

REPORT TO: East Lothian Council

MEETING DATE: 16 November 2021

BY: Executive Director for Place

SUBJECT: East Lothian COVID-19 Recovery & Renewal Plan

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek Council approval of the East Lothian COVID-19 Recovery & Renewal Plan.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Council approves the COVID-19 Recovery & Renewal Plan and the amendment to governance arrangements.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 COVID-19 continues to have significant ongoing impacts on services provided by and through the Council and its wider partners. The Council remains in business continuity mode and, formally, within the Response phase in respect of the pandemic. Whilst the majority of Council and partnership services are now operating at levels close to full service delivery and indeed many areas are “*recovering*”, many critical front facing and support services are experiencing enormous challenges to sustain services with staff availability critically impacted as infection levels remain high. Capacity and resilience has also been massively affected by the duration of the Response effort.
- 3.2 The recovery and renewal from COVID-19 for East Lothian is being led by East Lothian Council, supported by our partner agencies as is normal practice under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 (Contingency Planning) (Scotland) Regulations 2005. Successful recovery is best achieved when early consideration is given to it in tandem with incident response. In June 2020 East Lothian Council formed the Multi Agency Recovery & Renewal Co-ordinating Group (MARRCG) and this group has met monthly since

being established. This group has overseen the publication and delivery of a Recovery and Renewal Framework that has been constantly refreshed and updated throughout this time and has been published in public view within the Members Library Service. Key area Action Cards have been incrementally updated, reflecting actions taken across key activity areas and detail significant intervention actions in respect of responding, resetting, re-starting and recovering from the impacts of the pandemic and the vast amount of Government(s) guidance and measures.

- 3.3 The Recovery & Renewal Framework itself set out a requirement for officers and partners to review the framework at 12, 18 and 24-month intervals. It is in that context that this report has been prepared for Council. The Recovery & Renewal Framework has been a vital tool and detailed action record to date, however, in the view of both officers and partners, our preparedness for longer term recovery needs to be re-focused again as we move forward through the next 18 months.
- 3.4 The Recovery & Renewal Plan that Council is being asked to approve builds on the work undertaken to date through the MARRCG in respect of both the recovery of some key areas through the continued Response Phase of the pandemic and the efforts to prepare East Lothian in respect of the formal and longer term Recovery and Renewal Phase, embracing the opportunity to 'build back better' and ensuring we maximise the opportunity of a sustainable and green recovery.
- 3.5 Given the nature of the pandemic and its duration, there are multiple meetings that currently take place in the context of both COVID-19 Response and Recovery. It is proposed that, in order to streamline some of this activity, the MARRCG be stood down on approval of the Recovery & Renewal Plan. A multi-agency approach will be maintained by delivering the Plan and the actions contained therein, alongside monitoring the results of those actions, through the East Lothian Partnership (ELP). It is proposed that the ELP Governance Board, chaired by the Council's Chief Executive, will provide oversight of the required multi-agency activity that will be deliver the Recovery Plan outcomes through its individual partnership forums.
- 3.6 The Council will still retain the lead role in this activity. The Executive Director for Place will continue to be the ELC Silver for Recovery supported by the Head of Corporate Support as ELC Bronze. ELC Silver will continue to chair the internal Council officer group for Recovery, co-ordinating activity and reporting arrangements between the Partnership and the Council. The status of the delivery of the plan will be reported to Council periodically.
- 3.7 To ensure that the actions identified are appropriate and effective, this Plan will remain dynamic, flexible and under constant review, any non-material changes to the Plan will be reported timeously through the Members' Library Service. More significant changes would be reported to Council for approval. This will ensure that East Lothian's recovery and renewal will

reflect operational, community and staffing need and can adjust to emerging national policy and guidance, financial and economic recovery.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Recovery & Renewal Plan aligns with our current East Lothian Plan Key Themes and lays the foundations that will inform our renewed and revised East Lothian Plan moving forward. Our Plan also aligns with National Priority Outcomes and recognises COSLA and Scottish Government's agreed shared vision and the ongoing development of the National COVID Recovery Strategy.

