

- 9.4.4 *The Panel was pleased to learn that so many people who had been sleeping rough or otherwise presenting as homeless were found safe accommodation during the lockdown period. The Panel was not sure however, what happened to the households that were living in B&B when the lockdown was released. This question has been put to the Head of Service for Housing and the Panel is happy to receive an update informally.*

- 9.4.5 *The Panel would also like to know if any temporary sites were needed and found for gypsies and travellers in the Havant borough during lockdown and, if so, the current status of those sites.*

- 9.4.6 *The Panel was concerned to learn that the staff who undertook this highly sensitive, complex and challenging work, whereby face-to-face interviews were obviously the most desirable way to work with people, did not all receive the appropriate IT equipment throughout the lockdown and in fact that situation had not been completely resolved until October.*

- 9.4.7 *The Panel wished to express its thanks to those particular staff. The Panel recognised that the consequences of lockdown on families' finances and relationships would see a surge in the threat of homelessness over the coming weeks and months.*

9.5 Summary of the Process in Supporting Vulnerable Residents?

- 9.5.1 As part of the Hampshire County Council area response, a helpline called Hantshelp4vulnerable was established where advisers triaged calls from vulnerable people who were seeking help. The number to call was 0333 370 4000.

9.5.2 Callers were:

- a) provided with information and signposting including, where appropriate, to the NHS (2,835²)
- b) referred to 11 district based Local Response Centres (LRCs) where they were connected to local support in order to access food, prescription collection and other forms of support (as above) – provided by and in partnership with local voluntary sector organisations, groups and local councils, drawing on local volunteers (6,127³)
- c) referred to the County Council's Adult Health and Care Welfare Team where more complex needs and personal care requirements were identified. The call handlers were able to pick up any issues related to adult safeguarding or domestic abuse and other urgent issues. (3,107⁴)

9.5.3 As agreed by all agencies, Adults' Health and Care Welfare Team took the lead role in proactively contacting all residents identified as extremely clinically vulnerable by the Government who had not registered online for the government-funded food parcel scheme, or who had registered and had requested support due to delays in provision through the Government scheme, or where the Government scheme did not meet their requirements.

9.5.4 53,225 residents in Hampshire had been identified by the NHS as extremely vulnerable and advised to shield or take special caution, in addition to universal social distancing measures during the outbreak.

9.5.4 A flow chart of the process was set out in the background papers. It was important to note that although under this process the Council played a leading part, a majority of this support was delivered indirectly to vulnerable residents e.g. the Council supplied non-perishable food to the food banks. However, it was the food banks that supplied the food to the vulnerable residents. Also, volunteers working for community groups did shopping for vulnerable residents, or collected shopping that had been bought over the phone or by click n' collect, as the need arose, especially when delivery slots were unavailable and / or the vulnerable resident did not use the internet.

9.6 The County Council's Response

9.6.1 The County Council used a range of communication methods, such as texts, messaging to land lines, out bound calls and home visits depending on the circumstances and contact details made available by the Government. Initially, the County Council did a bulk text to make those on the list aware of the HantsHelp4Vulnerable Contact Centre. A proportion of the extremely vulnerable residents and indeed, other vulnerable people who were not on the extremely vulnerable list were already known to, or in receipt of social care services from the County Council and were contacted through community social work teams. Many GPs were also separately contacting their own vulnerable patients to ensure they were aware of support available.

² Local Resilience Forum Covid Welfare Response Scorecard – Last update 20th July

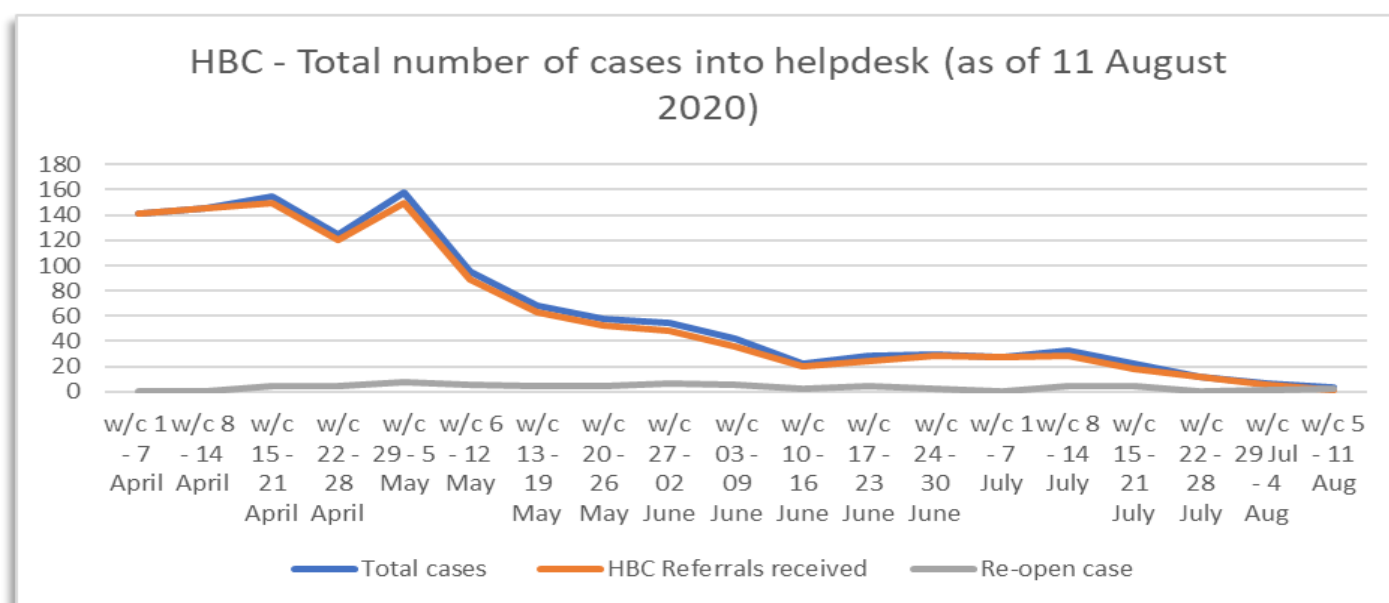
³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

