

Report of:		Title:	
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Name of Update		Date of Report	Status:
Recovery Plan	July 2021	Shareholders Sub-Committee	Information

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Introduction

HTS's Recovery Plan is a strategy to drive the recovery of the Environment and Housing workstreams following the easing of restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the lockdowns, HTS has taken government advice into account at each stage and have reviewed the services we can safely deliver to limit the risk of spreading the virus to our staff and the residents we deliver services to.

New measures to gradually reduce restrictions were introduced by the Government detailing a Roadmap out of Lockdown in early March 2021.

As a result, the working restrictions that were imposed in 2020 have continued through most of Q4 of 2021 and have continued to have a significant effect on HTS's performance and ability to deliver services.

As a result of the changes made already and the forecast dates of further improvements, HTS and Harlow Council can start to align service recovery with the Roadmap dates and this report provides more details of how this will be achieved.

Summary of the Governments Road Map out of Lockdown

Step 1 - Changes on 29 March

- Safer for people to meet outdoors rather than indoors. Rule of 6 introduced
- The 'stay at home' rule will end

Step 2 - not before 12 April

- Non-essential retail can open including libraries, gyms etc

Step 3 - not before 17 May

- Restrictions on meeting people outdoors is lifted meaning up to 30 people can meet outdoors
- Up to 6 people or 2 families can meet indoors
- Social distancing will be reviewed
- Most businesses can re-open

Step 4 - not before 21 June

- The government hopes to be in a position to remove all legal limits on social contact. This will be the most significant stage for HTS when potentially all work can continue without restrictions for the first time since March 2020.

Next Steps for Recovery

HTS's Roadmap to Recovery can be set out into 3 phases:

Phase 1 – Restart (Short Term Objectives – 0-3 months)

➤ Increase output

Works that previously couldn't be carried out safely should recommence. HTS has started this process already. This includes repairs inside resident's properties.

Projects and Capital programmes should be commenced while adhering closely to government guidance on preventing the spread of Covid-19.

Test, track and trace services for workers should help keep our sites running, as this allows us to monitor workforce availability and potential infection rates.

Shielding for vulnerable staff ended on the 30 March 2021 with all employees returning to work.

➤ Minimise disruption

Collaborative efforts will help minimise output lost due to Covid-19. It is therefore important for employers, contractors and supply chains to understand the difficulties caused by Covid-19 and work together to overcome them.

Prompt payments to contractors and the supply chain will also help with cash flow and prevent delays.

➤ Identify Affected Services

Establish a list of affected services and the extent of any backlog that may have been built up during Lockdown.

Initially prioritise actions to get services back up and running.

Establish Action Improvement Plans where required assessing timescales, resources and costs to improve performance.

Phase 2 – Reset (Medium Term Objectives – 3 - 12 months)

➤ Increase productivity

As we progress through the roadmap productivity should increase as restrictions are lifted.

Review approaches will be needed to compensate for the loss of productivity due to the requirement to implement Government guidelines across construction and the built environment

➤ **Strengthen capability in the supply chain**

It is essential that HTS maintains investment in training and retraining workers to ensure increased levels of sustainable employment.

Manage delays and availability of materials in the supply chain. Investigate options with alternative suppliers.

Subcontractors may have reduced resources due to furlough, so guaranteeing work and mobilising new contracts is critical.

➤ **Maximise employment**

A key element of the plan is its emphasis on skills and people.

HTS needs to make sure it retains its current workforce and fill any vacant positions to maximise its ability to deliver its services.

Training our new apprentices is key to developing talent within the business.

Develop and implement the governments Kick Start Programme and Work Experience programmes within HTS. These are being discussed in the HTS Recovery Planning meetings.

➤ **Preparing for barriers to recovery**

Increased demand on services when restrictions are lifted in addition to current backlogs created during Lockdown.

Operative productivity and flexible working are going to be key in recovery and we must consider what opportunities are available to us such as:

- Extended working hours during the week and weekends
- Employing additional resources
- Use of additional subcontractors
- Use of multi-trade operatives

There would be a need to consult with Unite Union to agree any potential changes to contracts.

Also, we must consider that working restrictions maybe in force until 21st June 2021 and this will have an ongoing effect on productivity.

Phase 3 – Monitoring and Reporting (Long Term Objectives – 6-12 months)

➤ Recovery Group for HTS activities

Continue to develop and implement the key objectives of the Recovery Group:

Improving 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.

Reassessing HTS Community Impact by its social value programme and reporting.

HTS Environmental Impact through its Landscape programmes and policies reviews.

Creating opportunities through the HTS Group Business and Commercial growth plans, particularly in the area of apprenticeships, training, and employment for young people.

To show leadership within the local business community with regards to creating local opportunities for local people.

