

REPORT TO: **SHAREHOLDER SUB COMMITTEE**

DATE: **28 SEPTEMBER 2021**

TITLE: **EMERGING FROM LOCKDOWN**

LEAD OFFICER: **ANDREW MURRAY, HEAD OF HOUSING (01279)
446676**

RECOMMENDED that:

- A** To note the report, and the progress HTS (Property and Environment) Ltd (HTS) have made during the lockdown.
- B** Delegations for the portfolio holders for Housing and Environment to monitor and manage delivery of the recovery plan, and to raise any matters arising. Progress will be reported to the Shareholder Sub Committee.

Status Update

1. HTS has since implemented a Service Recovery Plans across all work streams with a view to reduce the jobs in pipeline whilst fulfilling its day-to-day operations. The plans are intended to drive the recovery of the Environment and Housing work streams following the easing of restrictions as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Progress on the Recovery Plans are outlined in Appendix A.
2. During the lockdowns, HTS has been taking 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 of the changes made already and the forecast dates of further improvements, HTS and Harlow Council can start to align service recovery with a Roadmap.
3. The Government started to reduce Covid restrictions in March 2021 and plan to remove most legal restrictions, social distancing and social contact restrictions in July 2021. This is the most significant stage for HTS when potentially all work can continue without restrictions for the first time since March 2020.
4. In September, the Government will undertake a review to assess the country's preparedness for autumn and winter, which will consider whether to continue or strengthen public and business guidance as we approach the winter, including on face coverings and test, trace and isolate, and will review the remaining regulations.
5. Due to the lessons learned from the first and second lockdown and the good working practices already in place, HTS were able to minimise the effect of subsequent restrictions.

The key points of these changes were:

- Service delivery across housing repairs and maintenance (R&M) have fully resumed.
 - 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.
 - Resources were redirected to Void (empty) property refurbishment and external works.
 - All employees are required to continue to follow the latest government guidelines on hand washing, protection and social distancing i.e. Hands, Face and Space.
 - Grounds Maintenance to parks and landscapes continued to provide their service, albeit under difficult circumstances of reduced resources and challenging weather conditions.
 - Gas and electricity compliance - All gas and electrical inspections are aligned to their renewal dates.
 - Cleansing Services including litter picking, street cleaning, building cleaning and waste management continued to be provided and schedules for building cleaning were realigned to ensure the full programme of works were delivered.
6. The backlog of outstanding non-emergency works had increased significantly during the lockdowns and HTS has started to make substantial progress in reducing outstanding jobs when restrictions eased during quarter 3 of 2020.
7. HTS staff are now returning to working from office where possible.

Coronavirus Status Update

8. Following the easing of restrictions at the end of the lockdowns, there has been a need to continually exercise safe working practices that have impacted on the work delivered. The end of restrictions in August 2021 will further improve HTS productivity as resources are increased.

Relief event extension request

9. As a consequence of the recent second and third lockdowns, despite HTS's best efforts to protect the workforce and the community, whilst continuing to deliver services, the ongoing lockdown has resulted in a further extension of the current Relief Event until the end of June 2021.
10. The Relief Event covered all services provided by HTS.

Current Status of Services

Service	Direction of Travel	Commentary
Street Scene		Quarter 1 produced some good results with main area of concern around detritus and weed growth. The Waves were initially reduced to 1 due to the lockdown, this was then increased to clear areas affected following KBT survey. Similarly weed and abandoned vehicles were also affected by restrictions imposed due the pandemic.
Grounds Maintenance		There has been a significant improvement in performance for tree works following a rigid action improvement plan. HTS will continue to monitor and improve processes where necessary to ensure compliance with targets.
Housing Property		There has been a good progress made in housing repairs as reflected in KPI performance following the improvement action plan. The work in pipeline has reduced as the HTS repairs team tackle the backlog of orders.
Non-Housing Property		Another area of improvement for HTS following the initial lockdown early in the year 2020.

IMPLICATIONS

Place (Includes Sustainability)

None specific.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning

Finance (Includes ICT and Property and Facilities)

As contained in the report and appendices.

Author: Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Property and Deputy to the Managing Director

Housing

As contained in the body of the report.

Author: Andrew Murray, Head of Housing

Community Wellbeing (Includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

As a key employer in Harlow it is positive to see HTS undertaking activity that will support the local economy including supporting the local supply chain, and providing employment and training opportunities through Kickstart and work experience opportunities.

