

Title of Report	NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN	
Presented by	Councillor Tony Gillard Business and Regeneration Portfolio Holder	
Background Papers	Draft NWL Economic Recovery Plan attached as appendix 1.	Public Report: Yes
		Key Decision: Yes
Financial Implications	<p>The majority of the NWL Economic Recovery Plan will be delivered within existing council capacity and resources.</p> <p>An additional staffing budget of £22,000 for a temporary six month post and an operational budget of £40,000 is being requested to be reallocated from the remaining £73,000 Business Grants Earmarked Reserve to coordinate support for businesses in our towns and local centres and independent retailers and to deliver a shop local campaign and a digital growth programme to support high street business trade online.</p>	
	Signed off by the Section 151 Officer: Yes	
Legal Implications	None	
	Signed off by the Deputy Monitoring Officer: Yes	
Staffing and Corporate Implications	<p>Where possible, the delivery of the NWL Economic Recovery Plan will be delivered through existing service capacity and reported through the relevant team service plans and against the Council Delivery Plan.</p> <p>There is a current capacity and resource gap required to deliver some of the town centre recovery elements of the recovery. This will be met through the £22,000 salary costs for a temporary six month contracted post and an operational budget of £40,000 set out in the report.</p> <p>Delivery will be overseen by the NWL Economic Recovery Cell and updates provided to the NWL Recovery Coordination Group and the Portfolio Holder for Business.</p> <p>The actions identified within the recovery plan are delivered by a number of different service areas from across the Council. Members Recovery Advisory Group, the Recovery Coordination Group, Heads of Service and Team Managers have been consulted on the development of the plan.</p>	

	<p>A temporary 6 month internal secondment is currently being sought to provide additional capacity to support the recovery and reopening of our towns and local centres in response to the pandemic.</p> <p>It may be necessary to temporarily redeploy staff to different service areas to respond to the changing economic environment and the needs of our businesses, residents and communities.</p> <p>In such circumstances, the chair of the NWL Economic Recovery Cell will coordinate any redeployment with Human Resources and the line manager of any staff subject to temporary redeployment in line with redeployment procedures.</p> <p>Signed off by the Head of Paid Service: Yes</p>
Purpose of Report	To seek Cabinet comments on the draft NWL Economic Recovery Plan as set out in this report.
Reason for Decision	To seek Cabinet approval for the recommendations set out within the report.
Recommendations	<p>THAT CABINET:</p> <p>1. REVIEWS AND APPROVES THE NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN.</p> <p>2. REALLOCATES £62,000 FROM THE BUSINESS GRANTS EARMARKED RESERVE TOWARDS SUPPORTING BUSINESSES IN OUR TOWNS AND LOCAL CENTRES TO IMPROVE THEIR DIGITAL FOOTPRINT.</p> <p>3. DELEGATES AUTHORITY TO THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF PLACE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE PORTFOLIO HOLDER AND THE BUSINESS AND REGENERATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER TO REVIEW AND UPDATE THE PLAN, TO RESPOND TO THE CHANGING ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT AND TO REFLECT THE EMERGING REGIONAL AND NATIONAL RECOVERY STRATEGIES TO BE PUBLISHED IN 2021.</p>

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In January 2020 the first cases of the Coronavirus were reported in the UK. In the following months the UK experienced a series of measures and restrictions to the movement of people to help control the spread of the virus. The necessary restrictions limited business trade and many sectors began to experience trading difficulties and experienced a hit on cash flow. In March 2020 the government announced a

programme of emergency state support for businesses as some businesses were required to close and staff were asked to work from home.

- 1.2 During the pandemic, the council maintained support services for businesses and facilitated the delivery of government grant programmes to support local businesses.
- 1.3 The Government have announced plans for a national economic recovery plan and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) will be initiating an emerging Leicestershire-wide economic recovery plan. However, we believe there is also a parallel requirement to produce a local economic recovery plan for North West Leicestershire which meets the specific immediate needs of our businesses and communities.
- 1.4 This report introduces the draft North West Leicestershire Economic Recovery Plan (the plan) which lays out the Council's immediate, short and medium term plan of action to help support local economic recovery in response to the Coronavirus outbreak. A working draft of the plan is attached to this report as Appendix A.
- 1.5 The plan has been prepared to align to the draft Leicestershire LLEP recovery plan to reflect how the actions being delivered locally contribute to the recovery and resilience work being initiated across Leicester and Leicestershire. In the attached NWL Economic Recovery Plan, each individual action delivers against the key outcome and is cross referenced to indicate where it contributes to the delivery of the LLEP recovery plan.
- 1.6 This report and the attached plan were presented to Community Scrutiny for comments on 28 October 2020. Members of scrutiny debated the paper making constructive observations and supported the recommendations set out in this Cabinet paper.

2.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 2.1 Having focused on an immediate response to support businesses and communities since the national lockdown in March, in May 2020 the council set up a number of cells to respond to the recovery of the pandemic. The Economic Recovery Cell was formed and began to formulate the foundations for the NWL Economic Recovery Plan.
- 2.2 The plan sets out a programme of deliverable actions for the Council to respond to the crisis and help contribute to build our economy back strongly and more resilient. It aligns activities to mitigate against the impacts on hardest hit places, communities and businesses.
- 2.3 The plan will outline the immediate and short-term actions of the Council. However, it is important that the work plan remains fluid to respond to the changing needs of our communities in response to the changing environment resulting from Covid 19 and to adapt to new national and regional programmes of support as they are released.

