

Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: COVID-19 District Impact Assessment

Meeting/Date: Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) – 2nd December 2021

Executive Portfolio: **Recovery** - Councillor Steve Criswell

Report by: Assistant Director Recovery and Recovery Programme Manager

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

Huntingdonshire District Council established an 18 month recovery programme to ensure there is a focus on supporting and enabling resilience amongst our communities and businesses to recover from the impacts arising from the Covid -19 pandemic.

At the start of the pandemic the Council undertook a community impact assessment (July 2020) to consider the key risks and issues as the basis for a set of projects that supported recovery and the Council's emergency response during the pandemic.

The refreshed impact assessment sets out the key issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. The evidence based process is presented against the four key goals of the Corporate Strategic Plan: Good Start, Good Health, Good Work and Good Place.

The impact assessment underpins the focus of the Council, its communities and partners in achieving an environment within which Huntingdonshire and its people can thrive, protecting and enhancing the natural beauty of the area and ensuring the creation of sustainable places where people want to live. We cannot address many of the issues identified on our own, some are the responsibility of our partners. This impact assessment allows the Council to take a lead with partners and our communities with an evidence base to support a safe and healthy environment, deliver economic growth and create opportunities for the people of Huntingdonshire.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The panel is requested to:

- a) Consider and comment on the impact assessment and the key issues identified
- b) Support the use of the evidence base and priorities to engage our partners and communities in supporting Huntingdonshire to recover from the effects of COVID-19, securing resources and commitment to the district and its people.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is to provide Members with the findings of the second Impact Assessment (which sets out the significant impacts on Huntingdonshire and its communities) arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. This was concluded at the end of October 2021.
- 1.2. The report sets out the key impacts set against the key challenges the Council adopted in its Corporate Strategic Plan of Good Start, Good Health, Good Work and Good Place. These are the evidenced based impacts that will inform the outcomes we seek to achieve through service and project activities to promote a strong recovery, growing resilience in Huntingdonshire, for our communities and businesses in a better position to absorb and navigate unknown challenges in the future.
- 1.3. It is recognised that resilience can only be successfully achieved when delivered in partnership with other statutory, voluntary and community organisations. The objective of the COVID Recovery programme is to work collaboratively, enabling all services to engage with other responsible organisations to work towards common outcomes and objectives whilst identifying the role HDC officers can contribute to key areas of work; through direct delivery, preventative initiatives or leveraging/ lobbying other key delivery partners.
- 1.4. The impact assessment supports all those working for a resilient Huntingdonshire and focused on achieving our vision of a safe and healthy environment, deliver economic growth and create opportunities for the people of Huntingdonshire. In doing so it will be used as the basis for the Council's on-going approach to achieving recovery outcomes 'We are Huntingdonshire' which will be presented in March 2022.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The COVID Recovery Programme (see Appendix 1 – Scope) was initiated from the priority impacts identified through a Community Impact Assessment that Members considered at Overview and Scrutiny panel on 8 July 2020.
- 2.2. This initial Impact Assessment was presented and approved by Members at Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 25 January 2021 (Appendix 5).
- 2.3. The COVID Recovery programme continues to ensure the successful delivery of projects delivered by HDC officers whilst retaining a monitoring function on those BAU activities and projects delivered by partners. The COVID Recovery programme also remains aligned to the workstreams within the Market Towns Programme through monthly progress updates between programme managers.
- 2.4. The current scope of projects within the Recovery Programme are as follows:
 - Food Network; to establish Food Banks and develop a Huntingdonshire Food Poverty Action Plan.
 - Early Intervention; to develop a diagnostic signposting tool (app).
 - Business Digitisation; to register 100 stores registered with Click It Local (local online shopping platform) and improve digitalisation for local businesses.
 - Kickstart; to provide and fill 50 HDC placements and 50 Gateway (non-HDC) placements.
 - Job Clubs; to establish 6 job clubs.
 - Young Entrepreneurs; to support young people in the development of a viable business.
 - Healthy Living; to increase physical activity for inactive residents.

- Area Connectivity; to map walking & cycling routes and develop an HDC walking & cycling strategy.
- Welcome Back; to support local businesses and increase footfall in the High Streets of our four market towns.

2.5 The Council has recently adopted its Community (Transition) Strategy which sets out how Huntingdonshire District Council will work with residents and community groups to support the best possible outcomes for Huntingdonshire, its residents and businesses. This approach is critical to recovery and embedding the capability and capacity for prevention as well as response in relation to the key impacts on our communities that have arisen from COVID-19.

3. APPROACH

3.1. To accurately assess the impacts of COVID over the duration of the pandemic (March 20- Sept 21) a further Impact Assessment was conducted. Unlike the initial Community Impact Assessment 2020, where the objective was to identify the likely impacts of COVID over the forthcoming months (a forward view), the 2021 Impact Assessment uses data to establish where the impacts of COVID have been most significant (retrospective view).

