

**SUPPLEMENTARY REPORTS FOR
COUNCIL
7.30 pm on Thursday 17 September 2020
Zoom - Online**

The attached documents are due to be considered at the meeting listed above and were unavailable for circulation when the agenda for the meeting was published. The agenda items to which the documents relate is noted below.

AGENDA

9. References from Cabinet and Committees

- a) Referral from Cabinet - Annual Treasury Management Report 2019/20 (Pages 2 - 12)

Cabinet recommended to Full Council that the annual Treasury Management Report for 2019/20, as set out in Appendix A to the report, including that the Council operated within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement during 2019/20 be noted and approved.

- b) Referral from Cabinet - Report of the Covid-19 Recovery Working Group (Pages 13 - 38)

Cabinet recommended to Full Council that a further Corporate Priority of 'Resilience and Recovery' is introduced into an amended Corporate Plan with the associated Action Plan.

REPORT TO: CABINET

DATE: 10 SEPTEMBER 2020

TITLE: ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT
2019/20

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR MIKE DANVERS, PORTFOLIO
HOLDER FOR RESOURCES

LEAD OFFICER: SIMON FREEMAN, HEAD OF FINANCE AND
PROPERTY AND DEPUTY TO THE CHIEF
EXECUTIVE (01279) 446228

CONTRIBUTING OFFICER: REBECCA KEENE, PRINCIPAL FINANCE
MANAGER (01279) 446448

This is not a Key Decision

It is on the Forward Plan as Decision Number I011370

The decision is not subject to Call-in Procedures for the following reason:

The decision stands as a recommendation to Full Council

This decision will affect no ward specifically.

RECOMMENDED that:

- A** Cabinet noted the annual Treasury Management Report for 2019/20 (Appendix A to the report), including that the Council operated within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement during 2019/20, and that the report is recommended to Full Council for approval.

REASON FOR DECISION

- A** In complying with latest Codes of Practice, Full Council is required to receive an annual report on the prior year's treasury management functions of the Council, which should also receive review by Cabinet in advance of its presentation to Full Council.
- B** The Prudential Indicators are also required to be reported to Full Council. These are included within the annual treasury management report.

BACKGROUND

1. Treasury management is defined as: "The management of the Council's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

2. During 2019/20 the minimum reporting requirements were that Full Council should receive the following reports:
 - a) An annual treasury strategy in advance of the year (Full Council, 7 February 2019);
 - b) A mid-year treasury update report (Full Council, 30 January 2020); and
 - c) An annual review following the end of the year describing the activity compared to the strategy (this report).
3. The annual report for 2019/20 has been produced in compliance with the Code and is set out in Appendix A to this report. The regulatory environment governing treasury management places onus on Councillors for the review and scrutiny of treasury management policies and activities. This report is important in that respect, as it provides details of the outturn position for treasury activities and highlights compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by Councillors.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

4. As stewards of public funds, the Council continues to take all practical steps to protect its investment portfolio. In this respect, emphasis remains in this order of priority: security, liquidity and yield.
5. Security is defined as “reducing risk in order to protect the return of capital sums, particularly in relation to the Council's investments”. In practice this means placing investments with organisations which have a high quality credit rating, i.e. banks and other bodies which have a Fitch rating of A(-) and above. Local authorities do not, usually, have credit ratings but are inherently safe havens for investment.
6. Liquidity means “ensuring that investments are not committed for excessive time-periods in order to facilitate the Council's cashflow requirements and to reflect the risk of not having immediate access to funds”. Councils are discouraged from investing disproportionate sums of money for long periods of time at what seem attractive rates of return.
7. Yield is “obtaining a reasonable return on investments”. For most of the financial year the Bank of England base rate held steady at 0.75 per cent. However, as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the measures put in place to stop the spread of the virus, the rate was reduced to a record low of 0.1 per cent in March 2020. The Council has attempted to gain the best yields without compromising security and liquidity.
8. The advice from Arlingclose is that the Council must aim towards a good investment spread as this is the best defence to protect the Council from a possible capital loss. As a result, and within the overarching powers given by

Councillors in the Treasury Management Strategy, the Council held investments with the CCLA (the Local Authority property fund), a Cash-Plus Fund, Money Market Funds, local authorities, and the Treasury's DMO. It does not currently have any investments with Banks and Building Societies other than funds held overnight with its own banker, Barclays Bank plc.

IMPLICATIONS

Environment and Planning (Includes Sustainability)

None specific.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning

Finance (Includes ICT, and Property and Facilities)

As contained in the report.

Author: Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Property and Deputy to the Chief Executive

Housing

None specific.

Author: Andrew Murray, Head of Housing

Community Wellbeing (Includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

None specific.

Author: Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing

Governance (Includes HR)

None specific.

Author: Simon Hill, Head of Governance

Appendices

Appendix A – Annual Treasury Management Report 2019-20

Background Papers

Treasury Management Strategy 2019/20

<http://moderngov.harlow.gov.uk/documents/s14878/Appendix%20A%20-%20Treasury%20Management%20Strategy%20Mid-Year%20Review%20201920.pdf>

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

None.

<p style="text-align: center;">HARLOW COUNCIL</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2019/20</p>
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Introduction

1. This Report sets out the Council's Treasury Management outturn position in accordance with recommended practice.
2. It provides a review of external economic conditions impacting on the Council and focuses on the major issues affecting its borrowing and investments.
3. The Council uses specialist treasury management advisors to support its decision making, keep officers up to date with economic and more specifically market developments and providing specialist training and support.
4. Covid-19 and the measures put in place by the Government to slow the spread of the virus, has led to interest rates falling. The Bank of England cut rates in March to 0.25% and then cut them further to a record low of 0.1%. However, given the timing of this, the impact of lower interest rates is not evident in the figures reported below. The reduced rates of return will be felt during the current financial year (2020/21).
5. As a steward of public finance, the Council continues to take all practical steps to protect its investment portfolio. In this respect emphasis remains in this order of priority:

Security: some of the following might appear contradictory or elusive in this challenging economic environment

- Reducing risk in order to protect the return of capital sums, particularly in relation to the Council's investments
- The repayment of the sum invested; and / or,
- A return equal to or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation.

Liquidity: availability of cash when needed (adequate but not excessive liquidity)

Yield: a return commensurate with the level of risk.

6. The Council invests substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of risk remain central to the Council's treasury management strategy.

