

COVID-19 RECOVERY WORKING GROUP
Wednesday 5 August 2020 at 6.30pm
Zoom - Online

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Minutes (Pages 2 - 5)
4. Approve the final Terms of Reference (Pages 6 - 8)
5. Approve the Vision Statement (Pages 9 - 12)

To approve the Vision Statement and recommend to Cabinet.

6. Discuss and agree the work stream objectives taking views from Members
7. Update on progress of Action Plan
8. Matters of Urgent Business

**MINUTES OF THE COVID-19 RECOVERY WORKING GROUP
HELD ON**

22 July 2020

6.30 - 8.50 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Eugenie Harvey (Chair)
Councillor Simon Carter
Councillor Joel Charles
Councillor Tony Durcan
Councillor Tony Edwards
Councillor Mark Ingall
Councillor Andrew Johnson
Councillor Frances Mason
Councillor Russell Perrin
Councillor Nancy Watson

Officers

Brian Keane, Chief Executive
Hannah Criddle, Governance Support Officer
Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning
Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Deputy to the Chief Executive
Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing
Simon Hill, Head of Governance
Andrew Murray, Head of Housing
Adam Rees, Governance Support Officer

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Councillor Harvey welcomed the group to the meeting. She explained that the purpose of the group was to work collaboratively, generate creative ideas and have productive debate. Councillor Harvey explained that three key concerns of hers following the Covid-19 pandemic were unemployment, local businesses and the voluntary sector.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Charles declared a pecuniary interest as a remunerated Council appointed director of HTS (Housing and Regeneration) Ltd.

Councillor Carter declared a pecuniary interest as a remunerated Council appointed director of HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The group considered the Terms of Reference that were shared at the Cabinet meeting on 9 July 2020. It was agreed that it was important to complete a gap analysis and to understand the baseline to help to inform the Terms of Reference and establish a feedback mechanism so performance against the Terms of Reference could be compared.

The group agreed to:

- a) Add a term around the Council working with regional health officials to minimise the risk of a second outbreak in Harlow.
- b) Extend the community action term to include community cohesion and wider engagement including public health education and to focus on the impact on the voluntary sector.
- c) Have specific focus of the impact of Covid-19 on the faith based communities and BAME group.
- d) Have a specific focus on public education in view of the on-going health risk.

It was agreed that the action plan should consider dynamic and static risk.

The amended Terms of Reference would be circulated to the Chair and a representative from the Conservative group for approval before the next meeting.

5. RESPONSE PHASE - KEY ACTIONS AND DECISIONS

Councillor Harvey noted some of work completed by the Council during the response phase whilst there was a gradual loss of services and the following had been achieved; enabling 420 officers to work remotely, working with the County Council and shielding agencies creating the Community Hub, awarding grants to local businesses, helping 36 rough sleepers, monitoring staff sickness, creating online creative projects, dealing with 60,000 customer enquiries and HTS emergency work during lockdown. The group requested that this information was circulated as a note to all.

The group considered whether the Council was still in the response phase or had moved into the recovery phase. Councillor Harvey advised that the Council was moving into the recovery phase. Councillor Perrin suggested that the details of the response were written down within a strategic framework for comparison against the groups' terms of reference.

6. RECOVERY PHASE

a) Workstreams

Jane Greer, Head of Community and Wellbeing, explained that under the “community impact” work stream, there were four key sub-groups;

- a) Third sector, faith groups, BAME and other communities
- b) Homelessness and supported housing
- c) Arts and culture
- d) Data collection.

Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning, explained that the “business impact” work stream would need access to better economic data in order to consider the impact on Harlow. He confirmed that, to date, support had been provided to the retail and hospitality sector for the re-opening of their businesses and to 200 Council business tenants.

Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Property and Deputy to the Chief Executive, detailed the innovative changes made to services as part of the “council business” work stream. The stream had considered 19 actions for immediate action and was aware of where the Council currently stood with its service and where it needed to get for services in the future.