3.2. The Impact Assessment 2021 follows the framework of the already adopted Grand Challenges, implemented by the County's public sector service providers (and detailed within Huntingdonshire District Council's Corporate Plan.) These are set out as follows:

People (Good Start/Good Health):

We want to make our district a better place to live, to improve health and well-being and support people to be the best they can be

Place (Good Place/Good Work):

We want to make Huntingdonshire a better place to work and invest and we want to deliver new and appropriate housing.

3.3. The methodology for the Impact Assessment 2021 was derived by acknowledging an increasing number of headlines on the impact of COVID-19 that emerged in the media. To establish the relevance of these published national trends on the four Grand Challenges the approach was:

- Identify national trends for specific subject areas within a Topic
- Identify national datasets to validate the national trend – are these trends correct and robust or just hype?
- Identify if there was County data to support this national trend – are these trends apparent in our County?
- Identify if there was District data to support this national trend – are these trends apparent in our District?

3.4. A total of 14 Topic areas were identified and within those, 59 Subject areas were analysed for impacts because of the COVID pandemic (Appendix 2).

3.5. A **confidence rating** was attributed to each subject area, based on whether the national trend has been validated at a national, county or district level. An **impact rating** was also assigned to each subject area, based on the objective analysis of the data, along with the subjective knowledge of Subject Matter Experts within the organisation. A robust process of scoring and moderation was undertaken to ensure the confidence and impact ratings reflected the current and expected impacts across these subject areas.

3.6. Where there was an assumed impact that has not yet been realised e.g., through the removal of Furlough, commentary was included to substantiate the impact rating.

4. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

4.1. To interpret the results the following analysis was conducted across the Impact Assessment subject areas scores:

- High confidence = County, District or sub-district level data used
- Low confidence = Unreliable or only national data used
- High impact = Catastrophic or major impact because of the pandemic
- Low impact = Negligible, minor or moderate impact because of the pandemic

4.2. The analysis allowed the 59 subject areas to be segmented into a matrix format to identify the highest known and unknown impacts and the lowest known and unknown impacts (*Appendix 3*). NB: There were 6 impacts that were identified as POSITIVE IMPACTS where the effects of the COVID pandemic had improved outcomes for residents and/or businesses.

4.3. The results of the Impact Assessment (*Appendix 4 – Full Impact Assessment*) identified **26 high impacts** because of the COVID pandemic. The impacts have been consolidated into 15 priority areas of focus across the 4 Grand Challenges and set out below:

<p>Good start PROVIDE life opportunities for residents</p> <p>❖ SUPPORT our residents in Huntingdonshire to successfully adjust to all life-changing events they experience from birth to grave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve education and support for children 0-16 yrs • Improve further education and apprenticeships for 16+ yrs • Improve personal safety (in the home) • Prevent and reduce low income and poverty • Prevent and reduce emergency access to food 	<p style="text-align: right;">Good health</p> <p>PROVIDE active opportunities for residents</p> <p>❖ ENCOURAGE our residents in Huntingdonshire to make and take the right choices to improve or support their health and wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevent and reduce obesity • Increase physical activity • Improve mental health • Prevent and reduce adult social care
<p>Good place STRENGTHEN the local community</p> <p>❖ SUPPORT our residents in Huntingdonshire to remain living in the area with affordable housing and a manageable cost of living</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create affordable housing for local residents • Improve personal safety (outside the home) <p>ENHANCE the local environment</p> <p>❖ TAKE positive action to preserve and protect the natural environment when making improvements and developments to Huntingdonshire</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase use of parks and open spaces • Increase use of active travel (walking and cycling) • Increase public transport usage (bus and rail) 	<p style="text-align: right;">Good work</p> <p>STRENGTHEN the local economy</p> <p>❖ SUPPORT our Huntingdonshire businesses if impacts such as COVID vs Brexit and/or lack of skills and employment emerge over the coming year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve skills and employment

4.4. The 15 priority focus areas should not be considered in isolation of each other or as mutually exclusive. There are several areas of service delivery and project work that support multiple areas. In addition, the continued work of HDC staff with wider external partners e.g.: public health, police, voluntary & community sector ensures a wide range of actions that can contribute to priority focus areas via directly delivered activities (projects), smaller changes to service delivery (initiatives) and as preventative measures (early interventions).

5. SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

5.1. The COVID pandemic has had a significant negative effect on the outcomes of our residents as demonstrated by the number of significant impacts in both Good Start and Good Health. There were no positive impacts (significant or otherwise) in either of these theme areas.

