Harlow Council
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Appendix A

Report of:		Title:	
Neil Rowland		Commercial Director	
Name of Report	Date of Report		Status:
Emerging from Covid - Recovery Plan	18 November 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 continued through most of Q4 of 2020/21 and Q1/Q2 of 2021/22 and continue to have an impact 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.

Additional Challenges Facing HTS Post Covid

Currently, across the country we are experiencing high levels of positive cases, but there are now a number of other factors that are affecting HTS and other organisations in a similar way such as, materials supply and price increases, high and rising inflation, and labour price increases.

In the preparation and planning phase of this Recovery Plan HTS predicted a number of possible effects of coming out of lockdown. A number of these have now come into play and despite forward planning are impacting on the delivery of services. The situation has been further distorted by the effects of Brexit:

Materials

Real point of sale costs have increased between 5%-40%, generating cost as well as delivery challenges. High energy usage manufacturing such as plaster, plastics, glass, bricks etc. will continue into next calendar and financial year.

Materials prices rose by 6.3% in 3rd quarter 2021 on a quarterly basis and by 16.9% compared with a year earlier. The materials supply difficulties are expected to stabilise by 3rd quarter 2022 and prices will rise by 15% over the forecast period (3Q2021 to 3Q2026).

Labour/Renumeration

'The great resignation' is what some are titling the current movement of people. Gallup 12, who carry out Employee Engagement surveys are saying that engaged colleagues will leave for a 20% remuneration increase, this is being offered in the market. We have struggled with recruitment and it will continue to be hard going. Although labour rates are not showing this rate increase at present in the indices, site labour rates are increasing by as much as 10%.

Overhead Challenges

Insurance premiums are experiencing large increases on fleet and buildings. Insurers risk appetite and ROI from premiums are taking a hit.

Fleet availability and prices are experiencing unprecedented timescales, meaning more aged vehicles within our fleet.

Fuel shortages now resolved have turned into fuel price increases alongside the costs of people heating their homes and buildings. We are reaching near record highs of energy costs; this impacts every element we are jointly reliant on.

Inflation

With the expected circa 4% inflationary rate, alongside the US potentially entering a recession (UK PLC usually follows two quarters later) and the bank of England likely to increase interest rates (with £400Bn of borrowing) this be the end of cheap borrowing.

Procurement

Procurement at least historic risk averse procurement is in a state of flux. Risk allowance is being increased on all repairs and planned contracts as well as development costs.

Supply chain appetite has changed rapidly as materials and labour prices increases are almost monthly affecting their ability to deliver.

Tender prices are expected to rise steeply over the next year with sharp rises in materials costs and site labour rates, together with strong demand. Tender prices continue to rise faster than costs over the remainder of the forecast period.

Initially, we forecast that this was a six-month issue, that would be rebalanced in early 2022.. For instance, timber the first nationally covered commodity is returning to normal availability and cost levels – this will still take 4 months to work through to a point of sale reduction. The same will occur for the other challenges noted, some longer, some quicker, with the possibility of the UK going into a recession in 2022.

However, the true impact of this combination of changes is beginning to impact HTS operationally and financially aligned to an increase in WIP post covid and complaints from Residents and Councillors.

Following our attendance at a recent conference held by Echelon Consulting, it is apparent that the challenges and impacts being realised by HTS is affecting similar organisations across the country.

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 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 availably 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 will be a need to consult with Unite Union to agree any potential changes to contracts.

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.

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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 September 2021. Since June, 91% of Standard Priority jobs and 33% of Planned Priority jobs have been completed. Overall, 55% of jobs have been completed in 5 months.

Priority		WIP at 30/9/21	WIP at 31/08/21	WIP at 31/07/21	WIP at 30/06/21	WIP at 09/06/21
Standard	Complete works in 20 working days	20	34	43	103	235
Planned	Complete works in 9 months	329	384	388	415	492
TOTAL		**349**	**418**	**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 - WIP by Work Centre				
Housing		**WIP at 30/9/21**	**WIP at 31/08/21**	**WIP at 31/07/21**
HCAP00	HOUSING AD-HOC	4	6	9
HREBPL	BRICKLAYING, PAVING AND LABOUR	13	16	16
HREGRF	GARAGE ROOF REPAIRS	21	22	23
HRESAA	AIDS & ADAPTATIONS	-	-	-
HRESBD	DAMP REPAIRS UNDER £400	-	-	-
HRESCA	CARPENTRY	39	47	48
HRESDE	DOOR ENTRY	-	-	-
HRESDG	DOUBLE GLAZED UNITS	17	25	25
HRESDR	DRAINAGE	-	1	1
HRESEL	ELECTRICAL	1	3	3
HRESFC	FENCING	4	10	11
HRESGA	GARAGES	1	4	4
HRESGL	GLAZING	7	10	10
HRESGR	GAS BREAKDOWNS	-	-	-
HRESIN	LOSS OF INSURANCE	-	-	-
HRESPA	PAINTING	1	1	1