➤ Role of Shared Operational Performance Meetings

Provide regular monthly updates on Performance across the full suite of KPI's and monitor progress of Actions Plans on services that have been affected by Covid-19.

➤ Shareholder Sub-Committee Meetings

An opportunity for both parties to review the recovery plan and provide strategic direction to HTS.

Workstream Summary

Responsive Repairs

A comparison of the Work in Progress between March 2020 and March 2021 illustrates an increased WIP at the end of the lockdown period that will need to be managed and programmed effectively.

Work In Progress (WIP)	Mar-20	Mar-21	Increase
Number of jobs in WIP	3551	4195	644
Value of WIP	£628,870	£1,100,111	£471,241

Additionally, the table below identifies the variances in WIP between each trade over the same period.

This will allow HTS to focus on the areas that have higher than normal levels of WIP and the largest increases over period.

Initially, the comparison below shows large increases in Carpentry, Electrical, Gas Breakdowns, Plumbing and Roofing, although roofing wip had increased significantly prior to Covid-19.

	WIP 20/21	WIP 19/20	Difference
Work Type	No of Jobs	No of Jobs	No of Jobs
HOUSING AD-HOC	38	19	19
BRICKLAYING, PAVING AND LABOUR	134	120	14
GARAGE ROOF REPAIRS	114	86	28
AIDS & ADAPTATIONS	16	14	2
DAMP REPAIRS UNDER £400	27	68	-41
CARPENTRY	560	371	189
DOOR ENTRY	19	5	14
DOUBLE GLAZED UNITS	199	163	36
DRAINAGE	11	8	3
DRAIN SURVEYS	0	3	-3
ELECTRICAL	241	150	91
FENCING	302	517	-215
GARAGES	224	220	4
GLAZING	38	24	14
GAS BREAKDOWNS	179	103	76
LOSS OF INSURANCE	2	0	2
PAINTING	21	0	21
PLUMBING	335	158	177
PLASTERING	383	406	-23
ROOFING	1084	872	212
HOUSING RE-VISITS	0	0	0
UPVC	268	244	24
TOTAL	4195	3551	644

In summary, over the last year the WIP has increased by 644 jobs and £471,241.00 in value. However, this does not indicate how many jobs are in the backlog compared against new jobs raised.

These are the initial areas that HTS will focus on reducing the backlogs.

Whilst Emergency and Urgent priority jobs have been completed throughout the various lockdowns and we are not expecting any performance reduction in these areas, it is expected that performance against Standard and Planned priority jobs will be significantly impacted for some time as delayed jobs are completed.

We have also carried out an in-depth analysis of the jobs included in the WIP and can identify the number of jobs in each work type that have already exceeded their target date due to Lockdown restrictions.

Below is the analysis of work in progress between March 2020 and April 2021, the time period that Lockdown has affected Services, as at the 13th May 2021 and the progress

made up to the 9th June 2021, split between priority, work type and housing or non-housing.

HTS WIP between March 2020 and April 2021

Outstanding WIP by Priority				
Priority			No. jobs in WIP 09/06/21	No. Jobs in WIP 13/5/21
Standard	S1	Complete works in 20 working days	235	433
Planned	P1	Complete works in 9 months	492	705
TOTAL			727	1138

Outstanding WIP by Work Centre				
Housing			No. jobs in WIP 09/06/21	No. Jobs in WIP 13/5/21
HCAP00		HOUSING AD-HOC	16	16
HREBPL		BRICKLAYING, PAVING AND LABOUR	26	32
HREGRF		GARAGE ROOF REPAIRS	24	77
HRESAA		AIDS & ADAPTATIONS	2	3
HRESBD		DAMP REPAIRS UNDER £400	2	9
HRESCA		CARPENTRY	96	142
HRESDE		DOOR ENTRY	3	15
HRESDG		DOUBLE GLAZED UNITS	38	48
HRESDR		DRAINAGE	3	4
HRESEL		ELECTRICAL	33	95
HRESFC		FENCING	16	60
HRESGA		GARAGES	11	13
HRESGL		GLAZING	24	22
HRESGR		GAS BREAKDOWNS	2	20
HRESIN		LOSS OF INSURANCE	2	2
HRESPA		PAINTING	2	2
HRESPB		PLUMBING	32	85
HRESPL		PLASTERING	65	63
HRESRF		ROOFING	239	303
HRESUP		UPVC	57	73
HVO103		VOIDS REPAIRS IN OCCUPANCY	9	8
TOTAL			702	1092

Outstanding WIP by Work Centre				
Non-housing			No. jobs in WIP 09/06/21	No. Jobs in WIP 13/5/21
HMUNDR		NON HOUSING DRAINS WORK	0	1
HMUNPL		MUNICIPAL PLANNED WORKS	0	0
HMUNOO		MUNICIPAL	25	40
HMCAPO		NON HOUSING AD-HOC	0	5
HMUNPP		PADDLING POOLS	0	0
TOTAL			25	46

Significant progress has been made in clearing the oldest jobs in the 4 weeks between the 13th May and the 9th June. This is highlighted in the March performance statistics where over 300 backlog jobs were completed alongside circa 600 jobs on target.