9.7 Havant Borough Council's Response Centre

Helpdesk calls

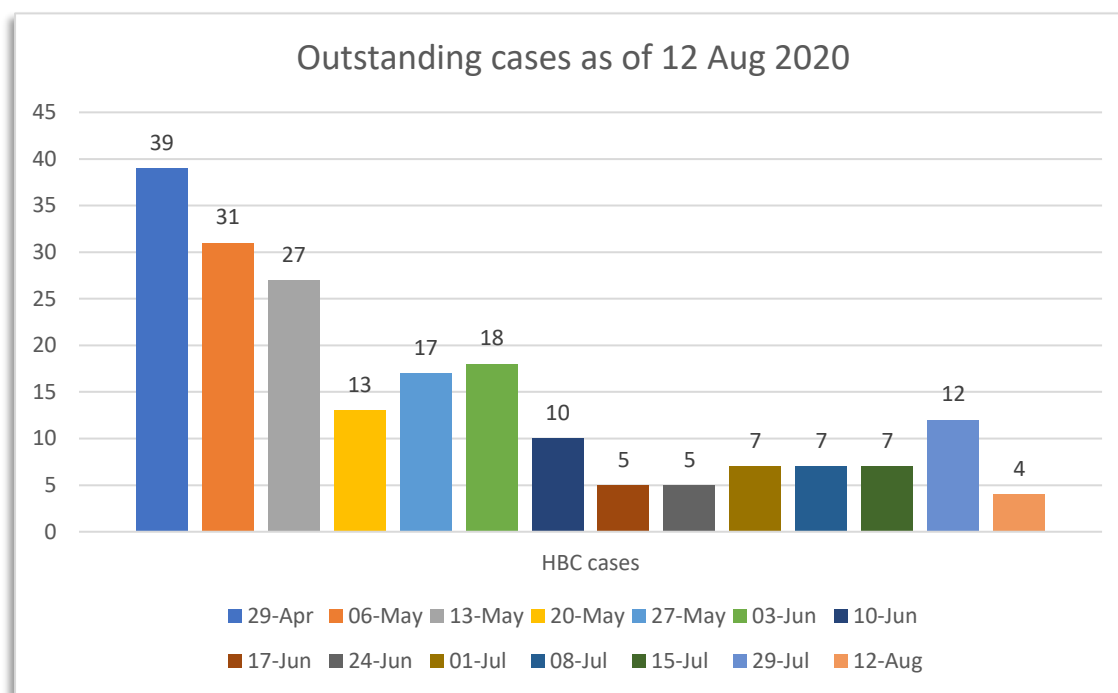
- 9.7.1 *The Panel was pleased to note that the Council's Local Response Centre for HBC (and EHDC) was ready to receive calls from the Hampshire County Council's HantsHelp4Vulnerable Contact Centre helpline (0333 370 4000), on Friday 27th March 2020. Unfortunately, the County Council, the lead Authority, directed that this local call centre could not become active until it had set up its helpline, which resulted in a delay of 4 days' before residents could use the system.*
- 9.7.2 *The Panel was unhappy with the delay and felt that it created an opportunity for community groups to take matters into their own hands by delivering flyers or other means of letting residents know who they could contact for support locally. While the Panel recognised that more help than less was best, it was aware that duplication of effort and confusion by residents about who to contact may have been caused in some incidences.*
- 9.7.2 A breakdown of the number of calls received by Local Response Centre is set out in the graph⁵ below:



Number of Cases

- 9.7.3 At its peak, the Council had 39 outstanding cases, which reduced to 4 cases at the end of the full lockdown period. Details of the number of outstanding cases is set in the graph below.

⁵ Havant Borough Council – Covid-19 Fortnightly Helpdesk Report (11 August 2020)



Welfare checks of shielded Vulnerable Residents (VRs)

- 9.7.4 On the 7 May 2020, HCC asked local Councils to carry out welfare checks on those people on the shielded list who the County Council had been unable to reach.
- 9.7.5 *The Panel was impressed to learn that within 24 hours of receiving the request, a team of 4 members of staff, headed by the Neighbourhood Manager was established. This team managed to complete the request (42 visits) within 3 days of the request being received.*

Support to potentially vulnerable residents not on the shielded list

- 9.7.5 The Executive Board initiated a project to proactively contact households (not on the shielded list) in the Borough. The list included anyone over the age of 70, in receipt of a form of benefit, had received a DFG and were on HBC's assisted bins list (this cohort of residents became known as the "New Vulnerable"). The purpose of the initiative was to identify whether these residents required help to obtain food, medical supplies, or other support during the pandemic. If the resident articulated they would like help in accessing certain services or support, they were added to HBC's database of vulnerable people and their details passed on to a volunteer group which could help them, e.g. by picking up shopping or prescribed medication etc. No other local authorities in Hampshire carried out this piece of work, on this scale.
- 9.7.6 Calls began on 27th April and were completed by 25th July (7926 calls made) - there were two phases:
- Phase 1 - checking in with potentially vulnerable customers
 - Phase 2 - calling those in receipt of a food parcels to check they were aware of the delivery being stopped – we then worked with the resident if requested to find an alternative solution.

Staff came together to work from across all departments and both councils on both phases. There were 87 staff with a team of managers on hand, making a total of 113 staff from Havant Borough and East Hants District councils.

9.7.7 The Panel was grateful to the Executive Board for taking this initiative and know anecdotally that residents who received these caring calls were thankful and impressed.

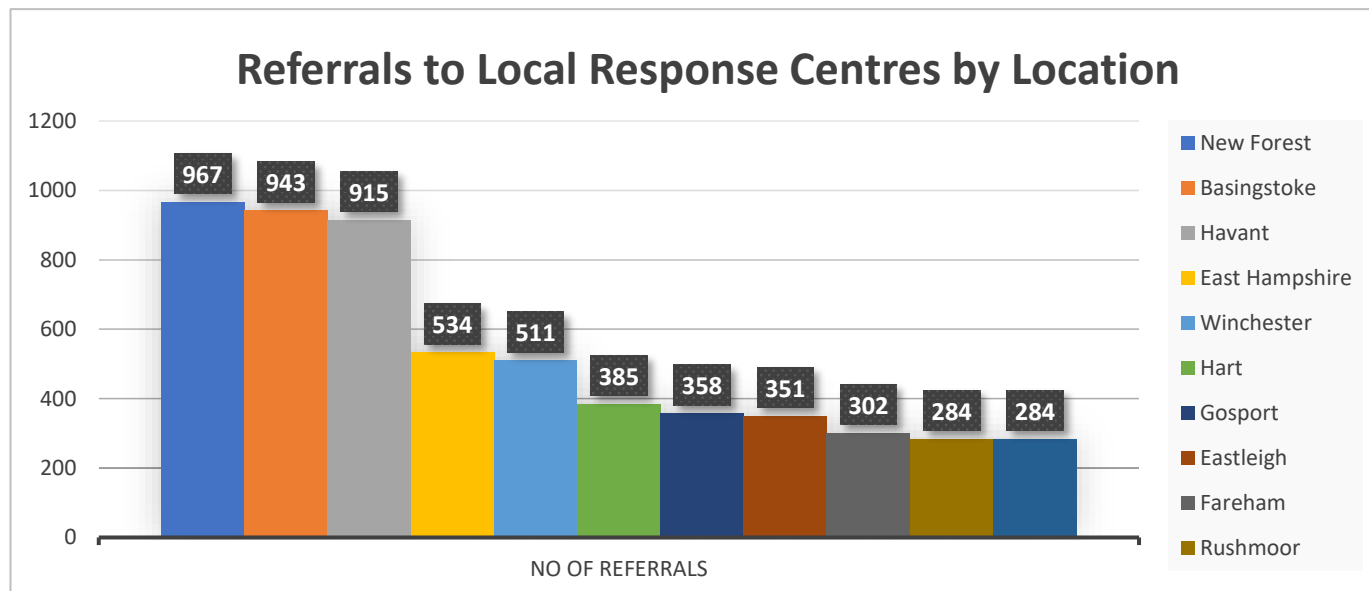
9.7.8 Food Hub

9.7.8.1 The Council's Community Team working with Community First set up a food hub to supply non-perishable to food banks or vulnerable residents. The Food Hub was located at the Leigh Park community centre, managed by one of the Council's managers and supported by Community First. This was used for storage only – the address was not publicised to the local residents. Although all supermarkets in the Borough were contacted, only Tesco in Havant were able to supply the required amount of food.

9.7.8.2 Emergency food parcels were delivered by the Civil Enforcement Team (CET), who used E-Cards to purchase emergency items as required. 76 Emergency food parcels were delivered by the CET between 14th April 2020 to 29th June 2020. The CET also delivered food to the food banks. Having the food hub meant food banks were kept supplied and where necessary, call handlers (from the LRC) could liaise with the CET who would then deliver food packs to those in dire need.

