

### Update from Recovery Theme Leads

#### **Economy Theme**

The majority of the reactive business support measures implemented by Government will come to an end over the next quarter, with a subsequent further impact on businesses and residents. Work on the Economy theme is therefore shifting from the delivery of this support to a longer-term programme. The Economic Recovery Plan is currently being drafted, and this will form the basis of the Economy Theme work programme. Work is also ongoing to develop the programme objectives and outputs for each theme

- **Impact**

There has been a total of 361 business closures notified to the Rates team since 1st April 2020 – 27% in the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure sector, 33% in the office sector and 40% from commercial units. The majority of the office sector has been from small office space – one to two desk offices – and the bulk of the commercial units have either been storage space or small workshops, under 800sqft. During this period there have been 94 business openings – 31% in retail, hospitality and leisure, 30% office space and 37% business units.

This represents a net loss of 267 businesses over 5 months. In comparison, across the past 2 years there has been an average of 171 business openings/month and 160 business closures/month; a net gain of 9 per month. There is regularly a delay in businesses notifying the Business Rates team of closures, we expect this will be exacerbated this year by the zero-rate bill for the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure sector.

- **Business Grant Scheme**

Over £94M has been paid out to Wiltshire businesses. Of the Small Business Grant and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants 7,571 businesses have been paid a total of £90.23M. Through the Discretionary Grants 566 businesses have been paid a total of £3.78M. Government have announced that these schemes are to close at the end of August and any unspent allocations are to be returned.

- **People, Debt and Income Task & Finish Group**

The People Debt and Income Task and Finish Group is utilising the 'Wiltshire Money' Partnership and have a targeted series of campaigns: August – Employment and Housing; September – debts and bills (as payment holidays end); October – employment (as the furlough scheme comes to an end).

## **Community Resilience Theme**

The Community Resilience Recovery theme partnership have focused their attention through August on consolidating the workstreams, clarifying delivery project purpose and gathering the data and evidence to ensure the work and focus is targeted to where the biggest difference can be made. Voluntary Sector partners, while having more business as usual activity reactivated, are continuing to commit considerable time and resource into ensuring Wiltshire's communities recover strongly from COVID19 and no one gets left behind. The following provides updates on the current partnership workstreams:

- **Wellbeing hub**

Pro-active outbound calling to shielding residents has now stopped and the Well-being hub line (and email inbox) has moved into Customer Services. Very low numbers of enquiries coming in, consistently below 10 a day.

- **Community Engagement**

Formal Area Boards resume from September, with local recovery as the key theme for discussion at the online discussions. CEMs are working closely with the boards to ensure that local recovery plans are starting to be developed in each community area.

A meeting was held with over 60 representatives of the brilliant Wiltshire COVID19 response groups on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August. The purpose of this was to learn from our communities on how they have stepped up to the challenge of the pandemic, to share best practice, to enable them to build networks across the county and to understand how we can continue to support their development in the future. This vital workstream will continue over the coming weeks and months. Faith leaders relationships continue to be strongly developed with a joint discussion around bereavement, grief and loss, and a further discussion scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

On 06 November 2019 the FACT Executive Board endorsed findings of the Integrated Earliest Support in Communities (IESiC) project which led to 3 new projects being set up, Community Connector/Navigator; Digital Platform and Community Development/Partnership Commissioning. On 16 July 2020 the FACT Executive Board considered proposals that these projects move into the Community Resilience Recovery Group governance from FACT, due to their synergy with the work of this group during COVID-19 and moving into recovery. The Community Resilience Recovery Group is currently working to integrate these projects into recovery workstreams.

- **Summer Holiday Provision**

The Active Communities group, which was established to enable people across Wiltshire to keep physically and mentally active during the coronavirus lockdown, continues to deliver a range of interventions both virtually and via other innovative approaches. As services begin to mobilise and start to reengage mainstream customers, the focus of the group has shifted towards

vulnerable individuals who are still deciding to shield and are therefore more likely to be isolated.

A directory of summer holiday activities and provision has been coordinated with partners across the authority area to seek to meet the needs of Wiltshire families. The directory details 43 activities offered by 36 different providers and has been downloaded 1,196 times. An updated version of the directory will be available during October half term and the Christmas holidays.