The same occurred in April where 292 backlog jobs were completed alongside 722 jobs on target.

In assessing the Recovery Plan it is also important to look at the age of the WIP as highlighted in the chart below for S1 Standard priority:

Aged WIP Report for S1 Standard - 20 Working Days

Work Type	2020								2021				Grand Total
	Month												
	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr 2021	May	
HOUSING ADHOC		1	1	1	1		1		2	3	1	1	12
MUNICIPAL			1	2		1	1	5	5	3	1	5	24
AIDS & ADAPTS						1						1	2
DAMP												2	2
CARPENTRY					2	1	5	5	6	9	11	4	43
DOOR ENTRY								1	1			1	3
DOUBLE GLAZING		4	1		1			1		3	1		11
DRAINAGE		1							1			1	3
ELECTRICAL			3			2	3			3	10	12	33
FENCING												1	1
GARAGES		1						1			1		3
GAS BREAKDOWNS	1	1				1	2		1	4	6	4	21
GARAGE ROOFING											2		2
INSURANCE				1						1			2
PAINTING										1			1
PLUMBING								2		5	7	18	32
PLASTERING						1		1			1		3
ROOFING										2			2
UPVC				1		1	3	2	5	8	3	6	29
VOIDS IN OCC					1	2			2	1			6
Grand Total	1	8	6	5	5	10	15	18	23	43	44	56	235

The operational teams are using these reports to tackle the oldest outstanding jobs first and where to allocate the various trade operatives by the volume of jobs.

It is anticipated that the backlog of Standard priority jobs will take a further 2-4 months to clear. Monthly updates will be provided to track progress.

Aged WIP Report for P1 Planned – 9 Months

	Month							
Work Type	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021	Apr 2021	May 2021	Jun 2021	Grand Total
HOUSING ADHOC				1		2	1	4
MUNICIPAL						1		1
BRICKLAYING/PAVING	2		1	8	7	6	2	26
GARAGE ROOFING	8	2	4	1	1	7	1	24
CARPENTRY	2		1	6	15	24	5	53
DOUBLE GLAZING	3		1	3	11	8	1	27
FENCING	6				1	7	1	15
GARAGES				2	5	1		8
GLAZING				1			2	3
PAINTING					1			1
PLASTERING	2	3	1	15	18	16	7	62
ROOFING	21	12	8	32	56	90	18	237
UPVC				3	9	13	3	28
VOIS IN OCC	1			1			1	3
Grand Total	45	17	16	73	124	175	42	492

Planned priority works are less urgent by nature but a large backlog of 492 jobs has been created.

HTS has developed a two-tier phased plan to deal with planned category works:

Phase 1 – the current operational resources will continue to deliver the core Emergency, Urgent and Standard jobs focussing on the oldest jobs and also carry out Planned priority jobs when they have availability.

Phase 2 – this will run concurrently with Phase 1. 300 jobs, mainly consisting of carpentry and plastering, have been transferred to a separate dispatcher in callsy to be managed via a separate team and supply chain. HTS's current supply chain is already fully engaged in helping us deliver our core services. We are in the process of procuring new subcontractors who can deliver these services.

Due to the nature of the works, each property will be post inspected to verify the works and determine if an asbestos survey is required. This is process is already being progressed

and jobs are being prepared to handover to the new supply chain so they can organise the works in an efficient manner.

It is anticipated that the backlog of Planned priority jobs will take in the region of 12 months to clear. Monthly updates will be provided to track progress.

Summary

Below is a summary of the existing service provision and mobilisation plans:

- Compliance - Gas Servicing -To date, all gas services nearing their expiry date have been attended to. HTS will increase production to begin creating what was a 2-month buffer between expiry date and due date.
- Compliance - CO and Smoke Testing. As these are primarily undertaken alongside the gas service the above applies.
- Compliance - Emergency Lighting Testing. All tests are in date and compliant. The service will begin to increase productivity to also create a realistic buffer between expiry and inspection dates.
- Compliance – Non-Housing Electrical Tests. All tests are in date and compliant. The service will begin to increase productivity to also create a realistic buffer between expiry and inspection dates.
- Void Refurbishments - The programme is active with amended systems of work and carried out to HSE requirements. Additional subcontractors will be employed where practical. The programme and methods of working will hopefully adapt and make increased productivity possible. Possible team working resumed and more effective use of staff attending multiple properties on the same day.
- Fixed Price Kitchens (voids) - The programme and methods of working will hopefully adapt along with revised Government guidelines and make increased productivity possible and regular utilisation of preferred contractors will be in place.
- Fixed Price Boilers (voids) - Work continues under the guidelines and safety requirements of the void programme.
- Emergency and Urgent Priority Requests - The main trades involved are Gas, Plumbing, Electrical, Carpentry and Drainage. These priority orders have been undertaken since the start of the lockdown period and will continue.
- Roofing - Service has resumed with amended risk assessments and method statements are in place and additional preferred subcontractors.
- Fencing - Continuation of service has commenced.
- Bricklaying, Paving - Continuation of service has commenced.
- Drainage - Continuation of service has commenced.
- Garages - Continuation of services but to also include roof repairs depending on client Asbestos surveys resuming.
- Communal and Landlord Areas - Continuation of services.