9.8 Comparing the 11 Local Response Centres

9.8.1 Havant received the third highest number of referrals from the County Council helpline as at 20 July⁶



9.8.2 Havant and East Hampshire set up and operated its own helpline, known as the Local Response Centre (LRC) .

⁶ Hampshire County Council Local Resilience Forum Covid Welfare Response Scorecard - LAST UPDATED 20th JULY 12:00

9.8.3 The amount of money spent on replenishing the Council's food hub was much less than other Councils. Approximately £500 was spent on stocking the Food Hub however total funding of around £18,000 has been spent on food supplies (Foodbanks, emergency shopping and food vouchers etc). This has been over the period of a year and includes the £500 for the Food Hub. All the funding was received from various Government grants to be used specifically for food. Spent and committed spend will take us through to September 2021 when the LRC will close.

9.9 Residents impacted by COVID19

9.9.1 Initially Vulnerable Residents who had to shield were affected the most. However, as the impact spread to the wider community as residents lost jobs and were waiting for their Universal Credit claims to come through, some were in financial need. Residents who were discharged from hospital for example in the evening and had to shield and had no food in the house also needed aid.

9.10 The challenge in providing community engagement and community support

9.10.1 One of the main challenges has been how to provide sufficient information to allow each agency/group to support its vulnerable residents within the data protection regulations.

9.10.2 This particularly caused a problem when the County Council was initially reluctant to share data with this Council. The data protection regulations and agreement with the County Council also prevent the Council from sharing some information with voluntary and community groups.

9.10.3 *The Panel is pleased to note that a data sharing agreement has now been signed with the County Council to overcome this issue.*

9.10.4 Problems were experienced when trying to secure accommodation for rough sleepers and the homeless for the following reasons:

- a) the NHS had block booked whole hotel chains for key workers.
- b) owners of B&B were more willing to work with key workers as opposed to rough sleepers.
- c) Premier Inns chose not to work with Councils, despite pressure from the government.

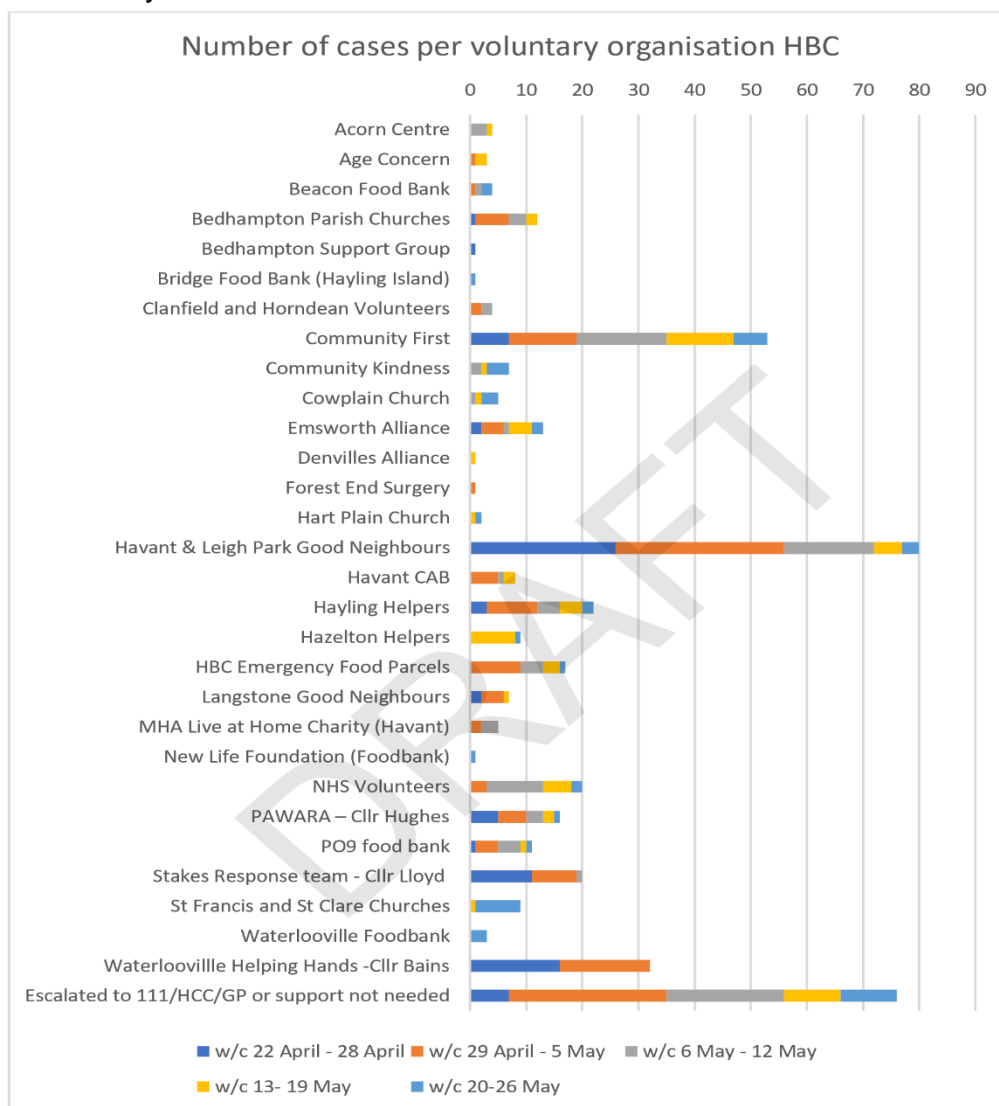
9.11 To what extent has the Council worked with voluntary / mutual aid groups?

9.11.1 The Council created a database of local voluntary groups within both Council areas using their own sources and information held by Community First.

9.11.2 *The Panel learned that despite the creation of a database of local voluntary groups, no data on a weekly / fortnightly / monthly basis was requested by the Council direct or via Community First such that the number of households actually supported throughout the period March to August is no recorded.*

9.11.3 The Panel has gathered information about the number of households some groups supported and estimates that – excluding Emsworth and Hayling Island – a further 400 vulnerable residents should be added to the data shown on the following graph. The Panel is pleased to note that a register of community groups in the Havant borough, including the contact details of the group coordinators and their reach and capacity, is going to be created by Community First and that a process will be put in place by CF to regularly update the data. The Panel will be happy to receive confirmation this has been done, informally.

9.11.2 As at 11 August 2020 the number of cases per voluntary organisation known by HBC / Community First was as follows⁷.