- **Community Spaces**

Reopening of community spaces has been a priority over the last few months. 6 libraries are now open (Chippenham, Corsham, Devizes, Salisbury, Trowbridge & Warminster) offering browsing and lending for up to 30 mins and bookable computer sessions for 45 mins. 8 more libraries (Amesbury, Bradford-on-Avon, Calne, Malmesbury, Marlborough, Melksham, RWB & Westbury) will reopen in September offering an Order & Collect service from the library entrance and bookable computers sessions for 45 mins. We are looking forward to meeting with Volunteer Coordinators at the 16 smallest libraries on 3 Sept to talk to them about the pre-requisites required before they reopen – including sharing some of the return to volunteering pack produced by HR.

Our in-house Leisure have now re-opened five facilities operating on our COVID-19 principles including reduced access and operations. A further 2 centres will open from 7<sup>th</sup> September. The feedback from customers has generally been very positive and informative for future learning; the Net Provider Score from the first 2 weeks of opening was 68% from 619 responses. To date the 5 centres have had just over 15,000 attendances, with swimming being the most popular activity.

- **Inequalities**

The Digital Access Support Group was set up to support those who are digitally excluded to access essential information and services during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have achieved the following:

Developed an assessment tool to understand the needs of those who are digitally excluded. Sourced devices and technical solutions for those without digital access. Identified grant funding for small voluntary organisations to apply for. Worked with Building Bridges/Community First to secure support for 50 people without digital access. NHS Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire CCG gained approval from NHS England for digital needs to be included as part of personal care plans in south-west region including Swindon and Wiltshire. Grant from Community First enabled Get Connected - Safer Supported Salisbury pilot digital inclusion project to provide digital access, training and ongoing support, for 10 identified vulnerable individuals. Wessex Community Action will be providing Digital Champions through the new digital community platform Wiltshire Together to provide countywide access to digital skills training and support.

- **Safe spaces**

This workstream covers a wide range of topics in relation to helping social distancing and active travel in public spaces.

### **Pavement Licences**

Hospitality and food outlets are invited to apply for licences to use space outside their premises for offering food and drinks. The process is working well although there have been a small number of applications so far. The applicants are informed of the outcome within 10 days.

### **Active Travel**

Following announcement of Emergency Active Travel fund by the government, the Council bid and was successful in receiving £227k in Tranche 1 for five temporary cycleway schemes, which are being built. These are:

1. A420 Chippenham to Bumpers Farm Cycleway
2. Winsley to Bradford on Avon Cycle / Footway
3. A361 Hilperton Road Cycleway, Trowbridge
4. Salisbury to Harnham Cycleway, Salisbury
5. Monkton Hill Cycleway, Chippenham

The Council has applied for funding for five further schemes in Tranche 2 to a value of £900k and is awaiting the outcome. These schemes are:

1. A420 Bristol Road and Lowden Hill tunnel scheme in Chippenham
2. Downton Road in Salisbury
3. People Friendly Salisbury (PFS)
4. Hilperton to Melksham via Semington
5. Easton Lane (Corsham to Chippenham)

### **Other Social Distancing Schemes**

The Council has received 528 suggestions for social distancing, walking and cycling, cycling, school and other schemes from town and parish councils, members of the public and officers to respond to Covid-19 implications. Whilst the assessments of these schemes are still ongoing, 242 have been discounted on safety or other grounds, with 171 schemes thought suitable for either short or medium-term implementation should funding be available. These schemes will be discussed with the Community Area Transport Groups for further consideration. Limited funding may also be available from the Integrated Transport budget for certain cycling schemes.

### **Care, Safeguarding & Education Theme**

The Care, safeguarding & Education Theme has continued to meet weekly and will be moving to fortnightly meeting from the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2002. The focus has been on ensuring the demand modelling is completed for each workstream in order to assess capacity requirements for winter pressures and latent and new safeguarding demand post lockdown.

- **Education**

Over the summer period 1421 Digital Devices for Disadvantaged and Vulnerable Pupils were delivered to Wiltshire. This is following an initial allocation of 1016 which was increased after we submitted a business case resulting in a further 405 being approved by DfE. 1161 have been allocated to date and available for collection by School, Social Worker or Personal Adviser. The remaining 260 digital devices will be distributed to eligible children in early years settings.

Early Years providers have been supported to implement the latest guidance and to manage children's return to settings safely, including producing a risk assessment. A transition to school guidance document has been produced to support children starting school in reception. Along with this, a settling in guide for Early Years providers on how to welcome all children from 0-4 years back into their settings using the Five to Thrive approach and high-quality practice has been shared. This has specific advice on how the settling in process will be different this year due to the pandemic.