3.0 ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN OUTCOMES

- 3.1 The plan includes a series of key actions that contribute to the delivery of 9 outcomes. These outcomes stemmed from the early Leicestershire Economic

Recovery Cell planning and have since been modified to reflect the recovery work of the draft LLEP economic recovery plan.

3.2 The NWL Economic Recovery Plan outcomes, along with some examples of the associated actions, are listed in table 1 below:

Table 1.

Outcomes	Example actions
1) Support individuals during hardship	Redundancy support for residents and businesses.
	Support for job seekers to access local and regional virtual Job Fairs.
2) Administration of government grants to businesses and individuals	Support for businesses to access grants and funding
	As a council introduce measures to support businesses cash flow
3) Provide a link between representatives of local businesses and agencies that support economic development	Support for local businesses in readiness for the UK's exit from the European Union
	Refer local businesses to support from organisations such as the Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Business.
4) Deliver local programmes of support to new and start-up businesses to stimulate economic recovery	Provide first point of contact and 1:2:1 support for local businesses
	Provide direct support programmes such as support funding, business start-up advice and regulatory compliance.
5) Collate and monitor trends and data to understand and respond to changes in the economic climate	Prepare and supply regular economic intelligence at a local, regional and national level to assist in decision making.
	Map the commercial occupancy of towns and local centres across the NWL to monitor the changes on our high streets due to the impact of Covid 19 on local businesses.
6) Identify the impact on tourism and the tourism sector	Provide support for the tourism and hospitality sector in North West Leicestershire.
	Create and communicate more reasons to visit North West Leicestershire.
7) Supporting retail recovery and the reopening of the high streets post Covid 19	Develop a shop local campaign to encourage residents back into our town centres and to support local businesses.
	To promote and support retailers, corner shops, local networks and businesses providing essential services to local communities during the Coronavirus pandemic.
8) Work with education providers to identify opportunities for upskilling and training of individuals	Support the work of Stephenson College to promote apprenticeship opportunities, distance learning courses and upskilling support available to local residents and businesses.
	Ensure that partners provide support to adults and school aged leaving pupils through careers advice, apprenticeships and training.
9) Support measures that respond to infrastructure challenges	Ensuring residents and job seekers can access employment and training opportunities.

- 3.3 Further details and the specific actions that contribute towards these outcomes are set out within the plan.
- 3.4 It is intended that the plan will be reviewed and refreshed in early 2021 to reflect on the emerging national and regional recovery strategies currently being developed.
- 3.5 The UK Government are preparing a national recovery strategy expected to be published in January 2021 and The Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership are preparing a Leicestershire-wide recovery plan. An early draft of the Leicestershire-wide recovery plan was consulted on in September 2020 with a final draft being produced in February 2021.

4.0 CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The actions identified within the plan will be delivered using existing NWLDC capacity where available. The NWL Economic Recovery Cell, have taken the lead role in preparing the plan and will be actively involved in facilitating its delivery and monitoring.
- 4.2 It is important to note that the delivery of the plan requires an ongoing commitment from our existing partner organisations. However, the uncertainty that the coronavirus brings may also impact on our partners ability to continue to work with the Council in the way they have previously.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The majority of the NWL Economic Recovery Plan will be delivered within existing council capacity and resources.
- 5.2 In order to facilitate the delivery of the new towns and local centre support programmes set out in the plan, including the digital growth programme, an additional operational budget of £40,000 is being requested.
- 5.3 Additionally, a staffing budget of £22,000 for a temporary six month post is also requested to deliver support in respect of the Economic Recovery Plan.
- 5.4 It is proposed both requests are funded from the remaining Business Grants Earmarked Reserve where there is a £73k underspend. The residual £11k remaining of this reserve will be transferred unallocated reserve balances.

Policies and other considerations, as appropriate	
Council Priorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting Coalville to be a more vibrant, family-friendly town - Support for businesses and helping people into local jobs - Developing a clean and green district - Local people live in high quality, affordable homes - Our communities are safe, healthy and connected
Policy Considerations:	Council Delivery Plan 2017-2020
Safeguarding:	No safeguarding considerations.
Equalities/Diversity:	No equalities/diversity considerations.
Customer Impact:	The attached NWL recovery plan sets out a series of actions to support residents and businesses through the Coronavirus pandemic.
Economic and Social Impact:	The attached NWL recovery plan sets out a series of actions to support residents and businesses through the Coronavirus pandemic.
Environment and Climate Change:	Detail any environment and climate change impact as a result of the decision.
Consultation/Community Engagement:	No direct community consultation has taken place. The plan was drafted reflecting on the emerging Leicestershire-wide recovery plan and in consultation with various NWL recovery groups, Corporate Leadership Team and representatives of the Extended Leadership Team.
Risks:	As part of its Corporate Governance arrangements, the Council must ensure that Risk management is considered and satisfactorily covered in any report put before elected Members for a decision or action.
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