9.11.3 *The Panel acknowledged that residents or councillors may not have been aware of the precise nature of the work carried out by Community First, including the coordination of support given direct to a number of vulnerable residents.*

⁷ Source Appendix 4 of Cabinet Report submitted to Joint Scrutiny Board on 22 June 2020 (See Background Papers)

9.12 What Went Well and What Did Not Work Well

Internal Assessment

9.12.1 What Went Well

- The Local RESPONSE Centre was set up very quickly thanks to the “can do” attitude of those involved.
- The bulk food delivery arrangement with Tesco’s was difficult to achieve but once in place it worked
- Setting up the food hub in Havant
- Positive contribution from the Civil Enforcement Team
- Community teams working together across both authorities
- Positive personal journey for many individuals thanks to the support of colleagues
- Planning Policy Department early offer of assistance
- Many positive relationships have been forged including links with
 - Food Banks
 - Other Hampshire based local authorities
 - Community groups
 - Volunteer groups
 - A “Risk, Actions, Issues and Decisions” (RAID) register was set up for officer use and worked well as officers could keep track of actions and decisions– in hindsight this should have been set up from the start.
- Rushmoor taking a lead role in communication and feedback to HCC
- Setting up the Community Coordination Group (COG) in EHDC
- Setting up the Community Action Group in HBC
- Volume of outbound calls made by council officers
- Ability to evidence LRC take up and usage
- Set up of reporting system to monitor and react to foodbank needs
- Use of foodbank information enabled money and resource to be saved by not setting up a food hub in East Hants
- Speed of response to support gypsy and traveller groups in East Hants

9.12.2 What did Not Go Well

- Hampshire County Council coordination role – some delays at the outset – but good working relationships have been established
- Having insufficient time to train staff in different roles
- Mixed messaging over available budgets.
- Unable to use Capita customer service staff in Havant even though they had no work to do
- Multiple agencies put calls out for volunteers, this was uncoordinated and overwhelmed the local volunteer groups – better once COG set up
- Deployment of volunteers at first

- Representative from Ministry was not well enough informed to be able to provide clarity and answers in a timely fashion, leading to delay in critical decisions
- Central government appeared to lack knowledge of how local government operate, this caused duplication of effort locally and centrally
- Children who receive free school meals during term may not have received a voucher or their families may not have been made aware of how they could obtain food in line with the government's funding for these children, during school holidays.

9.12.3 Residents' Assessment

A survey sent to residents in place of the usual residents' survey to gauge how the local communities were feeling revealed the following:

What Went Well

- Positive feedback from residents saying they felt the council cared

What did Not Go Well

- Some residents reported they'd been called multiple times by different callers
- There was some confusion over role of the County Council and that of Havant Borough Council.
- Requests for social care and mental health intensive support came to Havant Borough Council rather than Hampshire County Council if residents could not get through to County, which delayed the resident reaching the specific help they needed.

9.12.4 Ward Councillors' Assessments

A survey of ward Councillors identified the follow assessments of the Council's response

What did Not Go Well

- Slow response from local authorities
- The individual voluntary groups were working a full capacity and could not have done more
- Confusing messaging as to where to receive support and help, or volunteer
- Vouchers promised for children's lunches were not available - but this was a government failure
- The Council failed to keep councillors in the loop.
- Leaders of the support groups were frustrated due to the lack of information regarding the vulnerable residents such as address, phone numbers, etc
- The Council did not provide enough funding and easy access to funding to support groups

9.12.5 Hampshire Councillors' Assessment

The County Councillors representing this Borough were asked to submit a brief to the Council to give an indication on how well they considered the County Council and LRCs worked together. However, as only two Councillors responded there is insufficient data to draw any reasonable conclusions from this response. (redacted copies of the responses are set out in the Background papers)

The Panel is fortunate that the Cabinet Lead for Adult and Social Care is a County Councillor representing the Borough did reply and her assessment was as follows:

What Went Well

- Good communications via an LRC group led by Patricia Hughes and Karen Edwards and supported via HCC relationship managers. Also well supported by the LRF structure and Graham Allen's meetings bringing together the VCS, Districts and the County Council

What Did Not Go Well

- Although communications improved as relationships developed during the pandemic between County and Districts, there was an initial problem with communication.

The Panel was disappointed to note that there was no communication about the situation of lockdown and vulnerable residents between County Councillors and Borough Councillors.

9.12 Lessons Learnt

9.13.1 The officers identified the following lessons learnt:

- a) The Council's response should be project planned by a project manager from the beginning of any future severe restrictions
- b) The Council should establish good communications with Community First earlier in the crisis to determine exactly what support they can provide and to whom.
- c) The Council should take time to pause, reflect and plan when the situation appears to be becoming overwhelming
- d) The Council should take time out to train staff.
- e) The Council should establish a network with other Local Authorities as early as possible to learn from their experience and identify best practices.
- f) The Council should delegate the authority to act to the lowest acceptable level to enable a speedy response.
- g) The Council should put in place support mechanisms for staff and managers involved in providing support to protect their wellbeing and health

- 9.13.2 *The Panel took the view that greater consultation with ward Councillors, who are the leaders in their local communities, should take place at the beginning of any severe restrictions, to inform each ward where their residents' support will come from.*
- 9.13.3 *The Panel considered that an opportunity had been lost by not consulting and speaking to ward Councillors on what was needed in their areas, where the most vulnerable residents might be housed, and how the crisis impacted on local communities.*
- 9.13.4 *The Panel noted that councillors who were coordinating support groups were not given any support by the Council for their well-being. In fact, no councillors were contacted during the lockdown by any staff or member of the Cabinet to check on their health and well-being which was regrettable especially as many on the Council are in a high-risk category.*

9.14 Actions Put in Place in the Event of a Second Wave

- 9.14.1 *The Panel noted that the following actions had been put in place in the event of a second wave:*
- a) HBC has completed an Impact Assessment in preparation for the Stabilisation phase and then the Recovery phase.
 - b) HBC is in the process of preparing a local lockdown/second wave emergency response plan.
 - c) HBC has produced a flowchart which details how the Local Response Centre would be reactivated and all related responsibilities; this can be done in less than 24 hours, including out of hours cover.
 - d) HBC has defined all roles and responsibilities in the event of a second wave.
 - e) HBC has 60 trained staff on a register to be reinstated into lockdown roles.
 - f) HBC has prepared a Service Level Agreement with Community First to ensure clarity and timeliness in relation to advising and reinstating the local support groups and volunteers.
- 9.14.2 *The Panel was pleased to be given an assurance that the Council can be operational within less than 24 hours if a second wave happened tomorrow.*
- 9.14.3 *The Chair of the Operations and Place Shaping (OPS) scrutiny board has been shown the Plan in confidence – called the Outbreak Plan –which seeks to be the readiness plan for any subsequent local or national lockdown.*
- 9.14.4 *At the time of reviewing this report, the Chair has questions about the capacity and scope of the support that would be provided by community support groups and by the ability of Community First's organisation to co-ordinate community support and step into any gaps that could emerge, providing on-going support to all the residents who may need help. The Panel is happy to receive updates on these matters, informally.*

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Review of the Financial Implications to the Council of the First Wave of the COVID19 Pandemic

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The following is a synopsis of the proceedings and recommendations made by the Covid 19 Scrutiny – Financial Implications of Covid 19 Response Task and Finish Panel (“the Panel”) to consider the financial implications of the Council’s response to the first wave of the Covid 19 pandemic.

3.0 The Panel

- 3.1 The Review was undertaken by the Panel which included the following members:

Councillor Briggs (Lead Councillor)
Councillor Branson
Councillor Carpenter
Councillor Thomas
Councillor Wade

- 3.2 The Panel would like to record its gratitude to the Members and Officers of Havant Borough Council for making themselves available to meet with the Panel. Full details of contributors to this review may be found in the document entitled “Background Papers”.

4.0 Terms of Reference

- 4.1 The Panel agreed to:

- a) understand what had already happened
- b) understand what controls and oversight existed in light of the pandemic which sat outside the councils’ budget and policy framework
- c) consider the financial implications of what was coming
- d) consider how scrutiny could play a part in understanding and acting on these implications

5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The Panel’s activity fell into 3 parts:

(a) Review of Background Information

Throughout the review the members of the Panel had access to the report on the Council’s Covid 19 response submitted to Cabinet on 1 July 2020 and to the resource back established by the Local

Government Association, which included examples on how other Councils had reacted to the Covid 19 pandemic

(b) Interviews with the relevant officers

To discuss the Council's support to vulnerable people during the first wave of the Covid 19 pandemic.