Public health guidance has been provided to support schools to complete risk assessments for the safe return to education in September. Where necessary, pupils are starting school at different times to prevent large groups gathering, pupils are spending the day in bubbles and following good hygiene advice. Supportive 'Team Around the school' meetings have taken place with officers from SEND, Education Welfare, health, children's social care and behaviour support to provide schools with the support they need to ensure full attendance from September onwards.

We are following the government guidance on home to school transport which was received later than expected on the 11<sup>th</sup> August, and can be found [here](#). 20 additional buses and coaches have been procured to manage peak travel demands to school from the 1<sup>st</sup> September. This will be funded through the £40m government grant allocated to local authorities of which Wiltshire received £460k. Guidance has been provided to schools, parents and transport providers on how school and public transport will operate from the start of the new term, this can be found [here](#). Communications around the return to school will continue into the start of term and feedback reviewed constantly to determine if our approach needs to be amended

During July the new Education Employment Advisor (EEA) team contacted Young People who were in employment destinations who did not have a September Guarantee, and those who were recorded as destination unknown. This has contributed towards our overall unknown figure which stands at 4.14% at the end of July, reduced from 5.3% in June and 6.3% February 2019. The NEET figure June 2020 was 2%, this is in line with the June 2019 figure

- **Care Homes**

Care Home visits are taking place and are being carefully monitored by Public Health & Adult Social Care via the Health Protection Board to ensure that there are no further outbreaks in care homes.

Guidance has been developed with Public Health to advise providers who want to reopen day services.

Funding totalling £7.5 million will be provided to support infection prevention and control measures. Care homes will receive £4.7 million with £2.8 million going to supported living providers and domiciliary care agencies. This has been paid in two equal instalments with 50% in June and the remainder before September.

- **Safeguarding**

Individual risk assessments have been written and continually updated for children known to children's social care; a sample of these are audited through the practice leads group on a fortnightly basis.

Statutory services and requirements have been maintained throughout with greater use of technology being utilised to maintain contact with children, families and carers. Face to face contact has been maintained throughout according to risk assessment and as social distancing measures reduced, it was re-introduced as a routine expectation. Short-term and long-term placement stability has remained good (8% and 75%) and stronger than both the England and statutory neighbour average. The number of children placed in foster care and the proportion placed within in-house provision has continued to improve throughout the COVID-19 period with 77% in foster care and 51% in in-house provision at the end of quarter 1.

Demand modelling to explore the impact that COVID-19 has had in relation to children has been completed in partnership with CCG and Police. A significant increase in demand is anticipated in children's social care with MASH referrals expected to rise swiftly in September through to October, falling very slightly in November only to rise again just before the school term ends at Christmas. The forecast predicts a 63% increase in referrals by December. Children in need caseloads will largely mirror the same pattern excepting a slow-down in caseloads in November.

Child Protection will see a more gradual rise in caseloads through and into the new year with a slower decrease afterwards. Within this, however, there are likely to be spikes in S47 Enquiries as children become more 'visible' returning to school and services re-open/return to normal staffing capacities and practice. The number of children subject to child protection plans is expected to increase by more than 120 at the turn of the year.

Children Looked After are further away from front door activity and, although with exceptions, much fewer children are in such need that they need to urgently become looked after. Therefore, we expect to see a more gradual increase in the number of children looked after, nevertheless we expect to see numbers rise by a minimum of 25 by the end of December or early in the new year.

Work is underway with partners to ensure services are prepared for the anticipated increase in demand. Capacity is being managed within the MASH, Safeguarding and Support Service and Children in Care Teams to ensure we have the resource to available through the autumn to respond to the initial

increase in demand. Placement pressures will likely be experienced if additional numbers of children do come into care; through Fostering Excellence we have increased in-house foster care provision, further work is needed (and is underway) with independent providers to ensure we have access to additional placements locally. It should be noted that there is a national shortage in foster care and residential placements and so this does remain a challenge for us. Any significant increase in the number of children in care will place pressure on the placement budget. Through the Vulnerable People Stakeholder Group partners are working to ensure that health services and commissioned services are also readying themselves for the anticipated surge in demand. Data is shared and joint actions agreed to ensure access to services is prioritised appropriately, this monitoring will continue throughout the autumn.

The 24-hour domestic abuse helpline that was stood up at the start of the pandemic will continue for at least a further 4 months. The service provided through Women's Aid is jointly funded by the Council and the Police. The service provides consultation and access to specialist services, including where required referral into child and adult safeguarding services.

Adult social care have continued to meet all the statutory duties throughout this period. Advice and Contact have seen a small increase in demand for first conversations (the initial discussion which takes place at the front door) and for requests for care and support.