5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 COVID-19 has exacerbated inequalities. Our Recovery and Renewal Plan addresses these inequalities, recognising we will need to go further and faster to improve opportunities for those most disadvantaged.
- 5.2 We have declared a climate emergency and must focus on a sustainable future to address the massive and immediate challenge of climate change. We must take advantage of the unique opportunity and embed a new world of work, reduced travel, reduced emissions and new behaviours into a green recovery.
- 5.3 We need to address demands delayed as a result of the pandemic and that are further exacerbated by the negative impacts of BREXIT. We need to protect the health and well-being of our residents, focus support for our economy, young people's education and safeguard those who are vulnerable or isolated.
- 5.4 A full Integrated Impact Assessment will be completed as part of the process to renew and revise the East Lothian Plan in the context of Recovery.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – An £8.9M COVID-19 Fund has been established as part of the 20/21 financial year end closure. A wide range of earmarked commitments have been set out against this fund and is aligned with national funding directions. The COVID Fund is currently aligned to the multi-agency Recovery and Renewal Framework and will continue to be aligned with the Recovery and Renewal Plan and the detailed interventions that sit beneath it moving forward.
- 6.2 Personnel – The impacts of COVID-19 on staff and partnership resources have been significant both in respect of quantity of additional workload and in terms of duration. It will be necessary for this additional workload to

continue but for it to become much more integrated with business as usual as we forward.

6.3 Other – None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 East Lothian Council Members Library Report (100/21) COVID Recovery and Renewal Framework Document Version 1.9
https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/22534/10021_east_lothian_council_covid_19_recovery_and_renewal_framework_document_version_19

AUTHOR'S NAME	Douglas Proudfoot Morag Ferguson
DESIGNATION	Executive Director of Place Head of Corporate Support
CONTACT INFO	dproudfoot@eastlothian.gov.uk mferguson@eastlothian.gov.uk
DATE	12 October 2021

1: Overview

Our plan builds on the work undertaken through the **Multi-Agency Recovery & Renewal Co-ordinating Group** established in June 2020, which has overseen the substantial efforts to date in respect of our continued *Response Phase* of the pandemic and the recovery of some key areas as a result.

We have aimed to prepare East Lothian in respect of the formal and longer term *Recovery & Renewal Phase*, embracing the opportunity to 'build back better' and ensuring we maximise the opportunity for a sustainable and green recovery.

Our **COVID-19 Recovery and Renewal Plan 2021** recognises the shared vision for Recovery of COSLA and Scottish Government and the ongoing development of the national **COVID Recovery Strategy**.

COVID-19 has exacerbated inequalities. This plan addresses these inequalities, recognising we will need to go further and faster to improve opportunities for those most disadvantaged.



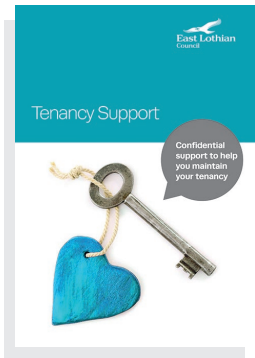
We have declared a climate emergency and must focus on a sustainable future to address the massive and immediate challenge of climate change. We must take advantage of the unique opportunity and embed a new world of work, reduced travel, reduced emissions and new behaviours into a green recovery.

We need to address increased service demand delayed as a result of the pandemic and further exacerbated by the negative impacts of BREXIT. We need to protect the health and wellbeing of our residents, focus support for our economy, young people's education and safeguard those who are vulnerable or isolated.

Our plan aligns with the key themes of the **East Lothian Plan 2017-27** and lays the foundations that will inform our renewed and revised East Lothian Plan moving forward. It also aligns with **National Priority Outcomes**.

To ensure that we're doing the right things, this plan will remain dynamic, flexible and under constant review. This will ensure that East Lothian's recovery and renewal will reflect operational, community and staffing need and adjust to emerging national policy and guidance and financial recovery.

2: Plan Principles



Person-centred communications



Collaborative working

East Lothian Partnership



Embracing digital channels



Championing the new world of work



Supporting the next generation

Outcome-focused Develop, maintain and deliver a coherent focus on COVID-19 recovery priorities to achieve improved outcomes.

Person-centred Inclusive, preventative and focused on those in greatest need.

Empowering and collaborative Building on the shared experience of collaborating during the pandemic, ensuring individuals and communities are supported to participate in and be actively involved in all recovery activity; including the groups most affected by the pandemic – women, disabled people, young people, older people, minority ethnic communities, those affected by poverty – so as to tackle systemic inequalities.

Agile and flexible Our COVID-19 recovery approach must build the capacity of the 'system' in order to respond to specific needs, to flex around differential needs for specific communities and places, and to react to change and unexpected events. Innovation and partnership working including further empowering of frontline teams is to be encouraged. Developing and sharing best practice will be essential.

Robust, place-based data-driven and evidence-based Action on COVID-19 recovery will be informed by local differences, while reflecting joint recovery priorities and shared evidence. Interim outcomes and an evaluation framework will be developed in partnership.