7. Treasury management activity is guided by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 Edition (the CIPFA Code). The Code requires the Council to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year and, as a minimum, a mid-year and annual treasury outturn report. This report fulfils the Council's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.
8. The Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2019/20 was approved by Full Council on 7 February 2019, and was superseded by the TMSS 2020/21, contained within the Capital Strategy, approved by Council on 30 January 2020.
9. On 31 March 2019, the Council had net investments of £31.752m arising from its revenue and capital income. The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. These factors are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary

	31.3.19 Actual £m
General Fund CFR	53.358
HRA CFR	187.370
Total CFR	240.728
External borrowing	(-)211.837
Internal borrowing	28.891
Less: Usable reserves	(-)54.175
Add: Working capital	(-)6.468
Net investments	(-)31.752

10. The treasury management position at 31 March 2019 and the change during the year is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Treasury Management Summary

	31.3.19 Balance £m	Movement £m	31.3.20 Balance £m	31.3.20 Rate %
Long-term borrowing	211.837	-	211.837	3.309%
Total borrowing	211.837	1.713	211.837	
Long-term investments	(-)4.000	0.094	(-)4.000	2.62%
Short-term investments	(-)7.500	7.500	0	n/a
Cash and cash equivalents	(-)20.200	(-)2.301	(-)22.100	0.60%
Total investments	(-)31.700	5.293	(-)26.100	
Net borrowing	180.137	7.006	185.430	

Borrowing Strategy during the year

11. At 31 March 2020 the Council held £211.837m of long term loans from the Public Works Loan Board, unchanged on the previous year.

Treasury Investment Activity

12. The Council holds invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. During the year, the Council's investment balances ranged between £25.67 million and £42.27 million due to timing differences between income and expenditure. The investment position is shown in table 3 below.

Table 3: Treasury Investment Position

	31.3.19 Balance £m	Net Movement £m	31.3.20 Balance £m	31.3.20 Income Return %
Banks and building societies (unsecured)	3.720	(-)0.24	3.480	0.50%
Government	5.280	(-)5.280	-	n/a
Local Authorities	9.000	(-)4.000	5.000	0.90%
Money Market Funds	9.700	3.920	13.620	0.53%
Other Pooled Funds				
Cash Plus Fund Royal London	2.000	-	2.000	0.94%
Property Fund (CCLA)	2.000	-	2.000	4.29%
Total Investments	31.700		26.100	

13. Both the CIPFA Code and government guidance require the Council to invest its funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its treasury investments before seeking the optimum rate of return, or yield.

The Council’s objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income.

14. In furtherance of these objectives Officers have preferred to invest with local authorities rather than individual banks or building societies which carry bail-in risk. Whilst investments in Money Market Funds (MMF) carry risk of bail-in, the Funds themselves are large and diversified and hence the exposure is significantly reduced.
15. The progression of risk and return metrics are shown in the extracts from Arlingclose’s quarterly investment benchmarking in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Investment Benchmarking – Treasury investments managed in-house

	Credit Score (where 1 is low risk)	Credit Rating	Bail-in Exposure	Weighted Average Maturity (days)	Total Rate of Return %
31.03.2018	4.10	AA-	42%	53	0.97%
31.03.2019	4.16	AA-	48%	86	1.09%
31.03.2020	4.19	AA-	77%	31	0.45%
Similar LAs	3.95	AA-	59%	65	(-)0.79%
All LAs	4.03	AA-	56%	48	(-)0.34%

Non-Treasury Investments

16. The definition of investments in CIPFA’s revised Treasury Management Code now covers all the financial assets of the Council as well as other non-financial assets which the Council holds primarily for financial return. This is replicated in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government’s (MHCLG) Investment Guidance, in which the definition of investments is further broadened to also include all such assets held partially for financial return.
17. The Council has lent money to its subsidiary and a local business, to support local public services and stimulate local economic growth.
18. HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Harlow Council which began trading on 1 February 2017. The Council provided a start-up loan to the business of £1.209m repayable over sixty two months and approved on 21 July 2016. The balance outstanding as at 31 March 2019 was £0.468m.

19. Harlow Property Limited was provided with two loans to support its developments within the Harlow Enterprise Zone, approved on 23 January 2014. The advances made were £1m on 15 March 2016 and a further £1.5m on 3 March 2017. Interest accrues on these loans. The total outstanding as at 31 March 2019 was £2.935m with security held against the increase in the property values.
20. These investments generated £167,000 of investment income for the Council, representing a rate of return of 4.5%.

Compliance

21. The Deputy to the Chief Executive and Head of Finance and Property Services reports that all treasury management activities undertaken during the year complied fully with the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Council's approved Treasury Management Strategy.

Annex A Prudential Indicators 2019/20

Capital Expenditure: The Council's capital expenditure and financing may be summarised and is consistent with the draft statement of accounts, as follows.

Capital Expenditure and Financing	2019/20 Estimate £m	2019/20 Actual £m	Difference £m
General Fund	11.156	12.092	0.936
HRA	24.044	14.764	(-)9.28
Total Expenditure	35.200	26.856	(-)8.344
Capital Receipts	2.525	2.661	0.136
Government Grants	0.535	3.011	2.476
Major Repairs Reserve	10.085	10.624	0.539
Revenue	9.347	0.804	(-)8.543
Borrowing	12.708	9.756	(-)2.952
Total Financing	35.200	26.856	(-)8.344

Capital Financing Requirement: The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) measures the Council's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose.

Capital Financing Requirement	31.03.20 Estimate £m	31.03.20 Actual £m	Difference £m
General Fund	62.209	62.655	0.446
HRA	190.070	187.370	(-)2.700
Total CFR	252.279	250.025	2.254

Actual Debt: The Council's actual debt at 31 March 2020 was as follows:

Debt	31.03.20 Estimate £m	31.03.20 Actual £m	Difference £m
Borrowing	220.837	211.837	(-)9.000
Finance leases	-	1.714	1.714
Total Debt	220.837	213.551	(-)7.286

Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement: In order to ensure that over the medium term debt will only be for a capital purpose, the Council should ensure that debt does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of capital financing requirement in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the current and next two financial years. This is a key indicator of prudence.

Debt and CFR	31.03.20 Estimate £m	31.03.20 Actual £m	Difference £m
Total debt	220.837	213.551	(-)7.286
Capital financing requirement	252.279	250.025	(-)2.704
Headroom	31.442	36.474	5.032

Total debt remained below the CFR during the forecast period.

Operational Boundary for External Debt: The operational boundary is based on the Council's estimate of most likely (i.e. prudent but not worst case) scenario for external debt. It links directly to the Council's estimates of capital expenditure, the capital financing requirement and cash flow requirements, and is a key management tool for in-year monitoring. Other long-term liabilities are not borrowing but form part of the Council's debt.

