

Report to: Cabinet
Date: 2 October 2020
By: Chief Executive
Title of report: Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) – Update
Purpose of report: To update Members on the latest policy context, the review of priority and delivery outcomes, the review and reset of the East Sussex Core Offer and the updated Medium Term Financial Plan and capital programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- i. note the updated national policy context and local position as set out in paragraphs 2 and 3 and appendix 1;**
 - ii. agree the updated Council priority outcomes and delivery outcomes as the basis for ongoing planning (appendix 2);**
 - iii. agree the updated East Sussex Core Offer as the basis for ongoing planning (appendix 3);**
 - iv. agree the updated Medium Term Financial Plan as the basis for financial planning (appendix 5); and**
 - v. agree to continue lobbying for a sustainable funding regime to meet the needs of the residents of East Sussex and which recognises the significant impact of COVID-19 on the Council's expenditure and income.**
-

1. Background

1.1. In July, Cabinet considered the State of the County report, a key milestone in the Council's Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process, its integrated business and financial planning cycle. The report set out the demographic, economic and service evidence base; the national and local policy context; and updates on our medium term financial planning position and capital programme based on the current understanding at that time. It also set out that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on our communities and services and created both a need and opportunity for the Council to review our priority and delivery outcomes and the Core Offer, to ensure they remain relevant in the new context we are working in.

1.2. The RPPR process, bringing together our policy, business and financial planning and risk management, provides the vehicle for the Council's service and financial recovery. The process of planning, through RPPR, for 2021/22 and beyond will take into consideration the immediate and future impact of the pandemic, alongside other trends and pressures, to form an integrated forward view and to ultimately translate this into service and financial plans which reflect recovery alongside ongoing work.

1.3. This report sets out our updated understanding of how we will need to reset our service and financial plans to deal with the future, as we continue to live with the reality of a world with COVID-19 and the significant impact this has on people's lives, as well as a fast-moving national policy agenda. In this rapidly evolving context it remains very challenging to quantify future need for services and national expectations for local government and to reflect these in our future service offer and financial planning. The report therefore provides our latest best assessment of the policy and financial context that will continue to inform our planning for 2021/22, and includes:

- updates on key national and local policy context developments since July;
- an update on the review of the Council's priority outcomes and delivery outcomes;
- an update on the review and reset of the East Sussex Core Offer;
- the updated Medium Term Financial Plan for 2021/22-2023/24; and
- updates to the Capital Programme.

2. National context update

2.1. The national context the Council is operating in continues to change rapidly. Since the State of the County report in July there have been a number of national developments which are expected to affect the Council's future work and business and financial planning, although the detailed implications for ESCC are uncertain in many areas. These developments are outlined in appendix 1 and include:

- Launch of the 2020 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) – to set Government departments' resource budgets for 2021/22-2023/24, although this will now almost certainly be reduced to 2021/22 only. Government had confirmed that department spending would grow in real terms across the CSR period but that there would be tough choices in areas of spending outside the priorities at the review (which for public services were 'supporting the NHS, taking steps to cut crime and ensure every young person receives a superb education'). The CSR or Spending Review is expected to impact future central government resource allocations for areas of county council responsibility and those of our partners. The future national approach to sustainably funding Adult Social Care remains an urgent issue. The outcome of the Spending Review had been expected to be announced in the Autumn Budget which has since been cancelled. It is understood that a Spending Review will still take place this autumn, but the cancellation of the Budget demonstrates the fast moving and uncertain context we are working in.
- Economic outlook update - the Office for Budget Responsibility published a commentary on public sector finances in August which outlined that the budget deficit has continued to rise sharply with Government borrowing £150.5bn between April and July; public sector net debt is now over 100% of GDP and tax returns for April-July were 31% lower than a year earlier. Although projections vary, a reduction in national economic output (GDP) of around 10% is expected this year. There is evidence of increases in job losses nationally and there is expected to be a further increase following the closure of Government employment support schemes at the end of October, although the Chancellor has announced further employment and business support measures to support

job retention through the winter. Two quarters of negative growth mean the UK economy is now in recession;