Author: Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing

Governance (Includes HR)

None specific, levels of complaint have risen during the pandemic and these trends have been reported to Cabinet in relevant JFPR reports.

Author: Simon Hill, Head of Governance

Appendices

Appendix A – HTS emerging from Lockdown.

Background Papers

None.

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

WIP – Work In Progress

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 2020/21 and Q1 of 2021/22 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

HTS has been closely monitoring the WIP that was built up during the Pandemic and tracking the progress of the oldest outstanding jobs that were raised between March 2020 and the 31st April 2021.

The table below illustrates the progress made up to the end of July 2021. During the 2-month period, 82% of Standard Priority jobs and 21% of Planned Priority jobs have been completed.

Priority			WIP at 31/07/21	WIP at 30/06/21	WIP at 09/06/21
Standard	S1	Complete works in 20 working days	43	103	235
Planned	P1	Complete works in 9 months	388	415	492
TOTAL			431	518	727

Additionally, the table below identifies and breaks down the WIP levels of each trade over the same period.

This will allow HTS to focus resources in the areas required to clear the oldest jobs as fast as possible.

All areas are reducing steadily and in line with plans.

Housing - Outstanding WIP by Work Type					
Housing			WIP at 31/07/21	WIP at 30/06/21	WIP at 09/06/21
HCAP00		HOUSING AD-HOC	9	2	16
HREBPL		BRICKLAYING, PAVING AND LABOUR	16	18	26
HREGRF		GARAGE ROOF REPAIRS	23	23	24
HRESAA		AIDS & ADAPTATIONS	-	-	2
HRESBD		DAMP REPAIRS UNDER £400	-	-	2
HRESCA		CARPENTRY	48	51	96
HRESDE		DOOR ENTRY	-	-	3
HRESDG		DOUBLE GLAZED UNITS	25	30	38

HRESDR	DRAINAGE	1	3	3
HRESEL	ELECTRICAL	3	8	33
HRESFC	FENCING	11	12	16
HRESGA	GARAGES	4	8	11
HRESGL	GLAZING	10	16	24
HRESGR	GAS BREAKDOWNS	-	1	2
HRESIN	LOSS OF INSURANCE	-	2	2
HRESPA	PAINTING	1	1	2
HRESPB	PLUMBING	7	19	32
HRESPL	PLASTERING	52	57	65
HRESRF	ROOFING	181	205	239
HRESUP	UPVC	23	32	57
HVO103	VOIDS REPAIRS IN OCCUPANCY	4	6	9
TOTAL		418	504	702

Non-Housing - Outstanding WIP by Work Type					
Non-Housing			WIP at 31/07/21	WIP at 30/06/21	WIP at 09/06/21
HMUNDR		NON-HOUSING DRAINS WORK	-	0	0
HMUNPL		MUNICIPAL PLANNED WORKS	-	0	0
HMUNOO		MUNICIPAL	13	14	25
HMCAPO		NON-HOUSING AD-HOC	-	0	0
HMUNPP		PADDLING POOLS	-	0	0
HMUNWD		WORK DEPOT	-	0	
TOTAL			13	14	25

Performance against Housing KPI's for Standard repairs has predictably been affected by the progress made in clearing the backlog of jobs, but overall movement has been in the right direction:

April **Red** 72%
May **Amber** 91%
June **Green** 96%

We also regularly carry 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 and can illustrate them by date below. Where possible the oldest jobs are being targeted first:

Outstanding Standard jobs by age from date raised

S1 Jobs in WIP by Age

Work Type	Apr 2020	Jun 2020	Jul 2020	Aug 2020	Sep 2020	Oct 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021	Apr 2021	May 2021	S1 Total
HCAP00			1	1	1		1		1				5
HMUNOO							1	2	2	1	1	3	10
HRESCA						1					1	2	4
HRESDG								1		2			3
HRESDR												1	1
HRESEL											1		1
HRESGA								1					1
HRESGL	1	1									3	3	8
HRESPB										1	2	2	5
HRESPL								1					1
HRESUP							1					3	4
Grand Total	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	5	3	4	8	14	43

It is anticipated that the remaining outstanding WIP for S1's will be complete by the end of September 2021, subject to access and the availability of materials.