Operational Boundary and Total Debt	31.03.20 Boundary £m	31.03.20 Actual Debt £m	Complied
Borrowing	273.000	213.551	✓
Total Debt	273.000	213.551	✓

Authorised Limit for External Debt: The authorised limit is the affordable borrowing limit determined in compliance with the Local Government Act 2003. It is the maximum amount of debt that the Council can legally owe. The authorised limit provides headroom over and above the operational boundary for unusual cash movements.

Authorised Limit and Total Debt	31.03.20 Boundary £m	31.03.20 Actual Debt £m	Complied
Borrowing	283.000	213.551	✓
Total Debt	283.000	213.551	✓

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream: This is an indicator of affordability and highlights the revenue implications of existing and proposed capital expenditure by identifying the proportion of the revenue budget required to meet financing costs, net of investment income.

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream	31.03.20 Estimate %	31.03.20 Actual %	Difference %
General Fund	3.29%	3.30%	0.01%
HRA	15.16%	13.99%	(-)1.17%

REPORT TO: CABINET

DATE: 10 SEPTEMBER 2020

TITLE: REPORT OF THE COVID-19 RECOVERY WORKING GROUP

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR EUGENIE HARVEY, DEPUTY LEADER AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY

LEAD OFFICER: BRIAN KEANE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE (01279) 446004

This is not a Key Decision
It is on the Forward Plan as Decision Number I011722
Call-In Procedures may apply
This decision will affect no ward specifically

RECOMMENDED that Cabinet:

- A** Approves the Covid-19 Recovery Working Group's final Terms of Reference (attached as Appendix A to the report).
- B** Agrees the Vision Statement and Corporate Themes, and Action Plan (attached as appendices B and C to the report).
- C** Recommends to Full Council that a further Corporate Priority of 'Resilience and Recovery' is introduced into an amended Corporate Plan with the associated Action Plan.

REASON FOR DECISION

- A** The Council has taken steps to respond, and begin the process of social and economic recovery of Harlow as the country continues to deal the Covid-19 pandemic. It has established a Working Group to work with Officers on a recovery action plan. This report brings forward proposals for the action plan.
- B** The report also recommends the adoption of the terms of reference for the Working Group and a vision of the recovery of Harlow.

BACKGROUND

1. The Working Group has met on three occasions since the last Cabinet meeting. Since that meeting the Portfolio Holder and Officers have continued to take actions on recovery within the four agreed workstreams. An update on those

actions was provided at the Working Group meeting on 5 August and is included as Appendix D to this report. This details the focus of the groups and a number of immediate measures that workstreams have implemented.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

Terms of Reference

2. At its second meeting on 5 August, the Working Group considered and approved its terms of reference (attached as Appendix A to the report). They set out the overview of the ongoing recovery action plan and the proposed focus of:
 - a) Developing greater community resilience;
 - b) Educating the public about health risks and working to mitigate future outbreaks; and
 - c) Advancing the post-COVID local economy.

Vision Statement

3. The Working Group, at its meeting on 25 August, agreed the Vision Statement and Corporate Themes (attached as Appendix B to the report) which are brought to this meeting for approval. The proposed Vision is as follows:
 - a) “To harness the positive aspects of the community response to the Covid-19 crisis and address the negative outcomes such that the Harlow that emerges - its residents, businesses and voluntary groups – is stronger, more resilient and poised to take full strategic advantage of the opportunities for growth and renewal.”
4. The Vision Statement is supported by the themes for recovery “promoting within everything that it does for the recovery of the town, the strategic priorities of its Corporate Plan”. This includes a new Strategic Priority: Recovery and Resilience which will require Full Council approval supported by the proposed Action Plan. The themes also include objectives for each of the workstreams which inform the actions within the Action Plan. Further work will be done to develop community communication messaging from the vision document.

Action Plan

5. The Working Group has also considered an Action Plan (attached as Appendix C to the report) to support the achievement of recovery. The Action Plan is split into actions for each of the four workstreams. This document will form the starting point for work through the workstreams, but will be a dynamic plan, kept under review by the Working Group, which will need to develop longer term sustainable actions informed by ongoing work..

6. All four documents form a central part of the Council's strategic framework in leading Harlow's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic
7. It is recommended that the final terms of reference, Vision Statement and Corporate Themes and draft Action Plan are approved. A suggested amendment to the Corporate Plan is recommended to Full Council for approval. The actions attributed to that additional priority will be those contained within the recovery plan.

IMPLICATIONS

Environment and Planning (Includes Sustainability)

As set out in the reports to the working group

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning

Finance (Includes ICT, and Property and Facilities)

As set out in the reports to the working group

Author: Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Property and Deputy to the Chief Executive

Housing

As set out in the reports to the working group

Author: Andrew Murray, Head of Housing

Community Wellbeing (Includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

As set out in the reports to the working group

Author: Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing

Governance (Includes HR)

As set out in the reports to the working group, change to the Corporate Plan fall within the Policy Framework and are a matter for the Council to approve.

Author: Simon Hill, Head of Governance

Background Papers

Those included within reports to the Working Group

<http://moderngov.harlow.gov.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=299>

Appendices

Appendix A – Terms of Reference for the Working Group

Appendix B – Vision and Themes for recovery

Appendix C – Current Action Plan for recovery

Appendix D – Update Circulated by the Chair of the Working Group on 23 July 2020 on Workstream Activities and Immediate Actions

Covid-19 Recovery Working Group

Terms of Reference

- (i) To advise the Portfolio Holder on the proposals contained within the developing pandemic action plan including short, medium and long term objectives and measures taking into account the changing landscape.
- (ii) To provide a forum for consultation on measures and strategy within the pandemic action plan
- (iii) To advise and comment on work with regional health officials to prepare for and mitigate any further outbreak or second wave of infection in Harlow;
- (iv) To identify Council-related impacts that may require additional resources or service delivery methods; and
- (v) To provide a focus for:

Developing greater community resilience

- community action, cohesion, and greater resilience.
- supporting the recovery of BAME communities, clinically extremely vulnerable and other marginalised groups
- engagement with the voluntary sector and faith-based communities

Educating the public about health risks and working to mitigate future outbreaks

- preparation and planning to ensure, with other public sector agencies, that in the face of future outbreaks or emergencies, all residents are given the best possible health protection and outcomes, particularly those at risk of health inequalities.
- community education on the on-going public health risk and to mitigate future outbreaks

Advancing the post-COVID local economy

- proposals for new ways of working
- business engagement
- innovative ways of growing the local economy

- (vi) To harness data and monitor recovery performance to ensure that services delivered post COVID, meet the changing needs of residents and businesses.