- Non-Housing - Continuation of services, dependant on the client's assistance for access arrangements where building are currently closed.
- Routine/Standard Orders - This area of work will be totally dependent on the priority of the orders themselves, the backlog of WIP and the priority status of orders already in the system. Increased investment in sub-contractor and possibly agency resources will need to be considered, along with possible incentive payments or changes to working hours for HTS staff/operatives to address what will be a large backlog of orders.

Environment

Services currently being undertaken and proposed resumption of services are as follows:

- Waste Transfer station - from the start of lockdown, the waste transfer station has continued to operate.
- Street Cleansing - from the start of lockdown, we have continued to maintain service delivery.
Social distancing will remain in place as per Government guidelines for this type of working.
- Pest Control & Abandon Vehicles - The service has continued to operate as normal from the start of lockdown.
- Mobile Building Cleaning - Ongoing service delivery is being maintained; all service standards are being met.
One operative in a vehicle has been the normal from the start of lockdown.
- Void Clearance – this service has continued to operate but with continued reduced productivity due to social distancing.
- Void Cleans - Same as above Voids Clearance.
- Mobile Caretakers - Are working a one operative in a vehicle so as to maintain social distancing.
- Transport Workshop - Service has remained continuous throughout the lockdown.
- Plant Workshop - Service has remained continuous throughout the lockdown.
- Grounds Maintenance - Grass Cutting in key locations and areas commenced on schedule in late March
- Trees - This service has been delivering an Emergency response only but good progress is now being made to reduce the backlog of jobs.

Capital Works

Internal Works

Works consist of all elements covered within the Decent Homes categories covering Kitchens, Bathrooms, Rewires and Central Heating works.

The programme has now restarted:

- All remaining properties have now carried over and will be prioritised for completion in 2021//22 programme

Aids and Adaptations

Works consist of various Aids and Adaptations to Council properties.

The programme has now restarted:

- All remaining properties have now carried over and will be prioritised for completion in 2021//22 programme.

Compliance

Works consist of electrical testing and remedial works where required.

- The entire asset list for 20/21 is now complete and HTS have now moved to testing the laterals for the tower blocks.
- Discussions to reduce the unit cost of remedial works has identified a significant underspend which has allowed the Council to bring forward other electrical Asset Management priorities. Which include the improvements to the lighting at Sumner Farm Close and electrical upgrades at Netteswellbury Farm, with the inclusion of external charging points for mobility scooters.

Externals

Works consist of a series of re-roofing projects across the town.

Works have now recommenced.

Garages

Works consist of refurbishment and demolition of various sites across the town.

The programme of works has recommenced in East Park.

HTS will need to employ additional resources to be able to deliver the remainder of the 20/21 programmes alongside the 21/22 programmes. This will include:

2No. Site Managers,
1No. RLO,
1No. Administrator,
1No. Quantity Surveyor
1No. Electrical Quality Inspector

From when restrictions are eased a mobilisation period will be required before commencing these workstreams and each maybe slightly different depending on the type of work.

Budgets

During the pandemic HTS managed to secure savings in a number of areas:

- Labour – reduction in overtime payments and agency labour
- Materials – savings due to less repair work being carried out
- Fuel – less journeys being made

As well increased costs in other areas such as purchasing PPE and Lateral Flow testing kits.

This has enabled HTS to still return £945,000 back to Harlow Council and save £502,000 to re-invest in 2021/22.

There will need to be a significant investment in services to get them back to pre-Covid levels and budgets will need to be monitored closely.

Summary

Whilst restrictions are gradually being eased, reinstatement of any services will be based on a risk assessed approach and must encapsulate the government advice on social distancing and self-isolation in order to work as safely as possible.

The key safety measures will need to be employed:

- Avoidance where not essential
- Social distancing of at least 2 metres
- Frequent hand washing
- Use of PPE where appropriate
- Travelling with one person per vehicle
- Regular lateral flow testing of front-line operatives

As we move through each of these phases in the roadmap, we must all remember that Covid-19 remains in the community. We must carry on with 'hands, face, space'. Comply with the Covid-Secure measures that remain in place. Get tested when needed and get vaccinated when offered.