Further demand modelling work (using the same process as Families and Children's) is underway in Adult Social Care to establish the impact of COVID-19 on the wider community and to assure ourselves we are able to continue to meet the need of our service users going forward.

Adult Social Care saw an initial drop in contacts made to the Adult MASH, however, as lockdown has eased these have returned to pre-COVID-19 figures. The types of concerns remain of interest, for example, we have seen a decrease in numbers of concerns being raised for people who suffer from self-neglect.

Where there are patterns or emerging themes presenting, these are highlighted as part of the Vulnerable People's Stakeholder Group for further discussion and to develop a system wide response.

In the case of self-neglect, work was undertaken by the MASH and the Communication Team to raise awareness of the area of concern and how to access help and support.

A joint communications strategy between partners has been established and work has taken place across Wiltshire to raise the awareness of the support available for people with mental health concerns. This has included specific work with primary care networks to work with local GP practices to help them identify concerns and promote access to mental health support.

The Health Based Place of Safety (HBPOS) in Devizes (the place the police will take people who may be in a mental health crisis in the community) has also seen a large increase in activity. Work is underway across the system to understand this increase in greater detail, to prevent people entering into crisis

and to ensure that the HBPOS is accessible at all times. This work is being completed across the Health, Social Care and Police partnership.

- **Health & Care**

There have been two key national publications from government that have impacted on the recovery work within the Health and Care Sub theme.

The first outlines the third phase of the NHS response to COVID-19 and their priorities from August 2020. There is a focus on restoring recovering services and preparing for winter demands. It includes a commitment to tackle health inequalities that were further exacerbated by the pandemic. It also emphasises the benefits of collaborative working and requires a system wide plan to be submitted by the end September which covers the key actions within the letter. The BANES Swindon & Wiltshire (BSW) system plan will capture the requirements and progress of the Wiltshire locality.

The Hospital Discharge guidance has also been updated. This was first published in March and describes how health and care systems should work together to support safe discharges from the acute hospitals. This guidance further reinforces the need for 'Discharge to assess' approach which supports people to go home as quickly as possible. The Wiltshire Council Reablement service working alongside Wiltshire Health and Care community health colleagues have been very successful in supporting increasing numbers of individuals to return home. There has been a 100% increase in the number of referrals on this pathway since March 2020. In addition, we are seeing requests for social care focused reablement for people living in the community begin to return to pre-covid levels. This means that individuals are increasingly able to remain independent and active without reliance on long term funded care.

Wiltshire Council is now responsible for submitting the weekly DELTA return, for Wiltshire & Swindon Local Resilience Forum, which reports the current stock levels, weekly usage and estimated days of supply across both councils. The LRF stock levels are healthy due to supplier contracts secured by the procurement teams within Wiltshire and Wiltshire Councils, however, CCG mutual aid is still in place should it be required. In addition, the Government PPE Portal is now in place for emergency supplies which can be utilised by adult social care, domiciliary care settings and primary care settings. The department of Health and Social Care will be responsible for distributing PPE to small organisations who are unable to register on the portal which will assist the LRF in sustaining healthy stock levels. MHCLG drops will cease by 11 September 2020 with a stockpile DROP due to be delivered to the LRF week commencing 31 August.

- **Families & Children's Transformation**

The Families & Children's Transformation Programme restarted following the pandemic with an Executive Board meeting held in July. The executive agreed to review the partnership priorities going forward and this activity will be presented to the next Executive in September.

### **Health and Wellbeing Theme**



The Health and Wellbeing theme moved to fortnightly meetings at the start of August 2020 after an initial series of weekly meetings to identify the key priority work streams. The focus has been on ensuring that the health protection measures around local outbreak management, testing and tracing are well developed across the system to enable swift and effective local responses.

In addition, work on the COVID-19 JSNA and evaluation of programmes against the Health Equity Assessment tool have taken early priority to ensure that data and intelligence are used to inform work streams. A set of outcomes have been agreed with the overarching aim of maintaining and improving health and wellbeing.

- **Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP)**

LOMP published, and a suite of multi-agency exercises scheduled in throughout the summer and autumn to test the delivery of the plan and inform its continued development. Two exercises have been run and the learning from these will be utilised by the COVID-19 Board and the LRF to inform the LOMP. Agreement provided that all partners will review the LOMP against the LGA self-assessment tool for assurance and ongoing improvement in a quarterly basis.

- **Testing**

Review and planning for local testing sites completed across the county – next stage is development of local testing plan to include rapid deployment teams and community sites.