Vision for the Recovery of Harlow

“To harness the positive aspects of the community response to the Covid-19 crisis and address the negative outcomes such that the Harlow that emerges - its residents, businesses and voluntary groups – is stronger, more resilient and poised to take full strategic advantage of the opportunities for growth and renewal.”

We will achieve this by:

Corporate Themes

Promoting within everything that it does for the recovery of the town, the strategic priorities of its Corporate Plan:

- Recovery and Resilience (NEW – subject to Council approval)
- More and Better Housing
- Regeneration and a Thriving Economy
- Wellbeing and Social Inclusion
- A Clean and Green Environment
- Successful Children and Young People

Acknowledging the role that the Working Group will have in promoting a plan for recovery.

Managing and recording Harlow Council's recovery response to the COVID-19 pandemic to meet its priorities as a community leader, and fulfil the requirements as a local authority under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 to "take the lead in facilitating the rehabilitation of the community and the restoration of the environment."

Seeking to remove the barriers that keep people beyond the reach of employment, services, jobs and other socio-economic recovery measures and opportunities.

Maximising the opportunities for innovative ways of future working across the Council and with partners, its own LATCO and other stakeholders (such as the voluntary sector) to the benefit of the local community and business sector.

Preparation and planning to ensure, with other public sector agencies, that in the face of future outbreaks or emergencies, all residents are given the best possible health protection and outcomes, particularly those at risk of health inequalities.

Securing the best possible regeneration and infrastructure improvement outcomes for the town across the wider HGGT area in the context that they promote residents' health and wellbeing and economic recovery.

Harnessing data and monitoring performance to ensure that services delivered post COVID-19, meet the changing needs of residents and businesses.

Ensuring the community is kept informed about Council's and other related bodies' actions to keep them safe and prioritise their well-being as we adjust to a new and uncertain reality and seek to build individual and collective resilience.

Workstream Themes

Community Impact:

1. To ensure the physical, mental, and socio-economic wellbeing of all residents of Harlow is recovered to pre-pandemic levels or above through analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the community by undertaking data analysis; initiating meaningful dialogue with community, voluntary sector, faith and cultural organisations and utilising feedback from the Council's frontline services.
2. To maintain a robust and thriving community and voluntary sector by maximising promotion and take-up of Government initiatives to support the sector and community; facilitating meaningful engagement and partnership working and supporting the development of new initiatives to meet needs identified through COVID-19 community impact assessment

Business & Economy Workstream,

1. Increase the opportunities for advice, information, incentives and financial support to Harlow businesses, equipping them with the tools to prosper through the recovery phase.
2. Create and deliver a programme of active promotion of the Harlow economy to maximise opportunities for local businesses, to encourage business-to-business and local supply chain activity and to maximise the impact of the "Harlow pound"
3. Ensure young people in Harlow have access to information, advice, and opportunities for work and/or training to prevent a large cohort of young people emerging in Harlow without meaningful activity.
4. Securing partnerships with bodies and educational institutions to create a joined-up plan to promote the need for local employment opportunities, particularly for young people aged 18-24.
5. To actively look for examples of new ways of working and new business opportunities and to innovate them in Harlow.

Council Internal Services Workstream

1. To plan for the new 'normal' and any changes and/or challenges this may present to the Council's operating model and structures.
2. To ensure the continuation and where necessary the restoration of service provision to Harlow residents and businesses.
3. To work with all government guidance to ensure that strategic objectives are compliant and Covid safe.
4. Harnessing data and monitoring performance to ensure that services delivered post COVID-19, meet the changing needs of residents and businesses.

HTS Group Workstream

1. To improve business resilience and efficiency by a review of HTS business plans, priorities and business continuity; enhanced communication plans aligned to Council communication plans and a robust gap analysis and performance reporting.
2. To reassess HTS community impact by its social value programme and reporting.

3. To monitor HTS environmental impact through its landscape programmes and policies reviews.
4. To create opportunities through the HTS Group business and commercial growth plans, particularly in the area of apprenticeships, training and employment for young people.
5. To show leadership within the local business community with regards to creating local opportunities for local people.

Workstream: Community Impact		Lead Officers: Jane Greer Deputy Lead Officer: Andrew Bramidge			
<p>Objectives / Areas of Work: 1. To ensure the physical, mental, and socio-economic wellbeing of all residents of Harlow is recovered to pre-pandemic levels or above through analysis of the impact of COVID-19 on the community by undertaking data analysis; initiating meaningful dialogue with community, voluntary sector, faith and cultural organisations and utilising feedback from the Council's frontline services.</p> <p>2. To maintain a robust and thriving community and voluntary sector by maximising promotion and take-up of Government initiatives to support the sector and community; facilitating meaningful engagement and partnership working and supporting the development of new initiatives to meet needs identified through COVID-19 community impact assessment</p>					
Number:	Area of Focus	Identified Programmes / Projects / Schemes	What Can be Delivered? Or desired end state?	Comments: Resources required or constraining factors e.g. Influence only, requires work by other authorities	Likely Target Timescales
COM1	To ensure the physical, mental and socio-economic wellbeing of all residents of Harlow is recovered to pre-pandemic levels or above through analysis of the impact of Covid-19 on the community by undertaking data analysis; initiating meaningful dialogue with community. voluntary sector, faith and cultural organisations and utilising feedback from the Council's front line services.	Identify data that can be collated from Harlow Council front line services, social media, website, Policy and Performance Team and Essex County Councils analytics team, and the Clinical Commissioning Group	Up to date information from as many sectors of the community and government and other data sources that are available for analysis and use to ensure we understand the impact of Covid 19.	Officer time . Essex County Council input required. Potentially new system to capture all of this information.	Sep-20
COM2		Reinstate full tenancy support and supported housing services with the re-opening of communal areas within sheltered housing schemes enabling reduction of social isolation and inappropriate hospital admission	Reduced social isolation. Less hospital admissions, less call on support from Adult Social Care.	Government guidance Staff time. Additional cost of increased cleaning regime	Oct-20
COM3		Work with partners to support transition of placements under covid 19 from temporary accommodation to more settled accommodation	Successful rehousing of covid 19 homeless clients into more settled accommodation to prevent rough sleeping	Availability of suitable and affordable accommodation may be a constraint. Grant funding. On the engagement of client for support	Nov-20