Outstanding Planned jobs by age from date raised

P1 Jobs in WIP by Age

Work Type	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021	Apr 2021	May 2021	Jun 2021	Grand Total
HCAP00						2	1	3
HMUNOO						1		1
HREBPL	1			3	6	5	1	16
HREGRF	8	2	3	1	1	7	1	23
HRESCA				3	13	21	3	40
HRESDG	1		1	2	10	7	1	22

HRESFC	6				1	3	1	11
HRESGA				1	1	1		3
HRESGL							1	1
HRESPA					1			1
HRESPL	1	2	1	10	15	15	7	51
HRESRF	16	11	5	23	39	73	14	181
HRESUP				2	4	8	1	15
HVO103	1			1			1	3
Grand Total	34	15	10	46	91	143	32	371

Movements								17
Total								388

It is anticipated that the remaining outstanding WIP for P1's will be completed in approx. 9 months, subject to access and the availability of materials.

An additional subcontractor has been engaged to specifically deal with planned category works and their progress is being monitored.

Below is a summary of the existing service provision:

- Compliance - Gas Servicing -To date, all gas services nearing their expiry date have been attended to. HTS has now managed to create 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 has now managed to create a 4 week buffer ahead of programme.
- Compliance – Non-Housing Electrical Tests. All tests are in date and compliant. The service is working towards building a 2-4 week buffer.
- 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.

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 and:

- all remaining properties have now carried over and will be prioritised for completion in 2021//22 programme
- the 2021/22 asset list has been issued to HTS and pre-start surveys and designs are on-going.
- the 20/21 Programme is now back to a normal productivity levels, with completions and handover requests increasing weekly

Aids and Adaptations

Works consist of various Aids and Adaptations to Council properties.

The programme has now restarted and:

- all remaining properties have now carried over and will be prioritised for completion in 2021//22 programme.
- projects for the 2021/22 portion of the programme are now being released
- we are seeking more projects due to an increasing availability of our supply-chain workforce.
- programme is demand led and projects will continue to be released as authorised.

Compliance

Works consist of electrical testing and remedial works where required and:

- the entire asset list for 20/21 is now complete and the 21/22 programme of testing and associated works has commenced.

- we have now moved to testing the laterals for the tower blocks.
- Due to the spend being lower than expected additional works to defined projects to non-leasehold blocks are being scoped, the lighting at Sumner Farm Close and electrical upgrades at Netteswellbury Farm, with the inclusion of external charging points for mobility scooters has been re-prioritised.
- Other non-leasehold schemes are being sourced to bring into the programme as bringing forward too many properties from 2021/22 will start to upset the flat-line approach to the 5-year programme.

Externals

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

- Pitch roofing has commenced where possible, although roofs that require Redland tiles will be delayed due to a 20-week delivery date.
- The flat roofing supply chain is proving difficult to secure and we are continuing with a further procurement to exercises to limit the delay, although works have commenced on urgent properties.
- A list of properties has been provided, although additional and adjacent tenanted properties will be included to maximise value and for added asset management benefits.

Garages

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

The programme of works is now progressing well with works concluded in East Park and we are making good progress in The Hides.

Planning notices for the 21/22 programme are being prepared and scoping of the works is in progress.

Resources

HTS has employed 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

Recovery Plan for Environmental Services

Parks and Landscapes

<p>Recruitment problems due to furlough scheme reducing availability of staff and late start in recruitment due to lockdown of both our activities and the recruitment sector and inability to complete remote interviews (skill set of likely workers)</p>	<p>End date of furlough is end October 2021. This is due to the end of the summer work programme and therefore reduced staffing need. Until this date we are continuing to try to recruit and supporting this by offering a wide range of overtime. Take up is optional for employees though. To protect against a repeat next year we will recruit the summer agency staff early and take on extra permanent staff. We will look to use other methods of accessing temporary staff if this is not successful (recruitment shows, etc)</p>
<p>Absence– sickness from covid and time off for isolation. This links to the management resource to deal with these cases.</p>	<p>This is ongoing with 16 front line employees being unavailable to work at times. Current levels are much lower than this but we predict this may increase over the winter period with flu and covid expected to increase. Isolation for ‘track and trace’ has recently finished, so this will improve the situation and we’ve had reduced covid related absence recently. Current covid rates are raising and likely to speed up with the children returning to school in early September. End date likely to be about April 2022, following the winter ‘flu season’ – but obviously hard to predict. We continue to actively remind staff of the importance of social distancing, regular lateral tests and reporting of symptoms</p>
<p>Annual leave burden from agreed carry over</p>	<p>In line with government advice we permitted annual leave ‘carry over’ due to the lack of availability of holidays and the need for maximum workforce to carry out the works during lockdown periods. This has been spread over 2 years, with up to 5 extra days holiday in each year. We believe this is manageable, but ongoing minor impact until April 2023</p>
<p>Vehicles – increase usage</p>	<p>There has been an increase in the number of vehicles in use due to social distancing requirements. This has now been removed with the summer work (working off mowers) and the reduced requirement for social distancing since late July. We have a couple of teams who have 5 or 6 to a van and this has been reduced until lower covid rates (vulnerable employees) – therefore ongoing until about April 2022</p>