- Publication of the Contain Framework – which guides the approach to prevention and containment of local coronavirus outbreaks and the national escalation steps to be taken to augment local activity in areas with outbreaks. Government has also recently reinstated some nationwide restrictions following a national increase in COVID-19 case rates since early September;
- A Devolution and Local Recovery White Paper was due to be published this autumn, although this now seems to be in doubt. It was expected to propose a new phase of local government reorganisation and creation of Combined Authorities as the first step to securing further devolution deals to deliver economic recovery and renewal;
- Launch of the final phase of negotiations on the future relationship with the EU – with a future trading relationship between the UK and EU still to be agreed;
- Publication of the Planning for the Future White Paper – intended to overhaul the planning system, with potential implications for funding and delivery of infrastructure improvements to support housing developments in East Sussex; and
- Publication of the ASC Taskforce Report and ASC Winter Plan – which includes extensive actions for local authorities, the Department for Health and Social Care and the NHS to ensure that high-quality, safe and timely care is provided to everyone who needs it, whilst protecting those that need care, their carers, and the social care workforce from COVID-19 this winter. Many of the actions are already taking place within the East Sussex Health and Social Care System but there are new requirements for ESCC, including to produce an East Sussex Winter Plan by 31 October and complete a care market sustainability self-assessment.

2.2. Further detail and more developments are included at **appendix 1**. We expect the detail of policy changes and the resulting implications for the County Council to become clearer in the coming months and will continue to factor these into planning for 2021/22 and beyond.

3. Local position

3.1. As with elsewhere in the country, East Sussex saw an increase in COVID-19 infections in September, although at a rate slower than the national average. Public Health continually monitor the situation in consultation with health and borough and district partners. The second iteration of the East Sussex Outbreak Control Plan was reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board in September. This included a new escalation framework which set out the points at which local cases or outbreaks may require an escalated response, communications and action with partners. In consultation with local partners, the Director of Public Health agreed East Sussex should move from 'monitor and contain' to 'raised local alertness' on the escalation framework in September in response to the rising number of cases.

3.2. The pandemic has had a significant effect on the East Sussex economy and labour market, with the latest local data showing:

- nearly 100,000 people in the county were in receipt of government support through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (71,500 claims) and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (28,000 claims) at the end of July;
- Between March and July, the number of Job Seekers Allowance and Universal Credit (searching for work) claimants in East Sussex more than doubled to 20,000;
- In July, 47% of the East Sussex working age population were claiming Universal Credit, Job Seekers Allowance or receiving support from a Government COVID-19 income support scheme; and
- 10,700 businesses in the county have received grants for small businesses who are experiencing difficulties. There were 22,900 business enterprises in the county in 2019.

3.3. The 100,000 people on furlough or claiming self-employment income support at the end of July represents 31% of the East Sussex working age population. This is above the national average of 29% and indicates that, while levels of unemployment have already increased, there is a risk of further increase when these schemes cease at the end of October. We would expect this to have an impact on future need for council services and Council Tax income revenue. The East Sussex Economy Recovery Plan has been developed within this context and agreed by Team East Sussex to inform urgent work to be delivered over the next 12-18 months to support changes required in response to the pandemic and capitalise on the opportunities it presents for the East Sussex economy.

3.4. For the Council, the period since July has seen our staff and services continue to transition from temporary arrangements put in place during lockdown. We have closely followed public health and Government guidance to ensure that the steps taken are appropriate in the context of continuing to contain the spread of the virus. Changes to ways of working have been based on robust assessment of what is needed to effectively deliver services to residents. Some staff have continued to work from office bases or directly with clients throughout, with appropriate safeguards in place, where this has been essential to maintain services. Where staff have been working remotely as part of containment measures, a return to buildings has been prioritised for services where remote working is not sustainable or as effective. This approach is being kept under review with regular checkpoints. As part of this transition, all departments have also reviewed opportunities to take forward positive outcomes and learning from the new ways of working and new partnerships that have arisen from the local pandemic response. Member meetings have continued to take place online and are being discussed through the Member reference group.

3.5. A renewed Adult Social Care and Health Programme has been established to look at how we can continue to provide social care services to those that need them safely, effectively and efficiently, in light of the changes to working that have been made in response to the pandemic and any lessons learned. The programme will look at all areas of the department's activity to reshape and improve ways of working and will not impact levels of service provided. The programme will run until August 2021 and any financial implications will be included in 2021/22 budget setting. One

of the project workstreams will consider opportunities to work with partners to build on the success of the multi-agency Community Hubs, to build community capacity and prevent escalation of need in East Sussex.