HRESPB	PLUMBING	2	7	7
HRESPL	PLASTERING	50	52	52
HRESRF	ROOFING	160	178	181
HRESUP	UPVC	17	22	23
HVO103	VOIDS REPAIRS IN OCCUPANCY	4	4	4
TOTAL		**341**	**408**	**418**

Non-Housing - WIP by Work Centre				
Non-Housing		**WIP at 30/9/21**	**WIP at 31/08/21**	**WIP at 31/07/21**
HMUNDR	NON HOUSING DRAINS WORK	-	-	-
HMUNPL	MUNICIPAL PLANNED WORKS	-	-	-
HMUNOO	MUNICIPAL	8	10	13
HMCAP0	NON HOUSING AD-HOC	-	-	-
HMUNPP	PADDLING POOLS	-	-	-
HMUNWD	WORK DEPOT	-	-	-
TOTAL		**8**	**10**	**13**

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%
July Green 99%
August Green 98%
September Green 98%

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	**Apr 2020**	**Jun 2020**	**Dec 2020**	**Jan 2021**	**Feb 2021**	**Mar 2021**	**Apr 2021**	**May 2021**	**S1 Total**
HCAP00			1						1
HMUNOO					2	1		3	6
HRESCA							1		1
HRESDG				1					1
HRESGL	1	1					1	3	6
HRESPB							1	1	2
HRESPL				1					1
HRESUP								2	2
Grand Total	**1**	**1**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**3**	**9**	**20**

These works are being carried out using inhouse operatives.

The remaining jobs are taking slightly longer than anticipated mainly due to access issues. It is anticipated that the remaining outstanding WIP for S1's will be complete by the end of November 2021, subject to access and the availability of materials.

Outstanding Planned jobs by age from date raised

P1 Jobs in WIP by age	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	Mar 2021	Apr 2021	May 2021	Jun 2021	P1 Total
HCAP00						2		2
HMUNOO						1		1
HREBPL	1			3	5	3	1	13
HREGRF	8	2	2	1	1	6	1	21
HRESCA				2	13	18	2	35
HRESDG	1			1	9	5		16
HRESFC	1					2	1	4
HRESGA						1		1
HRESPA					1			1
HRESPL	1	2	1	10	14	14	7	49
HRESRF	15	9	4	21	36	63	12	160
HRESUP				1	4	5		10
HVO103	1			1			1	3
Grand Total	**28**	**13**	**7**	**40**	**83**	**120**	**25**	**316**

Movements in Priority 13

It is anticipated that the remaining outstanding WIP for P1's will be completed in approx. 6 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. Access to properties dropped significantly in July and August due to the holiday period.

Below is a summary of the existing service provision:

- Compliance - Gas Servicing – The programme is back on track being 8 weeks ahead of programme.
- 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 programme is back on track and 4 weeks ahead of programme.
- Compliance – Non-Housing Electrical Tests. All tests are in date and compliant. Works are progressing to create a 4-week buffer.
- Void Refurbishments – Backlog of work is decreasing each month, but the average turn around time is not back to pre-covid levels yet.

- Fixed Price Kitchens (voids) – Works are progressing well but the volume of new kitchens required is exceeding the budget for the year and alternatives methods are being discussed so as not delay void handovers.
- Fixed Price Boilers (voids) – Volumes of new works are exceeding budget and surpluses are being managed through the Capital Works 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 – High level discussions are ongoing regarding the continued volume of roofing jobs and the increased amount of works required to each property putting increased pressure on budgets and performance.
- Fencing – We are experiencing a higher volume of works in WIP as demand for fencing repairs is increasing.
- Bricklaying, Paving - We are experiencing a higher volume of works in WIP as demand for brickwork repairs is increasing.
- Drainage - We are experiencing a higher volume of works in WIP as demand for drainage repairs is increasing.
- Garages - Continuation of services but to also include roof repairs depending on client Asbestos surveys resuming.
- Communal and Landlord Areas – Proceeding to plan
- Non-Housing - Continuation of services with only a small backlog left to clear.
- 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 has been implemented, along with possible incentive payments or changes to working hours for HTS staff/operatives to address what will be a large backlog of orders.

Whilst the covid backlog is progressing relatively well and to programme, we are now experiencing a ripple effect of increased WIP levels in the current period. We have provided a summary of some of the potential reasons for this at the beginning of this report.

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 is progressing as follows:

- 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
- 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 toa 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 have been issued and priced by HTS and works are programmed to commence in November.

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

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Environmental Recovery Plan

This report is to describe the current position with regards to operations in Environmental Services with a view to the future and how we can control and mitigate the longer-term impact from coronavirus lockdown and other factors experienced over the last 18 months.