- 5.2. The COVID pandemic has been less damaging to the place with fewer significant impacts identified in the community and 2 of the 3 priority focus areas being in relation to positive impacts on both the environment and the increase in active travel (walking and cycling).
- 5.3. Businesses across the district have been less negatively affected with only positive significant impacts being identified in the Good Work theme area. This is predominantly due to the Government's financial initiatives offered across the peak of the lockdown restrictions to temporarily support the economy; business grants, support for self-employed, Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (aka Furlough).
- 5.4. It is recognised that some impacts of the COVID pandemic are yet to be realised due to the following:
 - Data was not available when the Impact Assessment 2021 was conducted
 - Government financial initiatives recently concluded or not yet concluded
 - Data was not accessible from partner organisations to validate district impact
- 5.5. A full review and retrospective was conducted across the key stakeholders to assess the quality of the Impacts Assessment 2021 report and the process undertaken to deliver it. Feedback was positive and constructive to allow for an improved process being delivered in 2022 (timelines to be confirmed).
- 5.6. Given the cross-cutting nature of the Recovery work, linking a wide range of services, a dedicated Executive Councillor, Councillor Steve Criswell, was appointed to the Cabinet in October to oversee the Council's approach to Recovery.

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1. For significant impacts that have valid local data; to identify activities, initiatives or early interventions within HDC and partner organisations that mitigate these impacts. A process of communications and presentation activities will be supporting the socialisation of the Impacts Assessment findings and further opportunities will be made available to service areas to consider what/how service delivery needs to accommodate or reduce these impacts. This will be incorporated with the service planning process from January.
- 6.2. For significant issues that do not have valid local data; to investigate timelines of datasets and partners' access/ sharing of data to confirm whether these are valid significant impacts in our district that need to be addressed.
- 6.3. For lower impacts that have valid local data; to monitor to ensure these impacts do not increase in severity.
- 6.4. For lower impacts that do not have valid local data; to discuss with partners to validate our assumptions. These impacts can be monitored if/when data is available to ensure severity doesn't increase.

7. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN/STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- 7.1 The impact assessment underpins the focus of the Council, its communities and partners in achieving an environment within which Huntingdonshire and its people can thrive, protecting and enhancing the natural beauty of the area and ensuring the creation of sustainable places where people want to live. We cannot address many of the issues identified on our own, some are the responsibility of our partners. This impact assessment allows the Council to take a lead with partners and our communities with an evidence base to support the Council's vision: **a safe and healthy environment,**

deliver economic growth and create opportunities for the people of Huntingdonshire.

- 7.2 The refreshed impact assessment sets out the key issues arising from the Covid-19 pandemic. The evidence based process is presented against the four key goals of the Corporate Strategic Plan: Good Start, Good Health, Good Work and Good Place.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 The development of the Impact Assessment has been a collaborative process across the Council with the information and initial analysis undertaken by the Transformation team and consultation with assigned theme leads to inform the assessment of magnitude of impact and degree of certainty regarding the information.
- 8.2 This report is the start of collaboration with Scrutiny Panel members to discuss the findings and key impacts identified that will inform the planning of service provision but also our wider engagement with the community and our partners to maximise the resources and activities in Huntingdonshire targeted at addressing the impacts identified as resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 8.3 The evidence base will be shared with our partners and the results of this collaboration and the reporting of key impacts will inform the Council's on-going approach to recovery, **'We Are Huntingdonshire'** which will be presented in March 2022.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct legal implications from this report

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no additional resource implications arising from this report

11. HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 The negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in respect of health have been highlighted as a key impact and work continues in respect of the specific recovery project: Healthy Living; to increase physical activity for inactive residents.

12. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 The recognition of the key issues impacting Huntingdonshire arising from the COVID-19 pandemic supports:
- Future service planning informed by the evidenced priorities
 - Effective deployment of recovery intervention projects on the main issues
 - Enables officers and Councillors to make the case with our community and partners for resources and efforts to tackle the main issues impacting Huntingdonshire to deliver our Corporate objectives.

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 (SCOPE OF RECOVERY PROGRAMME JAN 2021)

APPENDIX 2 (TOPIC AND SUBJECT AREAS OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT 2021)

APPENDIX 3 (MATRIX OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCORES)

APPENDIX 4 (FULL IMPACT ASSESSMENT 2021)

APPENDIX 5 (IMPACT ASSESSMENT 2020)

[HTTP://APPLICATIONS.HUNTINGDONSHIRE.GOV.UK/MODERNGOV/DOCUMENTS/S10977/APPENDIX%201%20-%20COMMUNITY%20IMPACT%20ASSESSMENT%20ECONOMY%20ENVIRONMENT%20SOCIAL%20AND%20COMMUNITY%20RECOVERY.PDF](http://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s10977/APPENDIX%201%20-%20COMMUNITY%20IMPACT%20ASSESSMENT%20ECONOMY%20ENVIRONMENT%20SOCIAL%20AND%20COMMUNITY%20RECOVERY.PDF)