(c) Arriving at recommendations

Key Observations

6.0 Actions Taken Manage the Financial Implications of the Council's Response

6.1 The Panel was pleased to note that from 17 March, 6 days before lockdown, actions were discussed and put in place to enable the Council to respond to the pandemic. Business continuity plans had been reviewed to ensure that the Council continued to deliver its critical services and support vulnerable residents.

6.2 To manage the financial implications of the pandemic:

- (a) income and expenditure relating to the Council's response had been recorded to maintain a log of lost income and additional expenditure as a result of Covid 19 and was being used for assisting with central Government returns and monitoring income/expenditure;
- (b) arrangements had been put in place to identify potential budgetary savings as a result of reduced activity during the lockdown and delay of Council projects – this has been used to mitigate the lost income and additional expenditure as a result of Covid.
- (c) a methodology had been agreed with the property team to help our tenants;
- (d) all recruitment has been put on hold and only agreed subject to Executive Board approval;
- (e) car parking charges were not suspended as it was felt that this would encourage residents to undertake additional trips contrary to Government advice during the lockdown
- (e) main expenditure was focussed on:
 - i) supporting vulnerable residents,

- ii) supporting business through additional expenditure on ensuring appropriate resources and systems to deliver the business grants; and
 - iii) IT costs to support staff working from home.
- (e) Hampshire County Council helped the Council's cash flow by reducing precept payments by 10% for the first quarter; to be paid at the end.

6.3 How the Pandemic Affects the Council's Financial Resilience

- 6.3.1 The corporate finance monitoring report for Quarter 1 revenue position forecast included a significant loss of income of £1.857M resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic which is partially offset by additional Covid-19 related grant of £1.558m. The Council had identified additional service-related savings to mitigate the impact of Covid-19. The latest forecast for the year showed a projected increase in the net cost of services of £1.685M and an overall projected deficit of £0.127M (which was 0.9% of the Budget Net Cost of Services)¹.
- 6.3.2 The Council had modelled impacts on cashflow and was comfortable with the position in the short term. The impact on the financial health of the Council had been reduced by stopping discretionary expenditure, freezing non-essential recruitment and redeployment².
- 6.3.2 The External Auditors were satisfied with respect to the position of the Council³.
- 6.3.3 There were considerable financial pressures on the current MTFS going forward (a total of £11m over the next 5 years within year savings required of £2M from 2021/22 onwards (based on MTFS when budget accepted in February). Without financial support from the Government, the Council probably could not have been managed by just cutting services and expenditure⁴.
- 6.3.4 A transformation programme had been launched to address the MTFS financial shortfall and this would be linked to the Covid recovery work in order to address the financial implications as a result of Covid. Consideration would be given to delaying some projects⁵.
- 6.3.5 Financial resilience with respect to Covid would depend on whether there was a second lockdown/a local lockdown and the severity of the expected recession⁶.

¹ Source: Report to Governance Audit and Finance Board on 7 October 2020 - Corporate Performance Report Quarter One 2020/21

² Source: Briefing paper submitted to the Panel and meeting of the Panel held on 30 July 2020

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

- 6.3.6 With regard to reserves, the Council could remain financially viable for the next 2.5 years if it did nothing and stood alone. However, this was not the intention of the Cabinet⁷
- 6.3.7 Although the Council had lost income, it was expected that the full impact would be felt when the furlough period ended. It was doubtful whether increases in discretionary sources of income will cover any shortfall⁸.
- 6.3.8 100% relief to business would be clawed back. Council tax, Council already received some relief⁹

6.4 Expenditure

- 6.4.1 At end of Quarter One proposed additional expenditure had amounted to £138,500 which consisted predominately on:
- i) additional costs supporting the homelessness (£58,000);
 - ii) costs associated with IT (£13,500) as staff moved to homeworking; and
 - iii) community support costs (£13,000).
- 6.4.2 An amount had also been set aside with respect to additional costs with respect to administering the grants scheme that Capita undertook, these costs were subject to negotiation (See 7.0 below).
- 6.4.3 Costs associated with homelessness would potentially be recovered through Housing Benefit/Universal Credit¹⁰. The Panel noted that the purchase of Brent House to house homeless residents had been financed from S106 money. It was anticipated that the use of Brent House should have positive effect on savings in bed and breakfast costs¹¹.
- 6.4.3 A breakdown of the additional expenditure relating to Covid is shown in the figure below¹²

⁷ Ibid

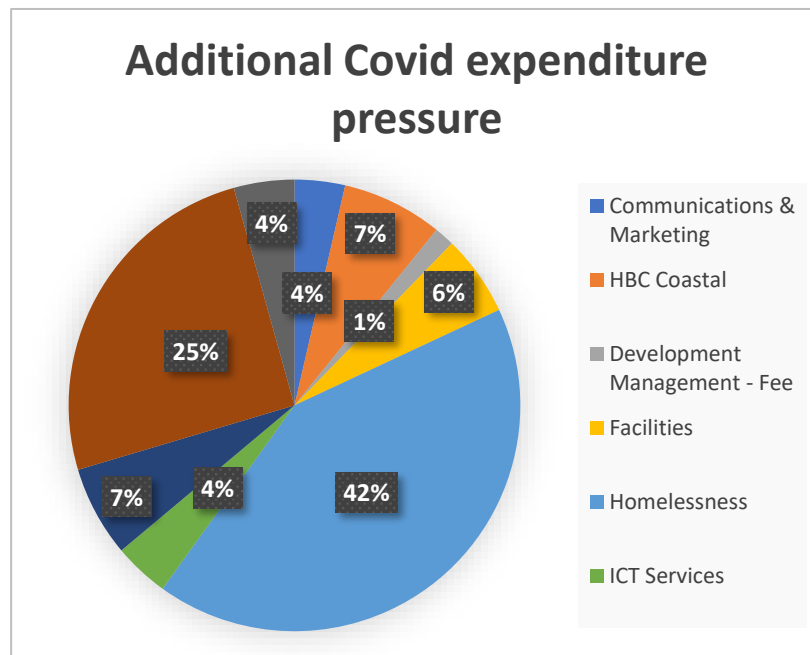
⁸ Ibid

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Source: Report to Governance Audit and Finance Board on 7 October 2020 - Corporate Performance Report Quarter One 2020/21

¹¹ Source: Briefing paper submitted to the Panel and meeting of the Panel held on 30 July 2020

¹² Ibid



6.4.4 There were expected further costs as one supplier had submitted a Financial Relief Notice which was currently the subject of discussions. In addition, further costs might be associated with any second wave of cases and/or a local lockdown – these were currently being monitored¹³.

6.5 Income

6.5.1 The corporate finance monitoring report for Quarter 1 revenue position forecasted a significant loss of income of £1.857M resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic which was partially offset by an additional Covid-19 related grant of £1.558m¹⁴.

6.5.2 Central Government had recently announced that they would contribute 75p for every £1 lost over the initial 5% of losses. The full details of the scheme had not been released but it was expected to cover lost income from car parking and regulatory services. Lost income from commercial activities would unlikely be covered through this scheme¹⁵.

6.5.3 Impact on the Council's Investment Programme

6.5.3.1 During the first quarter 96% of rents were collected, which was considered a particularly strong performance. The Panel noted that if there was no

¹³ Source: Report to Governance Audit and Finance Board on 7 October 2020 - Corporate Performance Report Quarter One 2020/21

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Source: Report to Governance Audit and Finance Board on 7 October 2020 - Corporate Performance Report Quarter One 2020/21

improvement in the economy, the loss of rental income could have a bigger impact on the Council's finances¹⁶.