Parks and Landscapes	
Recruitment problems due to furlough scheme reducing availability of staff and late start in recruitment due to lockdown and inability to complete remote interviews (skill set of likely workers)	End date 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. To protect against a repeat next year, we are going to 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) Recruitment is an ongoing struggle. We are looking at new ways to recruit, including running a recruitment fair, using other recruitment agencies, changing to application forms rather than CVs and other methods in a hope to improve uptake of advertised jobs.
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. This has been the case and we continue to have a number of covid cases and isolation to support children. 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. Which was removed with the summer work (working off mowers) and the reduced requirement from social distancing.

	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 following likely high winter rates. We continue with these additional vehicles as expected.
Weeds – high level of weeds due to missing a year of weed spray activity and reduced cutting	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	The access from parked cars has been improving, however with long term increase in working from home likely, it is expected for this to continue into the future. This has been exasperated by the significant amount of knee rails in place, which reduce access points, requiring either smaller machinery or strimming of areas that used to be mown rapidly by a large machine. 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. 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 the end of Summer 2022.
Grass growth levels - weather factors (large amounts of sun, then rain in the growing season)	We had a very challenging summer period due to the weather and staff levels. Since the middle of August the main growing has finished and the weather has slightly improved, allowing us to complete our rounds successfully to the end of September. As long as we are able to overcome the staffing issues over the Winter / Spring, we don't envisage a reoccurrence here
Grubbing out work	This was completed by the end of October 2021
Hedges	Due to the reduced works during Winter 2020/21 has led to significant growth now visible. Due to legislation this couldn't be tackled until late September (and we didn't have the resource). 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 hard cut. By winter 2022/23 this will be fully recovered.
Tree works	Due to social distancing it has been difficult for the arborists to work to their normal efficiency. Their work, with the use of ropes and climbing, requires close working regularly

	and their inability to complete this has led to a backlog (we recognise that this isn't the only reason for this backlog). HTS are working hard to overcome this with the use of contractors, and this has dramatically reduced in the last couple of months.
Machinery - supply of parts	This has become a 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. No significant impact to date, but to be aware it may increase over the winter. We will continue to monitor and plan ahead to try to reduce this.
Allotments	The allotments were not managed during the pandemic in 2020 and the start of 2021, and additionally the residents have carried out dramatically reduced work on them – presumably in line with lockdown restrictions and increased illness and isolation. 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). 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 dependent on resident engagement or investment from HDC – and a joint meeting is being arranged by Michael Pitt (HDC) to jointly decide on a suitable way forward for the future.
Street Cleansing	
Recruitment problems due to inability to interview and take on new staff because of lockdown Also concern about HGV drivers for sweepers	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, however this has now been completed with new starter now in post. 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.
Absence– sickness from covid and time off for isolation. This links to the management resource to	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

deal with these cases.	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. This has been the case and we continue to have a number of covid cases and isolation to support children. 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.
Detritus levels – due to lockdown and no full sweeping 'wave'	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. We continue to struggle with sweeper breakdowns (see below under 'vehicles')
Detritus levels – due to parking on grass verges, increased residential parking, long wet grass offcuts and temporary pedestrian barriers.	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. This has reduced, but likely to be an ongoing, long term problem. Discussions with HDC to be held to find ways to manage or accept this, particularly with the KBT report expectations (likely a national problem – perhaps benchmark results). 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 and now no longer a problem due to the end of the cutting season. The pedestrian barriers for covid segregation were removed at the end of the summer and the issue with build-up of weeds and litter / detritus has now been resolved
Fly tipping increase – due to more domestic projects, some waste site closures etc	This has reduced now and is now slightly high, but manageable – no ongoing impact
Litter increase (loose and in town bins) – due to more exercise, closed restaurants and significant	The litter levels, including levels of litter in bins, have continued to be high, although dramatically down from pre-June 2021 levels.

increase in takeaways / picnics	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 litter collected rapidly. This is above normal levels, but under control, therefore no ongoing impact.
Vehicles down time due to lack of parts	We have struggled with getting rapid turnaround times from our sweeper hire company, which they state is due to the difficulty in supply of parts. Unfortunately, we aren't able to foresee the impact in the future, but will continue to work closely with them to resolve any issues We are looking into our new contracts for sweepers currently and hope to enable some inhouse works as part of this. The new sweeper tenders are at review stage and hope for introduction in mid-2022, in the meantime we are looking to rent further sweepers to overcome this.
Building Cleaning and Caretaking	
Recruitment problems due to inability to interview and take on new staff because of lockdown	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
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. This has been the case and we continue to have a number of covid cases and isolation to support children. 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
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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 which will be

	ongoing through the winter season.
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. In some places this has also become an income stream with increased cleaning requirements.
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	
Absence– sickness from covid, shielding and time off for isolation. This links to the management resource to deal with these cases.	This has had a particular impact on this team, due to its 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.
Vehicle increase – due to social distancing	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.
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

Supply of parts	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)
Waste	
Non-recyclable waste	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 understand waste volumes better, particularly for subcontractors, and recovering cost in scrap metal for example.