	following likely high winter rates.
Weeds – high level of weeds due to pulling back a year of weed spray activity and reduced cutting in periods of lockdown.	2021 has allowed weed sprays to recommence and therefore the impact will be being reduced each time. We expect 2022 to show much reduced weeds around the town. There is a 3 year cycle for weed spraying and therefore a minor impact will be ongoing until 2023.
Grass growth levels – Restricted access to areas to cut grass due to both increase parking making cutting difficult and also a significant increase in knee-rails around the town	<p>The access from parked cars has been slowly improving in recent weeks, however with long term increase in working from home likely, it is expected for this to continue into the future.</p> <p>This has been exasperated by the significant amount of knee rails being put in place to control informal parking. These reduce access points for mowing kit, requiring either smaller machinery or strimming of areas that used to be mown rapidly by larger machines.</p> <p>We will use the winter period to review our rounds and access points alongside the new parking, considering the requirement for different machinery and longer rounds if necessary. Working alongside the client to make as efficient and cost effective as possible.</p> <p>Expect Spring 2022 when mowing season starts that improvements will be made, and in line with adjustments to the round or significant return to the workplace policies, we would look to have a full solution by Spring '22 onwards with a backstop position by the end of Summer 2022.</p>
Grass growth levels - weather factors (large amounts of sun, then rain in the growing season)	<p>There is no doubt that weather this Summer has had a direct impact on the voracity of plant and grass growth. We've had a very challenging summer period due to the weather.</p> <p>Since the middle of August, the main growing has finished and the weather has slightly improved, allowing us to complete our rounds, with one further round planned before the winter season commences.</p> <p>The grass should be in a reasonable condition (although not perfect due to long grass being cut) for winter therefore recovery by October 2021 (obviously with the access issues to consider)</p>
Grubbing out work (brambles and the like)	We have 2-3 weeks of this work to complete that we are this year utilizing additional subcontracting resource to allow more focus on other works for our inhouse team.
Hedges	Due to the reduced works undertaken during Winter 2020/21 (Covid lockdowns) this

	<p>has led to the significant growth now visible. Due to legislation this couldn't be tackled until late September (and we didn't have the resource for the reasons set out above).</p> <p>We will work our way through our winter programme as normal, hopefully with additional staff, but we expect increased complaints over the winter season. By the end of the winter 2021/22 it should be much improved but won't look aesthetically pleasing due to the need to hard cut the increased growth.</p>
<p>Tree works</p>	<p>Due to social distancing requirements over last year, it has been difficult for the arborists to work to their normal efficiency. Their work, with the use of ropes and climbing, requires close proximity working regularly and their inability to complete this has led to a backlog. Staff shortages also contributed to the backlog.</p> <p>HTS are working hard to overcome this with the use of sub-contractors and this has dramatically reduced the backlog in the last couple of months. We will also bring the town wide survey and works on board in 2022 which will in the long term have and much greater impact going forward</p>
<p>Machinery - supply of parts</p>	<p>This has become a particular problem over the last 2 or 3 months, seeming to increase recently. We have controlled this by the keeping of stock, good maintenance programme and the skill of our in-house mechanics.</p> <p>No significant impact to date although we currently have machines awaiting key parts. We need to be aware the lack of parts may impact delivery over the winter. We will continue to monitor and plan ahead to reduce this wherever possible.</p>
<p>Allotments</p>	<p>The allotments were not managed during the pandemic in 2020 and the start of 2021 due to Covid lockdowns, and for the same reason residents reduced work on them in line with lockdown restrictions and increased illness and isolation generally.</p> <p>HTS have been working through the required 32 plots that we clear and re-let each year and have been carrying out further plots where we have the resource to do so (this is completed by our ETF team).</p> <p>We will continue to work alongside HDC (Patrick) to support their work, to enable these to be brought back to a suitable standard. Timescales are dependant on resident engagement or investment from HDC – perhaps a joint initiative here? It is hoped that they will be in a suitable position ready for Spring 2022.</p>