3.6. Orbis continues to support staff to effectively deliver all services that we can remotely to reduce the risk of coronavirus spread. Across the Council we have seen improvements in productivity due to modernised processes and increased flexibility of working. Staff management and new service delivery practices are enabling staff to work in this increasingly flexible way. Opportunities to embed and expand digital technologies and processes that have enhanced service delivery and working processes in lockdown are being explored. There is some indication that the shift to increased remote working and economic uncertainty has increased applications to County Council job vacancies, including previously hard-to-recruit roles.

3.7. Work has also taken place to begin to assess the impact of the pandemic and accompanying economic disruption on future need and service pressures over and above pre-COVID trends in demand. This assessment will be an ongoing process throughout the autumn as the impact continues to emerge. The following will need to be taken into account:

- How people currently on temporary COVID-19 care pathways will translate into ongoing core demand for ASC. This will become clearer as further assessments take place throughout the autumn;
- The support we will need to provide if advice to shield the most clinically vulnerable is re-activated nationally or locally, and the impact of that beyond the current financial year. As set out in appendix 1, a new national shielding framework is expected to require councils to assess and meet the food and other basic needs of Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people if shielding is reactivated at a future date;
- The re-opening of schools is resulting in an increase in referrals of children newly in need. Modelling is taking place to assess the potential for an increase in children in need but understanding the scale of this need and how it will translate into future years will take time and be an iterative assessment;
- We will need to assess the impact of COVID-19 on ongoing work to support mainstream schools to improve families' confidence in local Special Educational Needs Provision; and
- Whether there are longer-term requirements to provide additional Home to School Transport capacity (as outlined in appendix 1) beyond this school term and whether additional grant funding will be provided for this.

3.8. It is clear that we will need to take account of the ongoing reality of COVID-19 in our plans. In the short to medium term we are likely to see new waves of infection which will need services to flex and respond rapidly to changing circumstances once again. The longer-term impacts of COVID-19 will not be felt evenly across our services and are not yet fully clear.

3.9. In this ongoing period of uncertainty it is important that we apply our existing robust political and business planning processes to develop our plans for the short, medium and longer term.

4. Priority and Delivery Outcomes

4.1. Cabinet agreed in July to review the Council's four priority outcomes and their subsidiary delivery outcomes in light of the changed context, and revise these as needed to ensure the priorities we are working to deliver, and the way we measure the performance of our activities and services, remain appropriate in the changing operating context.

4.2. An expansion of the cross-cutting priority outcome 'making best use of resources' to 'making best use of resources in the short and long term' has already been considered by Cabinet. This reflects the Council's ambitions for carbon neutrality and better reflects that the Council's decisions should be guided by a test priority that we ensure sustainability of our resources, both in terms of money and environmental assets.

4.3. As a result of the review several further amendments to the delivery outcomes which support the four priorities are proposed. The amended outcomes are shown in **appendix 2** with the key proposed changes detailed below.

4.4. Priority outcome: Driving sustainable economic growth –

- A new delivery outcome has been added to reflect the Council's role in supporting local businesses to recover and grow through the delivery of the Economy Recovery Plan in conjunction with partners.
- Delivery outcome 1, relating to employment and productivity rates, has been amended to reflect the changed context – the revised wording reflects the focus on recovery and the aim to maximise employment and productivity rates.
- Delivery outcome 3, on skills and employment, now includes reference to meeting the needs of the future East Sussex economy, recognising the potentially significant shifts in ways of working, differing impacts across sectors and potential new opportunities arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and other developments in the local economy.
- A new delivery outcome has been included to recognise the opportunity to maximise the influence of the County Council's role as a significant employer within the county and a buyer of local goods and services both in terms of supporting local economic recovery and longer term.

4.5. Priority outcome: Keeping vulnerable people safe –

- An additional delivery outcome has been included to reflect the Council's role, working as part of the wider health and care system, to support people affected by COVID-19 to achieve the best health outcomes possible.

4.6. Priority outcome: Helping people help themselves –

- Delivery outcome 9 has been broadened to include vulnerable people of all ages and to better reflect the range of ways in which support is provided.

- Delivery outcome 10 has been re-worded to reflect the opportunity to build on the mutual support systems that have been developed in partnership within communities so that these can continue to support the COVID-19 response, its impacts on people's lives and to help people help each other longer term.

4.7. Priority outcome: Making best use of resources in the short and long term -

- The wording of delivery outcome 12 has been enhanced to reflect the increased strength and long term importance of partnership working across sectors and its role in making best use of all available resources for the benefit of local people.
- Delivery outcome 16 is proposed for deletion as a strategic commissioning approach is now embedded in the Council's ways of working and does not require a specific delivery outcome.