Quarter amount requested (25 March-24 June)¹⁷	Quarter amount collected	%
£469,008	£453,119	96.6

6.5.3.2 There had been significant closures in the Meridian centre and the Panel was advised that the Council was looking to mitigate any financial pressures from the Meridian onto the Council's own budgets. Although the revenue budget for the financial year was not dependent on the income from Meridian, it would impact on the ability to build up the Regeneration Reserve¹⁸.

6.5.3.3 Meridian Income Received to date¹⁹

Meridian Shopping Centre				
Due Date	Invoiced	Outstanding	Received	Collection %
25/03/2020	£89,349.50	£28,770	£60,579.73	67.80%
01/04/2020	£34,250.00	£14,725	£19,525.01	57.01%
01/05/2020	£34,541.67	£15,933	£18,608.34	53.87%
01/06/2020	£34,541.67	£16,096	£18,446.07	53.40%
24/06/2020	£95,099.50	£66,776	£28,323.97	29.78%
01/07/2020	£33,448.47	£30,987	£2,461.64	7.36%

6.5.3.4 Although the Coronavirus Act 2020 did not waive or suspend the tenant's liability to pay rent under a lease, the Act prevented the Council from forfeiting a lease and commencing possession proceedings for failure to pay rent or other sums, including services charges and insurance rent between 26 March 2020 and (currently) 30 September 2020. Leases could still be forfeited where a tenant breached other covenants contained in the lease, such as tenant duties to maintain fixtures and fittings. Recovery action of all outstanding debt was continuing²⁰

6.5.3.5 The Panel noted that, in the event of more staff continuing to work from home after the pandemic, the Council would seek to maximise the potential commercial income from letting out the empty spaces in the Plaza²¹

¹⁶ Ibid and Source: Briefing paper submitted to the Panel and meeting of the Panel held on 30 July 2020

¹⁷ Source: Report to Governance Audit and Finance Board on 7 October 2020 - Corporate Performance Report Quarter One 2020/21

¹⁸ Ibid and Source: Briefing paper submitted to the Panel and meeting of the Panel held on 30 July 2020

¹⁹ Source: Report to Governance Audit and Finance Board on 7 October 2020 - Corporate Performance Report Quarter One 2020/21

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid and Source: Briefing paper submitted to the Panel and meeting of the Panel held on 30 July 2020

6.5.4 Impact on Fees and Charges Income

6.5.4.1 Income reductions were profiled at both 30% and 50% during the lockdown and to take account of potential future lockdowns. Based on information to date the current assumption was that there would potentially be a 30% income reduction of key income streams²².

6.5.4.2 Actual income from fees and charges for Quarter One against budget for selected income lines was as follows²³:

INCOME	Q1 BUDGET	Q1 ACTUAL	VARIANCE
Beach Huts	63,705	399	-99%
Building Control - Fee	34,485	29,479	-15%
Cemeteries*	53,727	0	-100%
Development Management - Fee	144,942	71,298	-51%
Green Waste**	170,433	710,395	317%
Hackney Carriage/Private Hire	24,990	11,436	-54%
Local Land Charges Chargeable	30,237	13,112	-57%
Norse Contract Payments	139,695	33,903	-76%
Off-Street Parking	562,458	106,116	-81%
On Street Parking (Fixed Penalty Notice)	40,854	905	-98%
Open Spaces*	78,717	0	-100%
R&B Contract Management	66,723	0	-100%
Transport & Implementation	106,206	607	-99%

* awaiting Norse payment who collect the money on our behalf

** billed at beginning of year

6.5.5 Income from Council Tax and Business

6.5.5.1 The collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates up to the end of Quarter One was as follows:

HAVANT COLLECTION RATES						
CTax:		NCD		Collected		as %
Jun-19	£	70,334,843.69	£	20,730,077.58		29.47%
Jun-20	£	73,199,125.36	£	21,159,252.76		28.91%
Change	£	2,864,281.67	£	429,175.18		-0.57%
NNDR:		NCD		Collected		as %
Jun-19	£	35,870,762.65	£	10,008,710.85		27.90%
Jun-20	£	18,754,874.21	£	4,301,176.50		22.93%
Change	-£	17,115,888.44	-£	5,707,534.35		-4.97%

²² Source: Briefing paper submitted to the Panel and meeting of the Panel held on 30 July 2020

²³ Source: Report to Governance Audit and Finance Board on 7 October 2020 - Corporate Performance Report Quarter One 2020/21

- 6.5.5.2 The Council had decided not to give a blanket deferral on direct debits for Council Tax for the first two months consider individual requests for a deferral. A total of 2220 households within the borough have had agreed Council Tax alternative payment plans through deferral to later collection periods.²⁴
- 6.5.5.3 Although the impact of the loss of business rates did not impact the general fund in 2020/21 it would need to be recognised in the government return (NNDR1) for 2021/22 and need to be recognised in the 2021/22 budget and the monies set aside. This deficit would be offset by the monies set aside in 2020/21 earmarked reserves. MHCLG has confirmed that collection fund deficit repayment can be spread over three years as opposed to the usual one and this will further assist cashflow. As a result of the expanded retail relief a section 31 grant of £17.1M is expected to cover the retail reliefs²⁵.
- 6.5.5.4 Additional support had been provided for Council Tax Support Schemes (£1.099M) for Havant. A decision would be made how best to utilise this money to support those residents in financial hardship with respect to Council Tax. To date £300,000 has been identified for support to those in need²⁶.
- 6.5.5.5 The Government was also allowing tax deficits to be spread over 3 years rather than the usual 1 year. This would allow for deficits to be paid off in a reasonable timescale and would limit cashflow pressures²⁷.
- 6.5.5.6 With respect to business rates; the majority of lost income would be covered through the central Government s31 grant covering retail reliefs that were announced early in the pandemic (see below). The Panel learnt that the full impact would not be known until the NNDR1 return had been completed for central Government later in the year. However, the s31 grant would ensure that there should be no cashflow issues for this financial year. Further details on collection rates for Q1 are detailed below as well²⁸.

7.0 Business Grants

- 7.1 The utilisation of the Business Grants scheme and the Local Authority Discretionary Grants scheme had been put in place to support local businesses and funds had already been distributed for both schemes. Round 2 of the Local Authority Discretionary Scheme has recently closed with further payments for businesses due shortly²⁹.