Street Cleansing

<p>Recruitment problems due to inability to interview and take on new staff because of lockdown Also concern about HGV drivers for sweepers</p>	<p>End date April 2021 – this is no longer an issue, but did have an impact earlier in the year, although not as significant as other sections and no requirement for seasonal workers. One recent street cleansing position has been difficult to cover. We have been trying to book training for further HGV training for potential sweeper drivers, which is yet to be available. We are also aware that our current drivers are likely to be offered more attractive packages in other businesses due to the nationwide lack of HGV drivers – none of this is currently having an impact, but we are working to reduce a future problem.</p>
<p>Absence– sickness from covid and time off for isolation. This links to the management resource to deal with these cases.</p>	<p>This is ongoing and likely to increase over the winter period with flu and covid expected to increase. Isolation for ‘track and trace’ has now finished, so this will improve the situation and we’ve had reduced covid related absence recently. Current covid rates are raising and likely to speed up with the children returning to school in early September. End date likely to be about April 2022, following the winter ‘flu season’ – but obviously hard to predict. We actively remind staff of the importance of social distancing, regular lateral tests and reporting of symptoms</p>
<p>Annual leave burden from agreed carry over</p>	<p>In line with government advice we permitted annual leave ‘carry over’ due to the lack of availability of holidays and the need for maximum workforce to carry out the works. This has been spread over 2 years, with 5 extra days holiday in each year. We believe this is manageable, but ongoing minor impact until April 2023</p>
<p>Vehicles – increase usage</p>	<p>There has been an increase in the number of vehicles in use due to social distancing. This has now been removed and we have returned to normal.</p>
<p>Detritus levels – due to lockdown and no full sweeping ‘wave’</p>	<p>Our ‘wave’ system was halted during full lockdown, to enable social distancing to be observed. We returned to the wave system in April 2021, and eventually to a 2-wave system (normal level) by May 2021, although this has been reduced to 1 on numerous occasions due to absences from covid predominantly.</p>
<p>Detritus levels – due to private vehicle parking on grass verges, increased residential parking, long wet grass offcuts and temporary pedestrian barriers.</p>	<p>We managed to fully clean the town by the end of May 2021 and continue to do this, however there are a number of areas where we have been unable to access due to an increase in parked cars in estates (due to home working) and also pavement damage and mud due to vehicles parking on grass verges.</p>

	<p>This has recently reduced, but likely to be an ongoing, long term problem if home working trends continue. Discussions with HDC to be held to find ways to manage or accept this, particularly with the Keep Britain Tidy report expectations (likely a national problem – perhaps benchmark results).</p> <p>We have also been working to clear the offcuts from our grass cuttings, which have been more substantial and wetter than normal. This has improved since about mid-August, but a minor impact continues.</p> <p>The pedestrian barriers for covid segregation have enabled a ‘collection’ of litter and detritus to build up in these areas which are not possible to clear without manual intervention. Most of these barriers have been cleared throughout the last month and the impact from this will be over by October 2021 after a couple of waves.</p>
Fly tipping increase – due to more domestic projects, some waste site closures etc	<p>This has been a significant drain on manual labour resources over lockdown but has now reduced and is now slightly higher than pre-Covid levels, but manageable – no major ongoing impact</p>
Litter increase (loose and in town bins) – due to more exercise, closed restaurants and significant increase in takeaways / picnics	<p>The litter levels, including levels of litter in bins, have continued to be high, although now starting to reduce from pre-June 2021 levels.</p> <p>We have been supported by the work of the Harlow wombles, which has reduced the impact, and HTS have worked closely to collect all the increased litter collected rapidly. This is above normal levels, but under control, therefore no ongoing impact.</p>
Vehicles down time due to lack of parts	<p>We have struggled with getting rapid turnaround times from our sweeper hire company, which is due to the difficulty in supply of parts.</p> <p>Unfortunately we aren’t able to foresee the impact in the future, but will continue to work closely with them to resolve any issues</p> <p>We are looking into our new contracts for sweepers currently and hope to enable some inhouse works as part of this.</p> <p>Whilst these are now dealt with, there was an impact on service delivery and to a degree this is likely to be ongoing (as above)</p>
Building Cleaning and Caretaking	
Recruitment problems due to inability to interview	<p>End date April 2021 – this is no longer an issue, but did have an impact earlier in the</p>