COM4		Develop innovative solutions to help people to access Harlow's culture and heritage sectors virtually. Identify cultural venues, services and other leisure activities that have been adversely affected by loss of income from Covid 19	Culture and Arts summer school to assist children who have missed learning opportunities whilst schools are closed. Undertake audience survey to identify peoples concerns re Covid 19 and attending events Look at digital and virtual solutions to enable access to relevant services, i.e. virtual access by residents, schools and other groups etc.	Funding from Carnival budget 2020 diverted to summer school activities staff time Additional funding for potential solutions may be required	Mar-21
COM5		Provide School readiness activities on line to help ensure children starting school in September 2020 have the skills to be ready to learn and achieve.	Online activities delivered to young people and their carers	Staff time.	Aug-20
COM6		Promote debt management and financial advice services and keep under review and government initiatives and guidance.	Review Council Debt recovery processes. Maximise residents' access to relevant benefits. Assist residents to access financial support services and local initiatives	Partnership working. Assess whether Harlow Council, government agencies and the community and voluntary sector have the capability and resources to respond.	Sep-20
COM7		Promote Better Health campaign and Mental Health and Wellbeing advice. Support public health campaigns to minimise covid 19 health impacts, ensuring the needs of volunteers are considered as well as other sections of the community	Better and improved physical and mental health, therefore be better prepared to deal with Covid 19 if affected current or in the future, for residents and volunteers	staff time campaign costs.	October 20 and ongoing

COM8	Maintain a robust and thriving community and voluntary sector by maximising promotion and take up of Government initiatives to support the sector and community; facilitating meaningful engagement and partnership working and supporting the development of new initiatives to meet needs identified through Covid 19 community impact assessment.	Work with the CVS and other partners to identify specific third sector recovery support needs and priorities to establish a multi agency forum to address local needs through community impact assessment	Survey of third sector support needs undertaken, Understanding of how Harlow communities have been disproportionately affected (possible survey and well as focus groups)	Staff time	Aug-20
COM9		Undertake a community impact assessment to assess any disproportionate effects of Covid 19 on disadvantaged groups and communities, for example BAME and disabled people.	Support local community, faith and voluntary groups to identify and maintain support for the most vulnerable people impacted by Covid 19. Work with mental health organisations to provide targeted support to BAME and disabled people impacted by Covid 19	Partnership working with other agencies, voluntary and charity sector. Some financial resource may be required.	October 20 and ongoing
COM10		Support the work of charitable and other organisations to tackle the impact of Domestic Abuse that has been heightened during the lockdown period	To identify the level of domestic abuse in Harlow and any increases due to Covid 19, and work with partners to address any shortfalls in service provision or support for victims	Staff time willingness of agencies to work together Potential financial support required	Mar-21
COM11		Work with Mental Health organisations to provide targeted support to BAME and disabled young people impacted by Covid 19.	Identification of sections of the community that have been adversely affected by the effects of Covid 19.	Staff time Possible communications costs, i.e. leaflets etc	Mar-21
COM12		Engage with local organisations that have existing links to BAME communities and local disability groups to ensure the Council's approach to community recovery takes into account the diversity of the town.	Set up a regular community forum to enable regular engagement and feedback from BAME communities and local disability groups Five point Government guidance to BAME communities followed.	Zoom facility. Ensure suitable access arrangements for community groups, i.e. access to IT.	03/09/2020 then ongoing

Workstream: Business & Economy	Lead Officer: Andrew Bramidge	Deputy Lead Officer: Jane Greer
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Objectives / Areas of Work: 1. Collating data to identify the impact of Covid-19 on the local economy and establishing a baseline to enable us to monitor progress throughout the recovery phase.
2. Increase the opportunities for advice, information and financial support to local businesses, working with local business support agencies.
3. Development of a programme to actively promote Harlow businesses to maximise the potential of the 'Harlow Pound'.
4. Creation of a local partnership to maximise the take up of apprenticeship and job placement programmes with the Council playing a leadership role.
5. Ensure young people in Harlow have access to information, advice and opportunities for work and/or training.
6. Identify ways in which existing Council service delivery can be utilised to support Covid recovery measures in the local economy.
7. Supporting communications to local businesses to assist in the prevention of a second wave of infections.

Number:	Area of Focus	Identified Programmes / Projects / Schemes	What Can be Delivered? Or desired end state?	Comments: Resources required or constraining factors e.g. Influence only, requires work by other authorities	Likely Target Timescales
BE1	Prevention of second wave of infection	Prepare protocols (and implement when needed) for communicating actions on increasing infections	Communications issued when required resulting in behaviour change	Environmental Health, Comms, Essex Resilience Forum	Ongoing
BE2	Collation of data	Identify what data can be collated within the Council's Policy and Performance team	List of data available for monthly collation	Input from Policy & Performance	End of August
		Identify what data can be supplied by Essex County Council	List of data available for monthly collation	Input from ECC	End of August
		Regular liaison with major employers in Harlow to gather intelligence	Regular views of local business on the impact of Covid	Resourced through Regeneration team	September
		Undertake regular business surveys	Regular views of local business on the impact of Covid	Identify if this can be done in-house or needs external commission	End of September

BE3	Business information, advice & support	Maximise the provision of Government grant support to Harlow businesses	Full utilisation of Government funds	Delivery through Revs & Bens team	August
		Develop social media platform to connect with local businesses	Ensure two way connections with local business community	Regen and Comms teams to lead	September - commence
		Work with Harlow Chamber of Commerce to increase information to businesses	Initial online workshop followed by ongoing joint Council -Chamber programme	Avalability of resources in Regen team and at Harlow Chamber. Involvement of NWES.	September
		Ensure all Council commercial tenants have full access to Covid information	Regular flow of information	Joint working between Property & Facilities and Revs & Bens	Ongoing
		Signpost Harlow businesses to NHS 'Working Well' programme	Referrals from Harlow into the Essex Covid Recovery programme	Environmental Health & Regen teams	Ongoing
		Explore potential for utilising empty town centre retail unit to be used as a temporary business advice centre	Determine the feasibility and potential location	Work with Water Gardens and Harvey Centre management	September
BE4	Promotion of Harlow businesses	Identify what more can be done to prioritise local businesses in the council's procurement	More local companies being given the opportunity to compete for Council business	Need to ensure compliance with procurement policy. May necessitate some changes to procurement practice across service areas.	September
		Explore potential for local 'Meet the Buyers' event, possibly in early 2021	More opportunities for local businesses to trade with each other	Can this be a physical event, or online goods and service matching?	November
		Utilise 'Discover Harlow' brand to deliver inward investment marketing campaign for Harlow and promote local success stories	Marketing campaign launched for Harlow with enquiry handling service	Work with Innovation Corridor	November
		Work with 'anchor' institutions to support local supply chain, learning from PHE impact report	More local small companies supplying larger purchasers	Work with PHE, PAH, College and larger businesses	October
		Harlow Council to promote use of town centre and neighbourhood centres	Increasing footfall	Regeneration team and Comms team	September
		Develop business awards scheme	Identification of local success stories	Work with Harlow Chamber and Heart 4 Harlow	November
		Implement new signage scheme to improve awareness of neighbourhood centres and local hatches	Increasing footfall	Regeneration and Property & Facilities teams	October
BE5	Create partnership to lead local employment initiatives	Identify opportunities within Harlow Council to utilise job placement programme	Increase trainee positions in Council and support local workforce	Budgetary constraints	October
		Develop partnership of leading organisations in Harlow to promote employment initiatives	Harlow Council working as community leader	Work through Growth Board; involvement of DWP	September

