

SCRUTINY REVIEW INITIATION DOCUMENT (SID)

Review: Covid Impact Review

Scrutiny Review Committee: Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee

Director leading the review: Dave Hodgkinson, Stephen Biggs, Maxine Holdsworth

Lead Officers: Caroline Wilson, Robbie Rainbird, Paul Clarke, Jo Murphy, Matt West

Overall aim: To consider the effect of the pandemic on employment, business and the local economy, on Council BAU service delivery, and on the Council's finances

Objectives of the review:

- To consider the impact on employment and businesses in the borough and what measures have been put in place to mitigate this
- To analyse the measures that are in place going forward to ensure residents and businesses are in the best position possible to recover from the pandemic and to maximise employment opportunities
- To consider how lessons learned in front line services can best support residents going forward
- To analyse the effect that the pandemic has had on the Council's financial position

How the review is to be carried out

Scope of the review

The review will focus on 3 areas –

- Employment, Business and Economy
- Service case study
- Council financial position

Employment, Business and Economy

Scope of the review

- Impact of Covid on employment rates across the borough including furlough
- Support provided to residents who have become unemployed, or have experienced reduced income, or have had to self-isolate (missing work)
- Impact on businesses and key local economic sectors
- Support provided to businesses
- Recovery planning: building back better

Types of evidence

- Documentary evidence and survey data
- Witnesses: Caroline Wilson, Robbie Rainbird, Cllr Asima Shaikh, Cllr Matt Nathan

Case study – lessons learned from the pandemic

Housing plays a key role in supporting the health, safety and prosperity of our residents. During the pandemic there were a wide range of impacts upon the service. Housing will provide a case study to explore:

- How we adapted services on estates

- Trends in service demand, how we modified services, what we learned
- Adapting repairs service and bringing back normal service
- Working with contractors
- Providing access to services for homeless households

Types of evidence

- Documentary evidence
- Witnesses: Billy Wells, Maxine Holdsworth, Matt West, homelessness charity

Council Financial Position

Scope of the Review

Rather than a one off event for the Council budget recovery from COVID 19 it will have an ongoing impact on the Council budget for the foreseeable future. This has the potential to come in the form of:

- Increased pressure due to demand from residents (e.g. housing/social care)
- Reduced fees and Charges – e.g. parking and leisure
- Structural changes to the tax raising capability of the Council
- Increased levels of uncollected debt
- Fiscal and monetary policy as a result of the national debt burden
- The extent to which these pressures come to bear on the Council budget remains uncertain and will depend on the way in which the pandemic impacts on LBI residents

Types of evidence:

- Documentary evidence – Financial monitoring information to be presented throughout the year, the annual budget papers and additional information to consider financial planning for future years and the impact of the pandemic
- Witness evidence – David Hodgkinson, Paul Clarke, Councillor Satnam Gill

Timetable for Review

29 July

- Approval of SID
- Revenue Outturn 2020/21

08 September

- Initial presentation and overview across all three themes

07 October:

- Further analysis and evidence of impacts on Employment, Business and the local Economy and the Council's finances and associated mitigations
- Case study – lessons learned from the pandemic in the housing service

04 November:

- Draft recommendations & clarifications

02 December

- Final report

Note: it is anticipated that findings and recommendations from the Finance work stream will be incorporated into the council's annual budget setting process which will be presented to the Committee in full in the usual way

Additional Information:

In carrying out the review the committee will consider equalities implications and resident impacts identified by witnesses. The Executive is required to have due regard to these, and any other relevant implications, when responding to the review recommendations.