4.8. Whilst other delivery outcomes may not have changed it is important to acknowledge that delivery of some of these will present a significant challenge in light of the increasing needs of individuals, communities and families as a result of the pandemic and its consequences, and uncertainty about the future.

4.9. Cabinet is recommended to agree the updated priority and delivery outcomes attached at **appendix 2** as the basis for ongoing planning for 2021/22 and beyond.

5. Core Offer

5.1. As a consequence of austerity and the requirement to find £138m of savings since 2010, the Core Offer was developed last year to define the Council's minimum reasonable service offer to our residents in this context, and to ensure resources were directed to areas of highest need. The Core Offer represents a level of service below which we should not go in order to meet the needs of residents, not only for the services we provide but to play our part in supporting them in their wider health and wellbeing needs. Savings already planned will take us to the minimum core service offer by 2022/23. Alongside this, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it additional roles and expectations for local authorities and changes in demand for existing services.

5.2. We have reviewed whether the activities within the current Core Offer, and the volumes of those activities, are regarded as core to meeting residents' needs in the new operating context. We have considered where local need for services and prioritisation of services have diverted from our current Core Offer as a result of the pandemic and whether the offer should be amended to include these in the longer term. We have also considered if there are existing elements of our Core Offer that are no longer priorities in the new operating context.

5.3. The review has shown that the Core Offer remains largely appropriate as an expression of our minimum locally appropriate service offer to residents in a time of austerity. It continues to reflect our statutory responsibilities, core functions and the range of services required to meet local needs. It includes a commitment to delivering good value for money in all we do. However, in many areas the way in which services are provided has changed and may continue to change, and demand has already increased in some areas, affecting the volume of activity needed to

deliver the Core Offer. The anticipated increase in demand for some services in light of the pandemic and the associated pressures on resources are reflected in financial planning.

5.4. As a result of the Core Offer review some specific changes have been identified to reflect the changed context as shown in **appendix 3**. The key proposed changes are summarised below.

5.5. As one Council

- Additional wording has been included to reflect the preventative focus of work with the voluntary and community sector.
- Wording has been updated to reflect the increasing importance of working within wider systems, for example in health and social care.
- The addition of a new core requirement to respond effectively as an organisation to the impact of COVID-19 and to maximise learning from this response.

5.6. Schools

- Wording has been added to reflect the new core responsibility to address the specific impact of COVID-19 on pupils' progress and outcomes.

5.7. Public Health

- Inclusion of specific wording to reflect enhanced responsibilities in relation to local outbreak planning and response as part of our health protection role.
- Several points relating to the commissioning of specific public health services have been replaced with a single overarching point focused on commissioning public health services to meet needs. This reflects the outcome of the public health review and the strategic commissioning approach to services.

5.8. Cabinet is recommended to agree the updated Core Offer attached as **appendix 3** as the basis for ongoing planning.

6. Medium Term Financial Plan

6.1 It remains difficult to plan for 2021/22 and beyond. The level of Government funding that ESCC will receive between 2021/22 – 2023/24 is yet to be confirmed; Spending Review (SR) 2019 was for a single year and therefore funding for this planning period will be announced at SR20 in the autumn, the date of which is still to be confirmed. Due to the ongoing uncertainty related to the end of the Brexit transition period and COVID-19 it is increasingly likely that there will be a single year SR similar to SR19. Cabinet, at its meeting in November 2019, welcomed the one-off funding of £4.4m that is now rolled into base funding. Additionally, the Fair Funding Review and Business Rate Retention reform have been confirmed delayed until at least 2021/22.

6.2 The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) has been updated to provide a baseline position before further refinement of pressures, including those relating to

Children’s Services, the future impact of COVID-19, and reduced income from council tax and business rates. A number of scenarios based on the potential for further funding announcements are set out in section 6.7. For financial planning purposes, the working assumption is that the authority will be conducting business as usual from 1 April 2021. Should there be a loss of income or extra pressures arising in 2021/22 from COVID-19, these will be managed through our normal quarterly monitoring process. The assessment at this stage is for the potential loss of income to be £2.0m whilst cost pressures may be in the region of £1.1m.

