

Appendix 2

Recovery Theme Plan Template

As with the emergency phase, the recovery phase will follow a thematic approach with a lead senior officer responsible for delivery and reporting on progress. Each lead officer will also be responsible for drawing up a plan, with objectives and milestones, for that thematic area in conjunction with the appropriate lead member.

Recovery Theme Title: Corporate Priorities
Lead Officer: Graham Boase
Lead Member: Cllr Hugh Evans
Summary of Recovery Theme: When we first considered the need for this recovery theme back in April/May there was the unknown impact on our revenue and capital budgets this year as a result of C19. Those impacts could have been so severe it could have required the Council to quickly reevaluate our priorities and whether we could afford to deliver them or not. Whilst there are still many challenges and some uncertainties regarding this year's budget we are now more confident that we don't need to completely reevaluate our priorities. Budget pressures in future years however may well mean we do need to reconsider our priorities both in terms of revenue and capital budgets. This theme therefore needs to consider whether or not we need to establish a new process to review and potentially change our corporate priorities in light of C19.
Key Objectives: To establish whether or not we need to introduce a new process to review our corporate priorities in light of C19 and if so what form should that new process take. The following have been considered: Corporate Plan (2017-22): The first thing to say is we have Council Elections in May 2022 i.e. approx. 18 months away. As such it is not too far off before we need to start to consider how best to commence work on the next Corporate Plan. That next Corporate Plan will set out the priorities for the Council 2022 – 2026 (4-year Council period). So it is inevitable that in due course we will be assessing our priorities in terms of the new Corporate Plan. We currently have a very clear set of 5 priority programmes in the existing Corporate Plan. Much work has gone into establishing, agreeing and delivering a wide range of ambitious projects to support each programme.

Examples of the high level Projects/Strategies that relate to the Corporate Plan include:

- Net Carbon Zero & Ecological Positive Council
- 21st Century Schools
- Flood defence projects
- General highway maintenance
- Broadband/Digital development
- Denbighshire Working Start

These projects remain relevant.

Delivery of the Corporate Plan is monitored by SLT, Corporate Plan Programme Board, Cabinet, Scrutiny, Council etc. Despite C19 there appears broad satisfaction that that good progress is being made in delivering the 5 programmes and the established governance arrangements remain appropriate.

This indicates that the Corporate Plan identified the right properties at the right time for the Council.

It appears there is no pressing need or desire to carry out any work to redefine the priorities in the Corporate Plan. The existing governance arrangements can adequately monitor the delivery of the Corporate Plan and should ensure a seamless transition from the existing Corporate Plan to the next Corporate Plan.

Response to C19 Emergency:

The day to day response to the C19 emergency has become part of our corporate priorities.

We are satisfied that through SEMT we managed the initial C19 emergency very well and we have broadly retained those same governance arrangements to ensure we continue to respond appropriately to the ever changing landscape created by the current emergency.

It appears there is no requirement to establish any new process to direct our response to the emergency as the existing governance arrangements are working well.

Recovery from C19:

The way we recover from the C19 emergency has become part of our corporate priorities.

We have set up a governance structure that initially identified 14 Covid Recovery Themes (some are divided into “sub themes”). Each Theme has an SLT lead and a Lead Member. The Themes have initially been worked up by the SLT lead in consultation with the relevant Lead Member. The draft Themes have been discussed at SLT and Cabinet Briefing. From there the Themes go through their own “route” of wider Member engagement e.g. initially during C19 to Group Leaders, more recently via Scrutiny, or other appropriate Member Forums.

Some of these themes involve relatively straight forward processes and will soon start to become business as usual, while others are directing more radical lasting changes and will take longer to develop and implement.

It appears there is no requirement to establish any new process to direct these recovery themes as the existing governance arrangements are working well.

Governance of our Priorities:

As a result of our Recovery Theme, “Democratic Process” and the work of our support services (e.g. ICT, Democratic Services etc) we now have our main governance systems functioning again (e.g. Scrutiny, Cabinet and Council). So the priorities of the Council are subject to the established political rigour e.g. over a 3-month period the proposed regional Growth Deal and associated GA2 will have been subject to a Member Workshop, Scrutiny, Cabinet Briefing, Cabinet, and Council.

SLT is meeting weekly to overview the work on our priorities from a senior management perspective e.g. regular review of the Corporate Project Register.

SIG continues to provide challenge in terms of proposed capital schemes to ensure they align with corporate priorities e.g. Queens Building, Rhyl.

Budget Board is monitoring the revenue budget, including the medium term financial plan, proposed savings for next year etc with the view of ensuring Cabinet and Council set a balanced budget e.g. managing the current round of Service Budget Sessions.

Setting and delivering priorities is always a balance involving the needs of the Authority, the will of Members and the needs of our community and all need to take ownership of the agreed priorities by signing up to their delivery.

It appears that our established governance framework continues to serve us well, so questions about our corporate priorities can be answered via our existing arrangements.

Conclusion:

Whilst we need to challenge Services to establish if they can still deliver their pre C19 priorities or if there is a need to realign those priorities in light of C19 there is no requirement to carry out a separate review of our corporate priorities given (i) we are making good progress in terms of delivering the existing Corporate Plan (ii) the Corporate Plan is in its last 18 months and work will soon start on considering the next Corporate Plan for the new Council (iii) we have appropriate governance arrangements in place to monitor and challenge our corporate priorities and how they are being delivered.

It would appear that whatever budget pressures we may face as a result of C19, be they in the short or longer term, we can use our existing governance arrangements to evaluate our corporate priorities.

Regard may need to be given to the CEO’s draft paper entitled, “Covid 19 – The Future Shape of Denbighshire County Council” which to date has been discussed at SLT and Cabinet Briefing.

The report highlights 3 “priorities”:

- We will operate as one Council
- We will focus our resources on what matters
- We will focus on communities

These 3 “priorities” are less to do with specific projects/areas of service delivery and are more about how we approach the business of the Council.

Dependent on the outcome of further discussion regarding the CEO's draft paper we may want to consider how to communicate the message of one Council, focussing its resources on what matters and focussing on our communities.

That message can be delivered within the context that our existing governance arrangements will need to continue to test and challenge our ability to deliver our agreed priorities in light of C19.

Key Milestones (include an decision points eg Cabinet):

Discuss with Lead Member Cllr Hugh Evans (28/10)

Report to SLT for discussion with the senior managers of the Council (29/10)

Report to Cabinet Briefing for discussion with senior politicians of the Council (02/11)

Report to Performance Scrutiny to seek the views of the wider Council membership (26/11)

Risks

We do not reassess our priorities in light of all the additional work and pressures created by C19 and as such we spread ourselves too thinly potentially resulting in the failure to deliver on certain priorities or succeeding to do everything but to a lower standard.

Opportunities:

We use our existing governance framework to review our priorities and their associated outcomes/targets in light of individual pressures/issues and we launch a new message focussing on strengthening our approach to being one Council, focussing our resources on what matters most to our communities.

What does Success Look Like?

A Council focused on a clear set of deliverable priorities including being able to respond to the ongoing C19 situation.