Children and Young People In line with Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, we will ensure the voice of children and young people is at the heart of our work on COVID-19 recovery.

3: Shared Vision

The three key East Lothian Plan priorities align our vision with those of the Scottish Government /CoSLA.

We are committed to realising our vision for **an even more prosperous, safe and sustainable East Lothian with a dynamic and thriving economy that will enable our communities to flourish.**

PROSPEROUS

COMMUNITY
MINDED

FAIR

Scottish Government/ CoSLA Vision:

- Address the systematic inequalities made worse by COVID-19;
- Improve well-being through supporting, empowering and offering opportunities to individuals, families and communities;
- Remobilise and develop inclusive public services to be even more person-centred, preventative and focussed on those in greatest need.



4: Key Priority Areas

1 Support our communities to tackle inequality and social exclusion

In partnership with the third sector address inequality and tackle the effects of poverty, vulnerability, isolation, loneliness, antisocial behaviour and domestic violence. We will support this by promoting increased and sustainable social action and building community capacity.

2 Climate and ecological emergency

Embed sustainable and green thinking in our actions and make tackling the climate and ecological emergency central to our social and economic recovery, laying foundations for a sustainable and prosperous future.

3 Support business, employment and promote inclusive economic growth

Build confidence in local businesses and key sectors; Tourism & Hospitality, Food & Drink, Health and Social Care, Engineering & Life Sciences, Construction. Focus on our Workforce for the Future – apprenticeships, skills. Progress strategic project interventions that drive the East Lothian recovery. Focus on our town centres and the core message of *Love East Lothian*.



4 Help our children and young people achieve their full potential

By returning to and maximising the benefits of in-school learning, assessing gaps in learning and progress while taking into account children and young people's health and wellbeing and wider personal development and citizenship opportunities within and across community life.

5 Deliver improved connectivity and digital innovation to ensure the most effective use of all of our resources

Address connectivity challenges and enable the digital inclusion of all of our residents. Utilise data and technology solutions to drive investment and high performance within our economy.

6 Maintain and develop resilient and sustainable services

Reinstatement of services is an important element of recovery, but it is crucial that we learn from the pandemic to design future models and services that are resilient and better meet the changing needs of our communities and our staff. We must manage increased demand for services, particularly hospital and social care services and strengthen the resilience of our care sector. Transform front facing services to customer focussed, accessible digital provision, developing citizen hubs offering access to cross-service supports for the most vulnerable in our communities.

7 Develop our people and future ways of working

Invest in a sustainable, resilient and succession planned workforce through recovery, learning from the pandemic to embed flexible and home working, promote well-being and develop new and different ways of working.

8 Invest in regeneration and a sustainable future

We will invest in the regeneration of local areas focussing on a place based approach, to create sustainable communities and support the provision of affordable housing, tackle homelessness and build community connections and cohesion. Support the regeneration and repurposing of town centres.

5: Actions

1 Support our communities to tackle inequality and social exclusion

- Implement the East Lothian Poverty Plan 2021-2023
- Encourage increased levels of volunteering across our communities and community partners and grow resilience, promoting community connections and befriending
- Engage with third sector and voluntary sector organisations to support a county-wide network of community groups and organisations
- Increase partnership approaches to tackle anti-social behaviour at all levels, allowing community groups to have a greater say in how our resources are deployed to provide the best outcomes for our communities
- Strengthen our joint approach to domestic abuse, increase confidence to report crimes and strengthen the support provided to victims of domestic abuse whilst bringing perpetrators to justice
- Work in a collaborative manner to increase confidence in community justice, prevent reoffending and enhance early intervention opportunities to reduce the amount of people entering the justice system, offering support and diversions instead of prosecutions
- Support carers of vulnerable adults and children to build resilience in order for them to sustain their caring role

2 Climate and ecological emergency

- Maximise the opportunities that now exist to improve the utilisation of assets and sustainable travel to drive real change in lowering our carbon footprint
- Promote East Lothian as a location for home working, reducing the need to travel

3 Support business, employment and promote inclusive economic growth

- Utilise our business recovery investment fund to support our town centres, tourism and the rural economy
- Support and advise East Lothian businesses to recover and grow and work to increase the number of business premises available
- Build on the economic benefits arising from lifestyle changes that have been accelerated by COVID-19
- Progress the delivery of the Old Craighall junction upgrade, the food and drink innovation hub, the regeneration of the Cockenzie power station site and further develop our proposals for the Climate Evolution Zone
- Promote skills development and training in core sectors and in sectors where skills shortages now exist
- Renew our Economic Development strategy to look ahead to 2030 and beyond and tie in with the wider Regional Prosperity Framework