- **JSNA 2020**

The JSNA is in development and will provide an evidence base for recovery across health and social care and the wider determinants of health. Early priority sections include: COVID-19 (the disease itself), mental ill health, domestic abuse, economy, health sector, deprivation and life expectancy. More than a dozen additional sections will be added to JSNA 2020 after these priority sections.

- **Substance misuse**

The substance misuse workstream is meeting weekly with commissioned services – key focus on service continuity, referrals, service risks, gaps and mitigation actions.

- **Homelessness**

Workstream has completed a review of all rough sleepers accommodated during COVID-19 response to determine health needs to provide targeted support. In addition, a funding bid to support rough sleepers has been submitted.

- **Mental health/LD/ASD**

Workstream focusing on recovery in Wiltshire for service users and organisations. Working closely with education work stream to ensure CAMHS interventions for young people are understood and implemented effectively. For early intervention, the Wiltshire Health Trainer service has undergone a repurposing and will be able to offer more support around low level mental health and resilience across the county. Next steps include review of social prescribers to identify the types of individuals being referred with poor mental health and assess any gaps on service provision.

- **Wider determinants of health**

This will be a key focus, and strong links with the economy theme, particularly around mental health, employment and carbon neutral are being explored for joint working.

New focus areas for the theme will include PSPO, obesity strategy and the requirements for increasing the number of flu vaccinations across the population.

### **Organisation Recovery**

The theme leads for organisation recovery have continued to meet weekly to agree priority areas for action and are developing an organisation recovery strategy for approval that will set out the programme objectives and priorities for each programme theme. This strategy will be aligned with the strategic outcomes of the wider recovery and with the priorities in the Council's business plan.

Workshops with all heads of service will take place in early September to get feedback on the impact of the ways of working during the pandemic and to get ideas about how we can work in the future.

Activities/actions in support of recovery include:

- **External Recruitment Freeze**

An external recruitment freeze is now in place as part of the organisation wide spending controls, with approval from CLT required where there are exceptions to this freeze. The aim of the freeze is to hold vacancies and fill wherever possible from within the existing workforce and proposals to mitigate the impact of this are being developed. The proposals will include steps to improve workforce agility and introduce a more flexible deployment of our resources to meet demand.

- **COVID Policy**

Some of the temporary arrangements put in place at the start of the pandemic as part of a COVID-19 policy have now been stopped. This includes temporary arrangements for the payment of casual and variable hours staff in

services that were closed. Normal arrangements for these staff will recommence on 1 September 2020.

- **Furlough**

Some staff remained furloughed. In total we have furloughed 583 staff across 828 posts mainly in leisure operations, City Hall and in the library service since March. We have also supported schools to make claims for 123 staff across 134 posts. For the period 20 March to 30 June we have claimed a total of £988k through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) for furloughed staff. As we move further into recovery and services re-open, we are flexibly furloughing some staff, allowing staff to return to work for some of their hours. The CJRS closes on 31 October 2020.

- **Return to Workplace**

In line with Public Health advice our approach is still to encourage office-based staff to work at home wherever possible. This is enabling us to ensure social distancing within our workplaces, keeping the staff who are have been delivering essential services from our workplaces as safe as possible. From June, as lockdown started to ease, some services and staff have started to return to the workplace either because this is essential for ongoing service delivery, for ad hoc reasons, (for example to complete a specific task), or for wellbeing reasons. This is supported by an approvals process and is being monitored.

The social distancing measures needed to ensure workplaces are COVID-19 secure means that Council's workplace capacity has been reduced significantly. For example, normal capacity across the three main council hubs is usually around 1600 staff, and this is reduced to around 800.

The number of staff returning to the work in the three hubs is increasing weekly as requests are approved and currently there is a daily average of 178 staff accessing County Hall, 48 in Monkton Park and 65 in Bourne Hill.

Based the reduced capacity in these hub buildings this represents 36% of the capacity in County Hall, 32% in Bourne Hill and 43% in Monkton Park.

- **Salary Finance**

The results of the employee wellbeing survey carried out in June indicated that some employees were concerned about the impact of the pandemic and the associated economic downturn on their families. As a result, we accelerated the launch of a new employee benefit to provide staff with financial education resources, savings products, advances on salaries and loans.

Salary Finance launched on 17 July and in the first few weeks after this launch around 20% of the workforce accessed the Salary Finance portal. Feedback from Salary Finance is that this is a very high level of engagement. In the first four weeks 31 staff have had loan applications accepted, indicating that staff who require financial support are making use of this benefit.