6.3 The baseline position includes: (1) Normal updates for regularly calculated adjustments and the additional year 2023/24, summarised at **appendix 4**; (2) Proposed updates following review by CMT via the Pressures Protocol, also summarised at appendix 4; (3) A review of deliverability of approved savings (see section 6.4).

6.4 The deliverability of existing savings plans has been reviewed, and whilst no savings have been identified as undeliverable, there will be slippage of £2.316m of savings into 2022/23 and 2023/24. The detail is set out in **appendix 6**.

6.5 These movements are summarised in the table below and provide a deficit budget position by 2023/24 of £23.860m.

Medium Term Financial Plan	2021/22 £m	2022/23 £m	2023/24 £m	Total £m
Council 11 February 2020 DEFICIT/(SURPLUS)	1.443	7.879	0.000	9.322
Normal Updates (appendix 4)	(2.106)	(1.441)	8.872	5.325
Proposed Updates (appendix 4)	9.895	(0.206)	(0.477)	9.213
Savings Reprofile (appendices 4 & 6)	2.316	(1.074)	(1.242)	0.000
Deficit / (Surplus) AFTER UPDATES TO THE MTFP	11.548	5.158	7.154	23.860

6.6 A detailed MTFP after normal updates and proposed pressures is shown at **appendix 5**.

6.7 As set out above, our known deficit for 2021/22 is £11.5m with an aggregate deficit of £23.9m. However, we know there is uncertainty about future funding allocations. In resetting the MTFP and presenting the budget for 2021/22 and beyond, a number of scenarios have been considered that could impact the possible level of budget deficit that will need to be addressed and these are set out in the table below. Scenario 1 includes potential options for further national funding which have yet to be clarified. For example, is it likely that we will have flexibility to raise Council Tax by a further 1%, will Revenue Support Grant receive an inflationary increase to Baseline Funding levels, and/or is it likely that we will get further one-off funding? If the council receives all of these then our position will reduce to a £3.0m deficit in 2021/22. Further scenarios presented below consider additional possible national announcements and their impacts on ESCC.

Scenarios	Estimate (£m)			
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total
DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) AFTER NORMAL UPDATES	(0.663)	6.438	8.872	14.647
Total Proposed Updates to the MTFP	12.211	(1.280)	(1.719)	9.213
DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) AFTER PROPOSED UPDATES	11.548	5.158	7.154	23.860
Local Considerations				
New Homes Bonus retain in revenue	(0.252)	0.138	0.114	0.000
DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) AFTER Local Considerations	11.296	5.296	7.268	23.860
Scenario 1, Likely				
Funding announced at SR20 similar to SR19				
Adult Social Care Precept and / or increase in referendum limit @ 1%	(2.983)	(0.068)	(0.070)	(3.121)
Revenue Support Grant (inflationary increase to Baseline Funding level)	(0.935)			(0.935)
One off grant – per previous years	(4.417)	4.417		0.000
DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) AFTER Scenario 1, Likely	2.961	9.645	7.198	19.804
Scenario 2, Less Likely				
Government Funds 2020/21 Business Rates loss	(0.237)	0.237		0.000
		(0.178)	0.178	0.000
			(0.119)	(0.119)
Government Funds 2020/21 Council Tax loss	(2.263)	2.263		0.000
		(1.697)	1.697	0.000
			(1.131)	(1.131)
Increase in referendum limit @ 1%	(2.983)	(0.068)	(0.070)	(3.121)
DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) AFTER Scenario 2, Less Likely	(2.522)	10.202	7.753	15.433
Scenario 3, Unlikely				
Business Rates, Proceeds of Pooling 2021/22	(1.279)	1.279		0.000
Income Guarantee: Government compensation for 75% of losses of income after the first 5%.	tbc			tbc
DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) AFTER Scenario 3, Unlikely	(3.801)	11.481	7.753	15.433

6.8 Although at this point in the RPPR process it is not possible to present a balanced MTFP due to the considerable level of national funding uncertainty and the everchanging requirements to meet the response to COVID-19, there are no plans to seek to identify further savings. Current savings plans (at appendix 6) get the Council to its Core Offer and any further savings would take it below that. Over the coming months, we will work to refine the budget to update for the impact of the Local Government Settlement, in whatever form that takes, whilst reflecting updated assessments of budget pressures, including Council Tax and Business Rates. If there is a deficit on the 2021/22 budget, and in line with our robust financial management policies and procedures, the plan at this point will be to use reserves to mitigate this position until the medium-to-longer term funding position is clarified.

