

25 January 2021**Agenda Item: 8****REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLACE****PROGRESS ON THE COVID-19 CRISIS ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACTION PLAN
(JANUARY 2021)****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is twofold, to:
 - a) provide an update on the work the Council and its partners are undertaking in relation to the COVID-19 crisis Economic Recovery Action Plan 2020-2022.
 - b) introduce members to the Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (D2N2 LEP) vision for recovery and growth.

Information

2. An ambitious economic recovery action plan to get the economy of Nottinghamshire back on its feet in the wake of COVID-19 and which feeds in to the Government's national recovery plan, was launched in September 2020. Nottinghamshire County Council recognised its role in helping repair the immediate economic and social damage brought about by the coronavirus pandemic. As a result of swift and decisive on-the-ground action undertaken by the Council, post-COVID-19 Nottinghamshire will be more digital, greener, resilient and prepared for the current and forthcoming challenges.
3. The COVID-19 crisis Economic Recovery Action Plan contains an unprecedented package of measures to be delivered by partners locally and nationally to get businesses up and trading again, restore business, consumer and community confidence, and support for those who do lose their jobs. One size does not fit all, and the COVID-19 crisis Economic Recovery Action Plan reflects local circumstances and priorities in different areas.
4. The Council recognises that getting the economy back on its feet will not be achieved by one partner alone or by one strand of investment or actions. The economy is most successful when different organisations, partners and stakeholders work together for the benefit of the people who live, learn, work and visit in Nottinghamshire.
5. Nottinghamshire County Council continues to make rapid progress. As confirmed in the following paragraph, since the launch of the COVID-19 crisis Economic Recovery Action Plan, over £11,403,000 of new money has been secured to help stimulate the economy and directly impact the residential and business community of Nottinghamshire. A progress update, based on the five themes of people, business, visitor economy, infrastructure and place, and which covers the ensuing 83 days since last reported to Members, is provided at **Appendix A**.

Action the Council and its partners are undertaking

6. Work has continued at pace in terms of the actions outlined in the COVID-19 crisis Economic Recovery Action Plan. Key highlights since the last update include:
- 98.4% of residential and business premises can access superfast internet speeds of above 24 megabits per second (24Mbps). This is compared to 96.6% superfast coverage for the United Kingdom. 17.11% of premises can now switch to gigabit speeds of up to 1000Mbps (a 3.15% increase since the last report). Early foresight by Nottinghamshire County Council to invest in high-speed digital infrastructure has meant that completing schoolwork at home and home working during the COVID-19 outbreak, has been a reality for most of the County's population that need to do so. Nottinghamshire remains in the top three most-digitally connected counties in the country and continues to exceed Government targets
 - The £4.3M Warm Homes Hub programme is now being rolled out across the County. The fund is split into three broad categories: new gas heating systems for urban homes and communities, non-gas solutions for rural homes and communities, and specific energy efficient/health related solutions. Whilst COVID-19 restrictions have resulted in project delivery being behind target, progress nevertheless is being made. To date, there has been eight new gas heating system installations with a further 25 households going through the process. In addition, E.ON are planning delivery to a site of 72 Flats - designs are being drawn up for 72 individual gas central heating systems, alongside a complete district heating network. A further 837 households have been supported against the 1,000 households target. Encouragingly, this support has achieved 60% of its target level of savings for residents
 - An extra £1M (serving an additional 100+ homes at least) was secured from Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) through the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme to retrofit homes
 - A bid is currently under consideration by Government for an additional £2.3M to facilitate insulation or low carbon heating measures to more communities under the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 1B. This means the residents of Nottinghamshire will have help to pay for insulation, double glazing and more. If successful, not only will Nottinghamshire boast more energy efficient homes, some of the most vulnerable residents in the County will save on their heating bills too
 - The employment and skills portal was launched to bring together information to help people access support whether they were working, furloughed or looking for a job. Since launching, there have been 631 unique users of the portal
 - The transfer of Council Levy funds to its Apprenticeship Training Agency to support the employment of further apprenticeships, with a focus on supporting Looked After Children, Care Leavers and other vulnerable groups of young people and adults. Approved to date are 22 apprenticeships ranging from lead adult care worker (Level two) to senior leader's master's degree (level seven) with a levy transfer value of £323,000 (i.e. 15.% increase since last reported to Members)
 - The Council's Business Advisers have continued to engage with Nottinghamshire businesses. Over 1,400 Nottinghamshire businesses have been provided with direct one-to-one support, alongside webinar-based advice

- Work is underway with Minor 2 Major partners to put in place a range of opportunities for traineeships, apprenticeships and Kickstart roles. Work is underway to offer heritage skills training for Inspire 16 – 19 construction students
- The Department for Transport (DfT) has recently announced that it has allocated £2.18m towards the County Council's Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 proposals
- £3.6M investment as part of the Government's 'Getting Building Fund' on the new 5G Enabled Digital Centre in North Nottinghamshire and the Lindhurst Development, Mansfield

The Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership (D2N2 LEP) Vision for Recovery and Growth

7. The D2N2 LEP plays a central role in deciding local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and create local jobs. The D2N2 LEP has recently set out its vision for Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire's future development, focusing on a green recovery and growth.
8. Looking ahead at future opportunities, the ambition is to unlock the expertise, creativity and political backing to make a move to zero-carbon a reality based on three guiding principles: clean growth, productivity and connectivity. The plan is to lead the most ambitious carbon economy turn-around in the country.
9. The D2N2 LEP's recovery and growth strategy, which sets out the organisation's vision and ambition for the future is available to view online at:
https://d2n2lep.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Recovery-Strategy-2020-V9_FINAL_Min.pdf

Other Options Considered

10. Routine progress updates were requested to be presented to this Committee. In so doing, they provide the opportunity for Members to identify and suggest areas for priority or future activities. Therefore the 'do nothing' option was discounted.

Reason for Recommendations

11. The Council recognises the need to be agile in its approach, to enable a switch from recovery to response mode in the event of further lockdowns or to respond to potential issues caused by the ending of Government support packages. The COVID-19 crisis Economic Recovery Action Plan is a 'live plan' with the Council responding to changing circumstance and the latest business intelligence. It is important that Members continue to monitor the situation and adapt as necessary as Nottinghamshire moves towards a new normal.

Statutory and Policy Implications

12. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

13. There are no financial implications arising as a result of this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

14. In recognising that Nottinghamshire County Council acted swiftly and decisively in launching its COVID-19 crisis Economic Recovery Action Plan, it is recommended that the COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee:

- 1) Celebrates the fact that in excess of £11.4 million pounds of new money has been secured over a two-month period, towards leading the way out of the crisis and laying the foundations for a modern and more sustainable county.
- 2) Considers whether there are further actions required in relation to the progress on the COVID-19 crisis Economic Recovery Plan.

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Constitutional Comments (CEH 18/12/2020)

15. This report falls within the remit of the COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee.

Financial Comments (SES 18/12/2020)

16. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- *Update on the economy and progress with the economic recovery action plan 2020-2022*, Report to COVID-19 Resilience, Recovery and Renewal Committee, published on 3 November 2020 <https://cutt.ly/KjkdSrO>

Electoral Divisions and Members Affected

- All