

Report to	Partnerships Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	10th September 2020
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Tony Thomas (Lead Member for Housing & Communities)/Liz Grieve (Head of Communities and Customer Services)
Report author	Liz Grieve, Head of Communities & Customer Services
Title	Infrastructure – Housing Recovery Theme

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. To examine the post COVID-19 Recovery Plan for Infrastructure – Housing Recovery Priority

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To provide information regarding the post COVID-19 Recovery Plan for the Infrastructure – Housing Recovery Priority
- 2.2. To assure Scrutiny that the Recovery Priority deals with all critical aspects of the recovery of the Council's Housing-related services.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the activities being pursued in relation to Council Housing's recovery from the first lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 3.2. That the Committee identifies any future areas for scrutiny in relation to this recovery priority.

4. Report details

- 4.1. The Housing Recovery theme (Appendix 1) was drafted and agreed with SLT and Cabinet in May 2020.
- 4.2. It focussed on key areas that directly impact Community Housing and its tenants:
 - Repairs & Maintenance
 - Voids
 - Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) and Homelessness
 - Rents
 - Tenant Support
 - Community Development
 - Capital Projects
 - Housing Asset Strategy
- 4.3. It focussed on bringing back services safely and as quickly as possible for the benefit of tenants and the safety of them, contractors and staff.
- 4.4. It also highlighted strategic developments that have been affected by Covid or have been made necessary by Covid.
- 4.5. In addition it aimed to make use of lessons learned through Covid to improve services going forward.
- 4.6. Many actions have been completed in line with the key objectives and an update has been provided in Appendix 2
- 4.7. Some areas of development will take months or longer to put in place, and picking them up again has been challenging, e.g. while staff are still redeployed (e.g. Track and Trace) or while Covid-restrictions are in place.
- 4.8. The plan will be reviewed regularly and further updates will be provided going forward.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

- 5.1. This recovery plan is primarily concerned with Community Housing and therefore relates to the Housing priority in the Corporate Plan.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1. The Housing recovery theme will largely be delivered through existing identified resources, but officers will make use of any Welsh Government grants if and when they are made available.
- 6.2. The plan is being delivered by a variety of services, particularly Communities & Customers, Finance and Property, and Community Support Services. ICT are project managing the Rentsense implementation.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

- 7.1. N/A

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

- 8.1. The suspension of SARTH has been made as a delegated decision further to consultation with Councillors and SARTH partners (Registered Social Landlords in Denbighshire).

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1. As indicated at Section 6 this recovery theme will largely be delivered through existing resources along with additional existing external funding. In particular Denbighshire's Housing Revenue Account has a 30 year Housing Stock Business Plan and robust financial monitoring procedures in place that ensures that the service is well placed to deliver the recovery strategy.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

- 10.1. Risks have been identified as follows and are being actively monitored:

Risk that there will be criticism of the suspension of SARTH

Risk that DCC will not achieve its Corporate Plan objectives with regard to new builds

Risk that the SARTH waiting list will become too long if properties are not available to let

Risk to tenants, DCC staff and contractors in terms of spreading Covid if preventative measures are not adhered to.

Risk that costs and timescales for works will increase as measures are put in place to reduce the risk of spread of Covid

11. Power to make the decision

11.1 Scrutiny's powers in relation to matters detailed in this report are as per:

- Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000;
- Section 7 of the Council's Constitution