		Develop programme of improving digital skills for businesses to help them deal with the 'new normal'	Number of Harlow businesses signing up to a programme	Work with existing business support providers, Harlow College, ARU etc.	October
BE6	Support to young people	Identify opportunities within Harlow Council to increase apprenticeships	Increase trainee positions in Council and support local workforce	Budgetary constraints	October
		Ensure an adequate advice and guidance programme is in place for all young people in Harlow	Clear referral mechanism in place and support to enable work-readiness	Work with Harlow College and other existing providers	September
BE6	Council service delivery	Ensure a focus on Covid recovery for local businesses is woven into Corporate Plan and service delivery	Measures delivered that specifically target Covid recovery as an aim	SMB to identify and discuss with Members. Work through Growth Board.	Ongoing

Workstream: Council Business Impact	Lead Officer: Simon Freeman	Deputy Lead Officer: Simon Hill
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- Objectives / Areas of Work:**
1. To plan for the new 'normal' and any changes and/or challenges this may present to the Council's operating model and structures.
 2. To ensure the continuation and where necessary the restoration of service provision to Harlow residents and businesses.
 3. To work with all government guidance to ensure that strategic objectives are compliant and Covid safe.
 4. Harnessing data and monitoring performance to ensure that services delivered post COVID-19, meet the changing needs of residents and businesses.

Number:	Area of Focus	Identified Programmes / Projects / Schemes	What Can be Delivered? Or desired end state?	Comments: Resources required or constraining factors e.g. Influence only, requires work by other authorities	Likely Target Timescales
CB1	Covid -Secure compliance	Corporate risks assessments, operational and staffing advices, PPE process, on going review of activities restricted by social distancing	Covid-secure workplace risk assessment for each premises re-opened, PPE identification and central issue process	Internal resources required	June 2020 - complete, risk assessment review on going based on changes to government guidance
CB2	Outdoor community and leisure sites	Playgrounds, car parks, MUGAs, pitches, Pets Corner, Town Park	Re-opening of facilities when government guidance permits and covid-secure arrangements can practically be implemented	Internal resources required, dependant on government guidance/restrictions	Aug-20
CB3	Indoor community and leisure sites	Playhouse, Museum, Nature Reserve, public conveniences, Leah Manning Centre, Sam's Place	Re-opening of facilities when government guidance permits and covid-secure arrangements can practically be implemented	Internal resources required, dependant on government guidance/restrictions	Aug-20

CB4	External facing HDC Operational sites	Civic Centre, Latton Bush Centre, Bus Terminus	Expansion of available facilities, including cash office, to members of the public when government guidance permits and covid-secure arrangements can practically be implemented	Internal resources required, dependant on government guidance/restrictions	Jul-20
CB5	Refining homeworking protocols and processes	CT homeworker kit standardisation, continuation of existing Telephony and ICT system upgrade programme	Increased capacity and resilience for homeworking processes put in place during emergency phase of COVID response	Internal resources	On going - commenced
CB6	Income Recovery	Housing rent recovery, leaseholder contributions, Commercial rent recovery, Benefit overpayment recovery, Council tax and NDR recovery, sundry debtors	Re-instate recovery processes to ensure income recovery can recommence to operate at normal levels	Internal resources required - dependant on courts service and external enforcement agents	On going - commenced
CB7	Enforcement	Environmental crime, ASB, illegal encampments,	Re-instate recovery processes to ensure enforcement can recommence to operate at normal levels	Internal resources	On going - commenced
CB8	Consultation and communications	External events, statutory consultations, panels and improvement boards	Alternative covid-secure delivery mechanisms (likely virtual)	Internal resources	On going - commenced
CB9	Virtualisation of face to face processes	Housing allocations, taxi licensing, car park permits, site visits for EHS, Housing services, supported Housing management	Web based alternative processes implemented	Internal resources	On going - commenced
CB10	Test and Trace	Essex and Southend Local outbreak plan	MOU agreed and Plan finalised, and Harlow ready for implementation when triggered	Internal resources, part of county-wide response	July 2020 - MOU in place, on going activity to meet plan requirements
CB11	Impact analysis of COVID19	Data identification, collection and analysis	Dashboard of metrics showing impact across town	Internal resources, dependant on some externally collected data	On going - not yet commenced

Workstream: HTS	Lead Officer: Andrew Murray	Deputy Lead Officer: John Phillips
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Objectives / Areas of Work: 1. To improve business resilience and efficiency by a review of HTS business plans, priorities and business continuity; enhanced communication plans aligned to Council communication plans and a robust gap analysis and performance reporting.
2. To reassess HTS community impact by its social value programme and reporting.
3. To monitor HTS environmental impact through its landscape programmes and policies reviews.
4. To create opportunities through the HTS Group business and commercial growth plans, particularly in the area of apprenticeships, training and employment for young people.
5. To show leadership within the local business community with regards to creating local opportunities for local people.