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Recovery Report - Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) 8 July 2020

<http://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=10235&MId=7756>

Recovery Programme – Special Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) 25 January 2021

<http://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=10235&MId=7897>

Community (Transition) Strategy 2021-23

<https://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/moderngov/documents/s117477/5.%20Community%20Transition%20Strategy%202021%202023%20Covering%20Report.pdf>

Impact Assessment October 2021

To be added

CONTACT OFFICERS:

Name/Job Title: Neil Sloper – Assistant Director Recovery
Tel No: 01480 787635
Email: neil.sloper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Name/Job Title: Liz Smith – Recovery Programme Manager
Email: liz.smith@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1 (SCOPE OF RECOVERY PROGRAMME JAN 2021)

Nineteen areas of work were identified to address the impacts of COVID-19 across these key themes. An organisational programme review, in April 2021, rationalised these areas of work into projects delivered by HDC officers, projects delivered by partner organisations and Business as Usual (BAU) activities.

The below was agreed by Corporate Senior Leadership team on 18th May 2021 enabling the Recovery Programme to proceed as follows:

- Projects – actively managed, reported and outcomes measured through the recovery programme
- Un-scoped – actively managed to initiate the project work and include as a live project in the programme
- Partner delivery – BAU resource to maintain role of Subject Matter Expert if/when required for input by the delivery partner but no further action required
- Business as Usual – regular reporting required to maintain monitoring of activity but no active management of a live project as part of the programme

Projects	Un-scoped	Partner delivery	Business as Usual (BAU)
1. Food Poverty	9. Young Entrepreneurial Support	12. Active Travel Schemes	2. Business CRM
4. MHCLG Early Intervention	10. Healthy Living	13. Green Recovery Challenge	3. Business Engagement
5. Business Digitisation - Click it Local			11. Rough Sleepers
6. Kickstart			16. Reopening of Leisure Centres
7. Local Job Clubs			17. Car parking charges
8. Improving Digital Infrastructure			18. Maximising NNDR and Council Tax Collection
14. Town and large employment area connectivity			19. Maximising rental income on Estates portfolio
15. Town Centre reopening - Think Local			

APPENDIX 2 (TOPIC AND SUBJECT AREAS OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT 2021)

GOOD START

Topic: Education & Training (apprenticeships, getting into work)

Subject: Uptake of university places

Subject: GCSE and A Level results

Subject: Apprenticeships

Topic: Personal Safety

Subject: Domestic abuse

Subject: Social Services – Children's

Subject: Court services and offender management

Topic: Support Network

Subject: Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations

Subject: Volunteering rates

Subject: Local Authority support for vulnerable residents affected by COVID-19

Subject: Loneliness and social isolation

Topic: Financial Hardship

Subject: Benefits

Subject: Free School Meals (FSM)

Subject: Food bank use

Subject: Requests for advice and support regarding debt and low income

GOOD HEALTH

Topic: Health

Subject: Life expectancy

Subject: Obesity - adults

Subject: Obesity - children

Subject: Physical activity - adults

Subject: Physical activity – older people

Subject: Physical activity – children and young people

Subject: Mental health

Subject: Impact on other health conditions

Subject: Behavioural risk factors (alcohol and smoking)

Subject: Adult Social Care

GOOD PLACE

Topic: Waste Services

Subject: Household waste (all types)

Subject: Food waste

Topic: Housing Demand

Subject: Housing repossessions

Subject: Local Authority housing waiting lists

Subject: Homelessness

Subject: House prices

Subject: Housing rental market

Subject: Housing affordability (house purchases)

Subject: Housing supply

Topic: Environment

Subject: Climate change

Subject: Air quality

Topic: Public Open Spaces

Subject: Use of public parks and spaces

Topic: High Streets

Subject: Local shopping

Subject: Parking

Subject: Markets

Topic: Crime and Justice

Subject: Crime and anti-social behaviour offences/reports

Topic: Transport and Infrastructure

Subject: Taxi and private hire vehicle usage

Subject: Rail usage

Subject: Road usage – motor vehicles

Subject: Road usage – cycling

Subject: Bus usage

Subject: Broadband connections

GOOD WORK

Topic: Economic Growth

Subject: Economic productivity

Subject: Economic support through business grants

Subject: Key business sectors - Retail

Subject: Key business sectors - Construction

Subject: Key business sectors - Manufacturing

Subject: Business activity

Subject: Wages

Topic: Employment

Subject: Job vacancies

Subject: Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (aka Furlough)

Subject: Redundancy

Subject: Unemployment

Subject: Self-employment

Subject: Support for self-employed residents

APPENDIX 3 (MATRIX OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT SCORES)