Andrew Murray, Head of Housing, confirmed that, as part of the “HTS Group” work stream, some service provision was moderate and HTS were working its way through backlogs. HTS had worked well with local and trade unions to support employees and get people back to work safely. Andrew Murray confirmed that the Best Value Review actions were continuing for the contract extension. Themes considered by the work stream included; social value impact, business resilience, commercial impact, environmental impact, the customer experience and creating opportunities.

Brian Keane, Chie Executive, confirmed that as of 22 July 2020 he would be receiving postcode data on the positive Covid-19 tests in Harlow.

The group requested a note on the operational, verbal updates of the officers by the next meeting.

b) Development of Action Plan

A draft action plan was due to come back to the group in August for Cabinet approval in September. The group agreed it would like to meet before 25 August meeting to work on the draft action plan. A further meeting would be arranged within the next two weeks.

The group agreed that a gap analysis and baseline analysis would be needed to inform an action plan. Councillor Perrin suggested that sustainability should also be considered as part of the action plan. Councillor Charles suggested that a sub-group for the working group was created to consider the overall vision of a post Covid-19 Harlow.

c) Short Term Measures/Quick Wins

Jane Greer confirmed a number of community impact short-term wins including; the community hub, the planned arts and culture summer events, the planned Black History Month events and the work to allocate discretionary business relief grants. Jane Greer advised the group that Rainbow Services would also be organising a survey to consider how groups had been affected by the pandemic.

Andrew Bramidge explained a number of short-term measures for the "Business and Economic Support" work stream;

- a) Mapping – impact monitoring
- b) Advice and support provided to the business community
- c) The promotion of local businesses
- d) Job skills

It was agreed that a note to all members would include the proposals.

d) Impact on Council Priorities and Corporate Plan

Councillor Harvey confirmed that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Council Priorities and Corporate Plan would be reviewed by September.

e) Finance Update

Simon Freeman confirmed that arrangements were changing weekly, however, the Council would be receiving an additional £165,000 of funding from the Government in a further round of grants announced by Government. The position had not changed since the update to Cabinet on 9 July 2020, however, the additional funding would mean that the gap would reduce to around £500,000. Simon Freeman confirmed that the Council was dealing with a forecast based on what was expected. Councillor Ingall confirmed that the returns information sent to the Government would be shared with the Opposition Group.

7. **MEETING FREQUENCY/NEXT STEPS**

The group noted the dates of the next meetings and requested that another meeting was arranged within the next two weeks. Councillor Harvey agreed to email the group to confirm the process outlined and would arrange for requested documents to be circulated to the group.

CHAIR OF THE WORKING GROUP

REPORT TO: COVID-19 RECOVERY WORKING GROUP
DATE: 5 AUGUST 2020
TITLE: COVID-19 RECOVERY WORKING GROUP
TERMS OF REFERENCE
LEAD OFFICER: BRIAN KEANE, CHIEF EXECUTIVE

RECOMMENDED that the Working Group:

- A** Approves the amended Terms of Reference attached as Appendix A to the report.
- B** Recommends to the Cabinet that the Terms of Reference are approved.

BACKGROUND

1. The draft Terms of Reference for the Covid-19 Recovery Working Group were presented to the working group on 22 July 2020 for discussion and approval.
2. During the meeting, a number of suggestions were made. It was agreed that the Terms of Reference would be amended and circulated to the Chair and a representative from the Conservative group for approval before the next meeting. These discussions have been ongoing and the latest draft is presented for approval

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

3. The Terms of Reference have since been amended and are attached as Appendix A to the report.
4. The amended Terms of Reference have been circulated to the Chair and Working Group prior to this meeting.

IMPLICATIONS

Environment and Planning (includes Sustainability)

As set out in the report.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning

Finance (includes ICT and Properties and Facilities)

None specific.

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

Housing

As outlined in the report.

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)

As contained in the report. Agreement of the Terms of Reference was requested by the Cabinet at its last meeting.

Author: Simon Hill, Head of Governance

Appendices

Appendix A – Amended Terms of Reference for Covid-19 Recovery Working Group

APPENDIX A

Covid-19 Recovery Working Group

Terms of Reference - Draft Revision for decision 5 August 2020

- (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 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.

Draft

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. To work 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.

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.