Number:	Area of Focus	Identified Programmes / Projects / Schemes	What Can be Delivered? Or desired end state?	Comments: Resources required or constraining factors e.g. Influence only, requires work by other authorities	Likely Target Timescales
HTS1	Business Resilience and Efficiency	Review of HTS Business Plans, Priorities and Business Continuity. Enhanced communication plans aligned to Council communication plans. Robust gap analysis and performance reporting.	Published updated/revised HSE (Covid 19) Standards. Enhanced Customer Access through digital channels. Aligned business plan/financial reporting, governance and timelines.	Capacity and Shareholder/Board governance arrangements	Oct-20
HTS2	Community Impact	Social value programme and reporting.	Enhanced social value demonstrated. Development/promotion of scrutiny reporting, and improved transparency with better measurement.	Needs wider Council community engagement approach.	Mar-21
HTS3	Environmental Impact	Landscape programmes and Policies reviews.	Action forcing and alignments of policies. Removal of unnecessary duplication. Simplified reporting and service offer.	Resources available and robust client briefs (planned tree programme/grass cutting). Prioritised timing and alignment to Council risks.	Sep-21
HTS4	Creating Opportunities	Business and Commercial growth plans.	Long term plans resourced and prioritised. Targeted resourcing and priorities.	Council plans/ambition and corporate plan priorities.	Mar-21

HTS5	local business community leadership	TBA	Creating local opportunities for local people	TBA	TBA
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Item 5 – Response phase

1. I want to take a few moments to bring members up to speed on how the Council has responded to the Pandemic and challenges that it has faced since the beginning of the year. I have heard some criticism that the Council has been slow to react and want to put our discussions in context.
2. In February, a multi service team was convened to look at the rising issues for the Council for its safe operation and staff welfare under its Business Continuity Plans. The Council has a Corporate Business Continuity Plan and individual Service-related plans in place. Traditionally, business continuity plans reflect the plan to react to a sudden loss of resources, in this case the Council had to plan for the gradual loss of services.
3. Early issues included:
 - Enabling the workforce to work remotely – most of the Council’s staff had no facility of working from home initially and demands on external technology suppliers nationally was significant to which our IT service responded brilliantly.
 - Putting in place monitoring of service impacts and staff sickness/shielding
 - With the Board members, decisions on the early closure of Council facilities including the Civic Offices, other Council buildings (Leah Manning Centre, Playhouse etc.), playgrounds, car parks
4. The Response has also:
 - Facilitated initial set up of Community Hub service; delivered as a joint initiative between Rainbow Services and Harlow Council – this has included council staff redeployment to service the Hub on a seven days a week basis, working with rainbow services on essential food deliveries throughout lockdown, individual welfare calls to category A and B residents (3000), liaising with other agencies for referrals and dealing with significant social issues created by the pandemic that would otherwise have been dealt with by social care services.
 - Worked with County and National planning agencies to ensure a coordinated response for those shielding and residents requiring assistance – this has included a coordinated reporting mechanism and liaison, a seamless referrals process for those requiring local hub help and action with Essex Welfare Services and other partner agencies. Support for excess death plans (with Westerleigh) and more recently local containment plans.
 - The council has paid out £11.4m to 841 local businesses in a measured way. The Council has given extended retail relief to 524 business rate payers, totalling around £17.5m and paid out £933,000 of government hardship

grants to 4,800 residents receiving Council Tax support. Officers are now assessing the many applications made by businesses to the Discretionary Business Grant Scheme which aims to support small and micro businesses that are struggling due to the coronavirus shutdown but are unable to access other government grant funding. All of these things have been achieved against a payment enforcement moratorium, a remote workforce and maintaining contact with residents having difficulty in paying.

- Introduced measures to create safe working environments at the Civic Centre and Latton Bush Centre to allow critical Council and third party services (including NHS teams) to continue, this has meant that contact teams have been asked to work right through, as essential workers, using social distancing at the civic centre, works have also been done to the receptions to enable safer working and the recent successful reopening of the civic centre to the public.
- For our Housing Teams the challenge has been in meeting Housing need. During the period Housing had to accommodate an additional 36 people who were sleeping rough where previously there had been only a handful identified on regular counts. Additionally, Housing has been supporting the increased hardship being evidenced through loss of income. Housing have offered support/signposting benefit/support take up, and development of payment plans,
- The Council has a stay on legal action until the end of August. The increase in Universal Credit Claimants has led to a delay in paying but there is evidence that the reopening of the cash office has meant more have paid arrears. Face to face visits have been undertaken and staff has demonstrated a willingness to work differently to ensure service provision to vulnerable tenants. Online applications processes have been developed to aid the public and within 48 hours of the new Housing Application form going live, a month's worth of applications had been made.
- Made decisions in public interest on the short-term suspension of Council facilities and services and set in motion groundwork for recovery work to commence re-delivery. Whilst facilities such as Pets Corner and The Playhouse have remained closed, staff have been undertaking engagement work, online creative projects and accelerating maintenance works so they are ready to open when it as soon as safe to do so. Staff have also been redeployed to support other recovery activities.
- The Council has operated in a fast-moving policy environment with government guidance being issued or changed almost daily. Restrictions and relaxations of COVID 19 related guidelines have required many dynamic changes to operation of services. The Council, in its community leadership role, has also promoted the wellbeing of Harlow residents, through its communications so the resident understood the appropriate responses at

each stage of the pandemic to mitigate risk to themselves and protect safety of others. Advice and help have been given to business to reopen safely by our environment team.

- The Council has dealt with over 60,000 enquiries* (calls, emails, online forms, applications and social media messages) during the pandemic with more than 24,000 people visiting our coronavirus support information on our website.
 - We have worked with our HTS partners to maintain their emergency responses for residents during the lockdown period, implemented safe working practices for their staff and the public they visit and worked collaboratively to bring back both housing and environmental services quickly so that impact to residents could be mitigated and services continue as close to normal as possible
 - Our Waste contractor, Veolia, and their bin crews have provided a service throughout the lockdown period and collected over 2,824 tonnes of non-recycling, 1,402 tonnes of recycling and 557 tonnes of food waste in April and May
5. The Response Team initially met daily with reporting to a daily Senior Management Board / HTS meeting. This work is now being wound down as many of the staff are involved in moving to recovery Workstream activities and as council activities recover, to their substantive roles. Measures implemented have meant that only one staff member has fallen ill to Covid 19 and recovered. Staff have adapted to new ways of working and continue to work remotely for the foreseeable future.
6. The Council has also quickly established a portfolio with specific responsibility for recovery and a mechanism for formal members involvement through this cross-party Working Group.

Item 6(a) – Workstreams

The following are update notes from Workstream Leads

Community Impact – Lead Jane Greer:

The following subgroups have been established to look at impact on our community covering the following themes.