and take on new staff because of lockdown	year, although not as significant as other sections and no requirement for seasonal workers
Absence – sickness from covid and time off for isolation. This links to the management resource to deal with these cases.	This is ongoing and likely to increase over the winter period with flu and covid expected to increase. Isolation for ‘track and trace’ has now finished, so this will improve the situation and we’ve had reduced covid related absence recently. Current covid rates are raising and likely to speed up with the children returning to school in early September. End date likely to be about April 2022, following the winter ‘flu season’ – but obviously hard to predict. We actively remind staff of the importance of social distancing, regular lateral tests and reporting of symptoms
Annual leave burden from agreed carry over	In line with government advice we permitted annual leave ‘carry over’ due to the lack of availability of holidays and the need for maximum workforce to carry out the works. This has been spread over 2 years, with 5 extra days holiday in each year. We believe this is manageable, but ongoing minor impact until April 2023
Vehicles – increase usage	There has been an increase in the number of vehicles in use due to social distancing. This has now been removed and we have returned to normal, with one exception.
Covid sanitisation works	HTS cleaning team have worked throughout the pandemic, increasing work to ensuring high levels of sanitisation, particularly of touch points and also in critical areas such as public toilets, doctors waiting rooms (Latton Bush) and the bus terminal. We have also increased filling of dispensers (increased washing) and sanitising. This work is ongoing until at least April 2022, and we have resourced this accordingly, so no impact to service.
Void clearance and cleaning works – due to lack of void management because of lockdown, leading to a ‘flood’ of voids from April onwards	We have had a significantly increased levels of void clearance and void cleaning works whilst the backlog was overcome from lockdown, this was overcome by use of an additional contractor for the clearance and two agency cleaners for the cleaning works. This has returned to about normal levels in August 2021. With covid and flu levels likely to be high this winter, there is a likelihood of further deaths and therefore increased voids works, but also continued absences and therefore potential impact until about April 2022 – we will plan for this and hope to avoid impact to service.

Transport

<p>Absence– sickness from covid, shielding and time off for isolation. This links to the management resource to deal with these cases.</p>	<p>This has had a particular impact on this team, due to it's small size and a number of medical conditions. The work has continued to be well managed, and all MOT, Servicing, Inspections and general repairs have been completed throughout. We expect ongoing issue through the winter period with flu and covid expected to increase.</p>
<p>Vehicle increase – due to social distancing</p>	<p>The team have managed additional vehicles (planned for sale) to enable social distancing and the maximum workforce availability. This has led to increased work for the team to maintain but has been successfully completed and with the recent reduction, this impact has now been removed. With no further lockdown expected, we don't foresee a continued impact here for the team.</p>
<p>Annual leave burden from agreed carry over</p>	<p>In line with government advice we permitted annual leave 'carry over' due to the lack of availability of holidays and the need for maximum workforce to carry out the works. This has been spread over 2 years, with 5 extra days holiday in each year. We believe this is manageable, but ongoing minor impact until April 2023</p>
<p>Supply of parts</p>	<p>There has been some impact on supplies, which is generally been worked around well, but particularly impacting our sweeper service from Go Plant (see above in Street Cleansing)</p>

Waste

<p>Non-recyclable waste</p>	<p>Due to the increase in litter (see Street Cleansing) this has led to an increase in non-recyclable waste coming into our waste station. This is already having an impact on our recycling rates unfortunately and expected to continue until winter – perhaps November 2021 The team are working to find new and innovative ways to improve this in other ways, such as reuse of some voids waste. HTS have introduced a weighbridge to</p>
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	understand waste volumes better, particularly for subcontractors, and recovering cost in scrap metal for example.
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Summary

Reinstatement of services has been based on a risk assessed approach and encapsulated 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:

- 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. Get vaccinated when offered.