²⁴ Source: Briefing paper submitted to the Panel and meeting of the Panel held on 30 July 2020

²⁵ Source: Report to Governance Audit and Finance Board on 7 October 2020 - Corporate Performance Report Quarter One 2020/21

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Source: Briefing paper submitted to the Panel and meeting of the Panel held on 30 July 2020

²⁸ Source: Report to Governance Audit and Finance Board on 7 October 2020 - Corporate Performance Report Quarter One 2020/21

²⁹ Report to Governance Audit and Finance Board on 7 October 2020 - Corporate Performance Report Quarter One 2020/21 and Briefing paper submitted to the Panel and meeting of the Panel held on 30 July 2020

- 7.2 Whilst discretionary grants were administered by the Council's staff, Business Support grants were processed by Capita. Therefore, provision has been made to cover Capita's costs.
- 7.3 The Panel discussed in detail the problems involved with Capita's administration of the Business Grants Scheme and the additional costs incurred by the Council to resolve these problems. The Panel was concerned about the lack of resources initially allocated to the provision of this Scheme by Capita and the length of time and pressure that had to be exerted by the Council and its partners to get the issues resolved. The Panel noted that in contrast, East Hampshire District Council, who had not outsourced its financial services was able to respond quickly to provide a more efficient and flexible service to businesses. The Panel was pleased to note that the Council would seek to recover these costs from Capita and that negotiations were taking place to bring some of the services back in house. However, there was concern that if there was another round of similar grants, the same problems would reoccur. It was therefore felt that this problem should be registered as a risk³⁰

³⁰ Briefing paper submitted to the Panel and meeting of the Panel held on 30 July 2020

**Review of Council's
Service Delivery Response
to the First Wave of the
COVID19 Pandemic**

Service Delivery Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The review was undertaken by a Panel of the Governance, Audit and Finance Board which included the following members:

Councillor Briggs (Lead Councillor)

Councillor J Branson

Councillor Patel

- 1.2 The Panel would like to record its gratitude to the Members and Officers of Havant Borough Council for making themselves available to meet with the Panel. Full details of contributors to this review may be found in the document entitled "Background Papers".

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 A copy of the presentation given at Councillors' briefings be sent to all Councillors

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 The actions taken in respect of governance arrangements, finance and organisation development to meet the first wave of the pandemic was endorsed by the Panel;
- 3.2 The future recovery programme was endorsed by the; and
- 3.3 the level of communication following Councillor Briefings needs to be improved to ensure that all Councillors are aware of the content and message given at these briefings

4.0 Terms of Reference

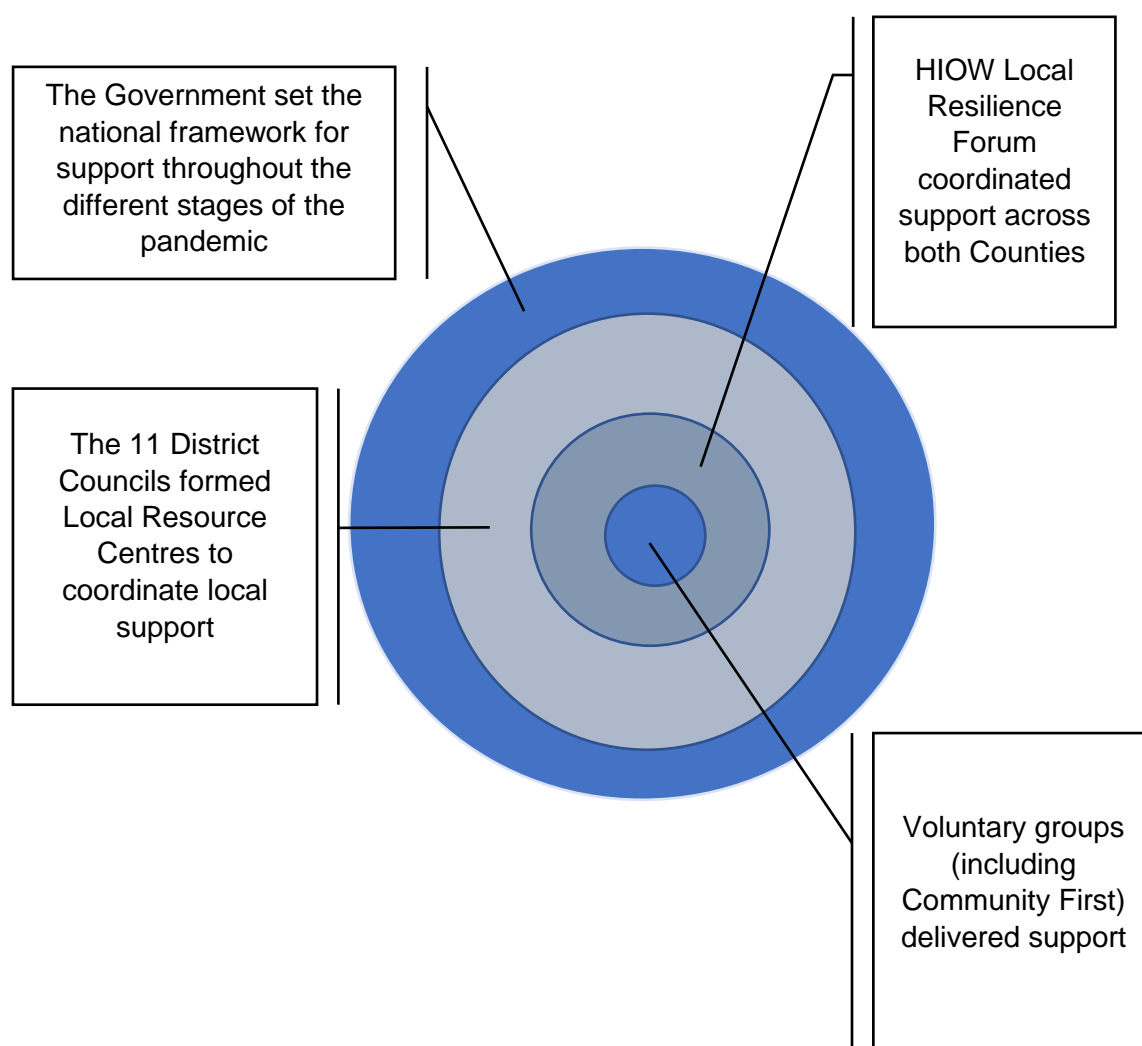
- 4.1 The objectives of the Panel were to:
- Review and test new approaches that have been developed in response to the pandemic.
 - Consider revised strategies and plans to deliver against current strategies and engage sub regional, regional and national partners to ensure the Council's voice is heard.
 - Ensure that all priority proposals and plans are affordable, sustainable and demonstrate best value.
- 4.2 The Panel focussed on the establishment of governance arrangements to facilitate the recovery of both Councils during and following the Covid-19 Pandemic

5.0 Background and Role of the Council

5.1 Formal Framework

5.1.1 Role of this Council

5.1.2 The Panel acknowledged that this Council had a critical role to play supporting the community and local economy within the framework set out below.



5.2 Roles and Responsibilities Framework

National Level

5.2.1 At a national level the lead responsibility for providing overall multi-agency command, control, and co-ordination throughout the different phases of the pandemic lay with COBRA with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Public Health England (PHE) playing a key role.

County Level

Local Resilience Forum

5.2.2 A forum was established for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight Local Authorities to coordinate responses, disseminate learning, escalate issues and provide mutual aid to the most vulnerable residents.

5.2.3 The principle membership of the HIOW LRF were:

Basingstoke & Deane Council	NHS England South East (HTV)
Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue Service	NHS England South East (HTV)
East Hants District Council	Hampshire Constabulary
Maritime and Coastguard Agency	New Forest District Council
Eastleigh Borough Council	Hampshire County Council
Portsmouth City Council	Rushmoor Borough Council
Environment Agency	Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service
Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust	Solent NHS Trust
Fareham Borough Council	Hampshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Public Health England South East	Southampton City Council
Gosport Borough Council	Hart District Council
South Central Ambulance Service - NHS Foundation Trust	Havant Borough Council
Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust	Isle of Wight Council
Test Valley Borough Council	Wight NHS Trust University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust
Isle of Wight NHS Trust – Ambulance Service	Winchester City Council

5.2.4 For this emergency the Director of Public Health was the lead officer, the County Council was the lead authority and Rushmoor Borough Council took the lead role in feedback and communication between the LRCS and the County Council

5.2.5 A Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) led the response to the pandemic and strategic objectives were defined from the outset. The role of the SCG was to coordinate efforts, to ensure that all programmes of activity delivered by the HIOW LRF supported the overall strategic aims and to report up to central Government.