- Arts and Culture
- Homelessness, Supported Housing and tenancy support
- Third Sector, BAME, Faith, disabled and other groups community impacts

There has also been a discussion on how a cross working group subgroup needs to be set up to look at

- Data – collection of and analysis

The key points so far are:

Arts and Culture Subgroup

This sub group focuses on arts & cultural venues and activities that are run by the Council or which the Council has a significant involvement in e.g. Playhouse, Gibberd Gallery, Museum, Carnival, Fireworks, Christmas Lights – also Council venues that are used by community based groups e.g. Latton Bush, Potter Street. A later stage may be to provide advice/support to non-Council linked groups/venues. Action planning to be focussed on two areas:

- Maintaining audience engagement and some activity where possible, particularly in the summer
- Preparing plans for re-opening (even if this may be many months away). Although this will feed into the internal group

Homelessness and supported housing and tenancy support Subgroup

Focusing on supported housing, homelessness including rough sleepers and victims of domestic abuse, allocations and tenancy support

Areas of focus will include:

- Establishing a plan to re-introduce support visits for older persons housing
- Planning for re-opening communal areas in older persons housing
- In relation to tenancy support, the level of family support has increased during lockdown, family members have been off work or furloughed, however as this support decreases and people return to work then support services need to increase to meet demand.
- Developing further the existing Rough Sleepers Action to help mitigate the effects of Covid 19 on homeless people.

Third Sector, BAME, Faith, disabled and other groups community impacts

Looking and at implementing support to aid recovering from the pandemic to the third sector, faith groups, BAME groups and others. Examples include:

- Supporting local community and voluntary groups to maintain support for the most vulnerable groups after Shielding ceases.
- Though local faith groups, identify specific support needs to assist community recovery

- Support local organisations that have links to BAME communities to identify specific recovery support needs

Council Business Impact – Lead Simon Freeman

Work of this workstream has the following key points

- Vast majority of council services have been maintained throughout.
- Extremely quick response to the government decision and national crisis in March to enable the above to happen.
- Public facing services temporarily suspended to comply with guidance and protect public/staff
- Some workers unable to undertake normal duties have been redeployed to support other activity (such as Community Hub, town Centre etc.
- Corporate Covid Risk Assessment completed and Covid Certification in Civic/Latton Bush

Now focusing on bringing service to the public back including –

- Public Toilets (reopened w/c 6 July)
- Civic Centre (reopened w/c 6 July)
- Car Parks (reopened w/c 6 July)
- Museum Garden (due to open 25 July)
- Playgrounds (Due to open by the end of July)
- Playhouse – some phased opening from w/c 20 July

During lockdown lots of work on using online service access with big win on the development of Housing Applications online. Work continues to develop these points of service access moving forward.

Business & Economy Workstream – Lead Andrew Bramidge

1. Advice and support to businesses

- Provision of Government grant support to Harlow businesses
- Direct businesses towards local business advisory services e.g. NWES, Growth Hub through partnership social media campaign involving Chambers of Commerce and SELEP
- Promotion of new business start-up support to include co-operatives where risk can be shared
- Improve environment in our employment areas e.g. better signage, transport
- Deliver joint Harlow Council & Harlow Chamber online business support and information event (hosted by Cllr Harvey?)

2. Promotion of Harlow businesses

- Local Purchasing – what more can the Council do in this regard?
- Local Purchasing – actively promote local purchasing opportunities e.g. by staging a (virtual?) Meet the Buyers event
- Inward investment campaign through Discover Harlow, positioning Harlow as key location in the UK Innovation Corridor
- Work with 'Anchor' institutions to support the local supply chain; learn from PHE Impact report
- Develop opportunities to create new forms of flexible business space e.g. co-working to enable new business creation, potentially using our commercial asset portfolio
- Immediately switch to active promotion of Harlow Town Centre, neighbourhood centres, retail parks and Harlow's hospitality sector. Focus of activity of 'Shop Local' e.g. through apps such as 'Shop Appy'
- Promotion of Harlow business success stories via Discover Harlow focussing on companies that are doing well at present and potentially linking them to supply chain opportunities
- Develop Covid related Business Awards scheme with Harlow Chamber and Heart 4 Harlow
- Fast track signage project to improve awareness of local shopping hatches.

HTS Group Workstream – Lead Andrew Murray

- Played a leading role in supporting the C/Hub, providing vans, volunteer resources, and storage accommodation for food parcels etc.
- Played a leading role in procuring PPE equipment ensuring "fit for purpose", establishing reliable markets/supply chain, interpreting complex/changing govt H and S guidance into adapting business processes, arranging Covid Secure office arrangements
- Established a "remote contact centre" quickly for responding to customer emergencies/enquiries.
- Worked well with local/national trade unions, in partnership, to provide support to employees thru lock down, and get people back to work safely/processes. (HSE)
- National recognition as a playing a leading role in the newly formed LATCo organisation, developing support mechanisms for members

Item 6b - Development of Action Plan

- Officers are working on producing an Action Plan layout common to all Workstreams
- It is envisaged that the first draft Action Plan will be brought to the Working Group at its August meeting.
- Work will continue on actions in the interim between meetings
- Action Plan will be a 'live' document and subject to change going forward

- Anticipated that the first report will be presented to Cabinet at their meeting in September.

Additionally, and concurrently, the Working Group will align with, inform and strengthen all high level strategic corporate activity, for example work on Harlow Gilston Garden Town, the Town Investment Plan, Town Centre Action Plan and the Corporate Plan

Item 6c - Short Term Measures

This is an opportunity for the Working to suggest measures that could be implemented quickly or could be subject to more work by officers.

Quick Wins for the Community Impact Group

- Worked with Rainbow Services in the successful operation of the Community Hub
- Planning for Black History Month activities in an alternative and more suitable location
- Development of a summer school e.g. theatre workshops, dance classes, museum activities programme using open air venues
- Promoted and encourage applications for Discretionary Business Rate Scheme
- Will target BAME children and young people for participation in the summer school
- Work with partners to deliver a Holiday hunger scheme at a suitable location.

Quick Wins for the Business and Economic Support Workstream

- Delivery of joint Harlow Council & Chamber of Commerce online business briefing and engagement event
- Proactive promotional campaign of town centre, neighbourhood centres, retail parks and the town's hospitality sector and 'Harlow Shop Local' campaign
- HDC to develop and lead a local partnership on implementation of Kick Start job placement scheme
- Develop Business Awards scheme to promote and celebrate local businesses
- Dedicated edition of Harlow Times – "Harlow is Open for Business", in late Sept/ early October.

Item 6d - Impact on Council Priorities and Corporate Plan

- The Council agreed its Corporate Plan in February before the onset of the pandemic
- The Plan does not reflect the recovery focus of the Council
- Proposed to add a further Corporate Priority in the next reporting round which will be the September Cabinet meeting