7. Capital Programme

7.1 The approved capital programme was reported to Cabinet in July 2020 as part of RPPR State of the County report, where it was agreed that the impact of COVID-19 on the planned programme during 2020/21 would be reported as slippage and/or under/overspend as part of the capital monitoring process. The table below provides an updated programme. These variations including funding updates are detailed at **appendix 7**.

Capital Programme Gross (£m)	2020/21	MTFP Period			2024/30	Total
		2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
Approved Programme as at State of the County	96.889	69.391	59.285	51.688	293.076	570.329
Updates to the programme	0.535	1.982	-	-	-	2.517
Revised Programme	97.424	71.373	59.285	51.688	293.076	572.846

7.2 As part of the RPPR process, service finance and departmental capital teams will complete a capital programme refresh as part of the Quarter 2 monitoring process which will be formally used to provide a realigned capital programme. There have been no revisions to the capital targeted basic needs proposals to support post COVID-19 service offer at this stage.

8. Lobbying and Communications

8.1. Work has been ongoing over the summer to understand the impact of COVID-19 on East Sussex residents through a range of both open access and targeted surveys, research and engagement. We received over 10,000 responses to an online survey open to all residents and held telephone interviews with a sample of 1,000 residents designed to ensure we heard from a representative cross-section of the local population.

8.2. Residents responding online identified improving the local economy as their top priority for the future, whereas respondents to the phone survey placed stronger public services at the top of their list. The uneven impact of the pandemic was reflected in research findings with around a third of online respondents feeling closer to their community, whereas around a quarter felt more distant. Almost a third (31%) of telephone interviewees had seen household income somewhat reduced, with a further 10% indicating their income had been greatly reduced as a result of the pandemic. A third of respondents expect they will need public services more than before COVID-19 over the next 12 months. A third of people expect that public services will have fewer resources to help them, whereas a third expect services to be resourced at about the same level as now. Looking at how the pandemic may change future behaviour, nine in 10 people expect to do more tasks and interaction online, six in 10 intend to do more to reduce their environmental footprint and more than half say their main focus will be on increasing their or their family's income. Findings from this research will feed into the evidence base that informs our planning for 2021/22 and our ongoing lobbying.

8.3. We are doing all we can, in the context of significant uncertainty, to understand and plan to meet local need, but we greatly need assurance we will have

sufficient funding to deliver all that is required to support local residents and businesses in the wake of the pandemic; and deliver an ambitious local and national recovery agenda in the future. We also urgently need a sustainable long term settlement for Adult Social Care, where demand is increasing year on year against a background of diminishing resources. While proposals for longer term reform of social care are still awaited, assurance that the short term support provided in 20/21 will be at least matched in 21/22 is a minimum requirement now.

8.4. South East 7 Leaders have written to the Chancellor this summer to set out the urgent need for certainty that in-year pressures from coronavirus will be met and that we will have adequate funding provision next year. The Leader and Chief Officers have also worked to help Government Departments evidence local government spending need in support of their submissions to the Comprehensive Spending Review and to explain the cost of not adequately funding councils in the current context. Lobbying will continue concertedly in partnership with others, including our local MPs, in the autumn.

9. Next Steps

9.1. This report demonstrates the high level of uncertainty within which planning for 2021/22 is taking place and the scale of the challenge we face. Much is to be determined around national spending allocations and priorities for 2021/22 onwards, and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic and economic upheaval on our services is still emerging. National government will be looking to local government to support the ongoing COVID-19 response and economic and social recovery, as well as delivering significant reform in a range of areas. We need certainty as early as possible that we will receive an adequate level of funding next year to enable focus on this work. We will redouble our lobbying efforts to ensure absolute clarity of this message to Government.

9.2. Work will continue throughout the autumn and winter to understand the impacts on our residents and services of the coronavirus pandemic, the detailed funding picture as it emerges and the implications of national policy developments. This analysis will feed into our ongoing business and financial planning.

9.3. Subject to agreement by Cabinet, the Council's updated priority and delivery outcomes, Core Offer and Medium Term Financial Plan will be used as the basis for more detailed business and budget planning for 2021/22 and beyond.

9.4. Members will continue to be involved in developing plans through Cabinet, County Council, Scrutiny Committees, Whole Council Member Forums and specific engagement sessions throughout the 2020/21 RPPR process.

BECKY SHAW
Chief Executive