5.2.6 The HLOW LRF was supported by:

- (a) The National Health Service
- (b) 11 Local Resource Centres (LRCs)- set up by district councils in partnership with local voluntary sector organisations, groups and local councils, drawing on local volunteers. These provided local support to access food, prescription collection and other forms of support
- (c) the County Council's Adult Health and Care Welfare Team where more complex needs and personal care requirements are identified. They may also draw on voluntary support from LRCs in addition to other care and support. They would pick up any issues related to adult safeguarding or domestic abuse and any urgent issues.
- (d) Community First - took a lead role behalf of the Community Voluntary Services (CVS) network and voluntary sector to support the LRF and LRCs. Full details of the roles of Community First is set out in the Background papers.

6.0 Immediate Response

- 6.1 The Governance, Command and Control processes that had been put in place were referred to and it was emphasised that the majority of the response had been down to co-operation, collaboration and true partnership work within the Council, across directorates and teams within the Council and the wider system. The governance structure and arrangements built upon the existing governance structures and sought to complement and reflect the already established governance structure of the multi- agency recovery led by the HLOW LRF
- 6.2 The Panel acknowledged that the most efficient and effective way to respond to the pandemic was for East Hampshire District Council and this Council to pool their resources and work together. Details of the work undertaken, and equipment provided to enable staff to work from home were reported. The Panel acknowledged that this approach provided a more agile service delivery and procedures which enabled both Councils to respond quickly to any issues that arose. The Panel also acknowledged the adaptability of the staff to take on new roles to meet new demands and to move away from working at an office to work from home without any deterioration on the standard of service.
- 6.3 The Corporate Risk Register had been reviewed in light of the Covid-19 situation and amended to help prioritise and coordinate the response, ensuring that focus was being dedicated to delaying the spread of the virus and protect the most vulnerable groups of people. The Plan was frequently reviewed and monitored.

- 6.4 The Panel expressed concern that although the Council has responded well to the pandemic, the level of communication to the Councillors could be improved. In particular, concern was raised that copies of presentations at Councillor Briefings were not circulated to all Councillors leaving those Councillors, who could not attend at a disadvantage.

7.0 Current Position

- 5.1 At the time of the review the Council was beginning the recovery programme



8.0 The Future

8.1 Recovery Programme

- 8.1.1 The Panel was advised that priority of the recovery programme was to ensure that the Council was fit for purpose, resilient and stable in order to move forward and be able to support the community and local economy.

8.2 Principles for Recovery

- 8.2.1 The Council had adopted the following principles during the first wave of the pandemic and when setting its recovery programme:

- To build upon joint working structure and methods with East Hampshire District Council adopted during the first wave of the pandemic.
- To continue to complement and reflect the already established governance structure of the multi- agency recovery led by the HIOW LRF
- The recovery should be an enabling and supportive process, which allowed individuals, families, and communities to attain a proper

level of functioning through the provision of information, specialist services and resources.

- Effective recovery required the establishment of planning and management arrangements.
- Recovery management arrangements were most effective when they recognised the complex, dynamic and protracted nature of recovery processes and the changing needs of affected individuals, families, and groups within the community over time.
- The management of recovery was best approached from a community development perspective. It was most effective when conducted at the local level with the active participation of the affected community and a strong reliance on local capacities and expertise.
- The private, voluntary and public sectors and wider community all had a crucial role to play in the recovery process.
- Recovery is best achieved where the recovery process begins from the moment the emergency begins.
- Recovery planning and management arrangements are most effective where they are supported by training programmes.
- The recovery process comprises the following overlapping activities:
 - Taking steps to prevent the escalation of the impacts of an emergency (e.g. restoring essential services following a disruption or securing evacuated premises).
 - Restoring the well-being of individuals, communities and the infrastructure which supports them
 - Exploiting opportunities afforded by emergencies – Establishing what happened, identifying where improvements could be made, and applying lessons learned. Taking steps to adapt systems, services and infrastructure affected by emergencies to meet future needs for example working from home arrangements, reducing the Council's carbon footprint, improved support networks for local communities.

8.3 Recovery and Reinvention board

8.3.1 Central to the recovery programme was the establishment of a Recovery and Reinvention Board which:

- provided strategic steer and oversight for the Covid-19 recovery and reinvention programme for both Councils
- Provided visible and strong leadership during the recovery and reinvention phase
- Took advice from the working groups, decide the strategy and ensures implementation of the strategy
- Ensures the coordination and delivery of consistent messages to the public and social media

84 Key Themes of the Recovery Programme

8.4.1 The Key themes of the recovery programme are:

(1) Organisation

An essential part of the programme is to ensure that the Council recover to 100% operational and to assess the financial and legal implications of the programme for the Councils.

The work undertaken to ensure the financial sustainability of the Council was outlined to the Panel together with work undertaken to ensure that the organisation and constitutional framework would be in a position to enable the Council to deliver its recovery programme.

At the heart of recovery was the transformation programme which sought to transform the vision and work of the Council to meet the needs of the Borough. The Panel noted that there would be an impact on the range of services delivered and there would be costs savings. With regard to potential loss of staff, the Panel noted that it was hoped to avoid redundancies and the loss of experienced staff.

(2) Community

The recovery programme seeks to ensure that the Council can continue to fulfil its role in the Community by

- coordinating the provision of full range of assistance and
- supporting those directly or indirectly affected by the emergency.
- Enabling the community to have easy access to the required assistance.
- Coordinating the clean-up, repair or replacement of the physical infrastructure and clean-up of the natural environment to an agreed state.
- Reviewing the integrity of assets and prepare a strategy for reinstatement where required.

(3) Economy

The economy stream of the programme comprises everything associated with the recovery of the local economy for example regeneration, business, the housing market, retail, and tourism.

The aims of the recovery programme would be to:

- support businesses in the immediate term to enable them to keep solvent and where possible, remain operational
- help businesses to re-build, grow and where needed adapt to the new circumstances
- work to create a strong economy, create the best conditions for growth and support businesses to thrive

9.0 Challenges for the future

9.1 Future Lockdowns

- 9.1.1 It was anticipated that, the event of a second lockdown, the reaction time would be faster, focus more surgical. Lessons had been learnt during the first lockdown and actions had been taken to avoid the problems experienced in the first wave.
- 9.1.2 The Panel noted that the Council was now in a better place to map out cases and focus controls in a local sense rather than District or County level.

9.2 Information Technology (IT)

- 9.2.1 The Panel was reassured that action was being taken to ensure that the Council's IT equipment and software could deliver the digital strategy which was a key part of the transformation programme

9.3 End of Furlough

- 9.3.1 The Panel noted that it was anticipated that the end of the furlough scheme would have an impact with a rise in unemployment in the area. The Panel received details of projects to be undertaken by Economic Team and Councillor Bowerman to help provide support for residents who became unemployed following the end of the furlough scheme. The Panel was assured that these projects would complement each other.
- 9.3.2 The Panel was pleased to learn that the Council was looking into ways of renting space in its properties e.g. the Meridian Centre for start-up business that are likely to be generated in response to the rise of unemployment following the end of the furlough scheme.

9.4 Brexit

- 9.4.1 The Panel noted that preparations for Brexit has helped the Council's response to this pandemic. The Panel was advised that the Council was in a good position to respond to the impact of Brexit.

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