4 Help our children and young people achieve their full potential

- Provide targeted wellbeing support for children and young people and their families. Target youth work and promote youth citizenship initiatives
- Ensure enhanced support for those children who have gaps in their learning and need additional interventions to support their development, progress and achievement
- Maximise the use of digital technology to enhance learning and support curriculum delivery, both in school and at home
- Ensure a clear focus on improving attendance and reducing exclusions in schools
- Council, Queen Margaret University and Edinburgh College will support young people to transition into positive destinations, including, further or higher education, training, employability programmes

5 Deliver improved connectivity & digital innovation to ensure the most effective use of all of our resources

- Identify areas of low network connectivity and work with government and providers to address deficits
- Review, upgrade and replace our technology to keep pace with digital security, stability and integration
- Support new ways of working through reliable and resilient digital infrastructure
- Develop our digital services for customers, improving their experience of interacting with the council
- Provide digital learning and capacity development opportunities within the community

6 Maintain and develop resilient and sustainable services

- Build resilience in health and care provision through closer integration and a focus on recovery from the pandemic
- Support the training and development of our carer workforce
- Target services and resources, led by data and evidence, to those people and areas most in need

7 Develop our people and future ways of working

- Create a network of Digital Champions to support colleagues as they develop their digital skills
- Rationalise our building assets to support new ways of working that are efficient and effective
- Develop a flexible and resilient workforce

8 Invest in regeneration and a sustainable future

- Develop a place based approach to deliver services designed around our local communities, focussing on community-led regeneration
- Accelerate the delivery of affordable housing to return to planned levels, across a variety of tenures
- Strengthen partnership work with those services and sectors that contribute to that vital role in supporting local delivery
- Support the development and expansion of active travel routes and promote health and wellbeing
- Continue the development and expansion of our electric car charging network



6: We'll know it's worked when...

It is vital that we keep track of the difference that our collective Recovery & Renewal work is making. We will collect data and organise it in a way that gives us a clear measure of our collaborative success but we will know our recovery plan has worked when...

Outcome 1:

Support our communities to tackle inequality and social exclusion

- 1.1 Greater numbers of people are supported to improve their health and well-being and recover well from the effects of the pandemic including isolation and financial stress;
- 1.2 More of our most vulnerable people receive the support they need and communities are supported to deliver local solutions to local priorities;
- 1.3 Engagement and co-production are embedded within our planning, processes and delivery of services
- 1.4 The targets set for the East Lothian poverty Plan to reduce poverty and mitigate the impact of poverty will have been met

Outcome 2:

Climate Change & Sustainability

- 2.1 There is increased investment in sustainable and active travel;
- 2.2 Use of public transport returns to pre-pandemic levels;
- 2.3 We reduce the cost and carbon footprint of our property

Outcome 3:

Support Business, Employment and Grow the Economy

- 3.1 Businesses are supported to safeguard jobs and drive future growth, major projects are progressed and a new Economic Development strategy is adopted
- 3.2 There is increased provision for and delivery of training, skills and career-based activities, including the creation of new apprenticeships.

Outcome 4:

Help our children and young people achieve their full potential

- 4.1 Children and families have increased confidence in attending school and can access the support that they need.
- 4.2 Children can access full-time in-school learning with minimal disruption to their learning and progress
- 4.3 Participation rates for 16-19 yr olds in further and higher education, training and work will improve
- 4.4 Children and young people have access to a wide range of extra-curricular community-based activities enhancing their school based learning and achievements

Outcome 5:

Deliver Digital Innovation to ensure the most effective use of all our resources

- 5.1 Broadband network connectivity is increased and digital accessibility improved;
- 5.2 Customer self-service increases through maximising use of the Customer Services Portal – evidencing channel shift and increased digital access to services

Outcome 6:

Maintain and develop resilient and sustainable services

- 6.1 Services across the Council and the Partnership can be accessed by everyone;
- 6.2 The Health & Social Care sector can cope with ongoing demand and winter pressures



Outcome 7:

Develop our people and future ways of working

- 7.1 Staff are able to work more flexibly and tell us things are working well;
- 7.2 Our staff tell us their well-being is promoted and protected

Outcome 8:

Invest in regeneration and a sustainable future

- 8.1 Capital works to deliver affordable housing and infrastructure projects are returned to pre-pandemic planned levels

