

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 25 JANUARY 2021

PART I - DELEGATED

7. COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS IMPACT ON SERVICES UPDATE REPORT (CED)

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the impact of the local Tier system, National Lockdown and current position of the Council's Services.
- 1.2 The Council will continue to prioritise service delivery and focus resources as set out previously in the Service Restoration Priorities Reports.

2 Background

- 2.1 Following the outbreak of Covid-19, a number of the Council's services were either stopped or partially stopped as a result of the pandemic and Government advice. In preparation for returning all services to business as usual (BAU) a Service Restoration sub-group was established under the Reset strand to lead on restoring Council services.
- 2.2 At its meeting on the 21 July 2020 the Covid-19 sub-committee agreed the priorities 1, 2 & 3 as those to take forward for service restoration (minute CRSC07/20 refers).
- 2.3 At the meeting on the 3 September 2020 the Covid-19 sub-committee agreed and recommended the report and appendix 1 Service Restoration Priorities 1 to 3 to Policy and Resources Committee for adoption (minute CRSC13/20 refers).
- 2.4 At the same meeting it agreed and recommended the report and appendix 1 Service Restoration - Resources and Target Date to be Fully Restored Document to Policy and Resources Committee for adoption (minute CRSC14/20 refers).
- 2.5 At the meeting on the 6 October 2020, the Covid-19 sub-committee agreed and recommended the report and appendix 1 Service Restoration Priorities 4 and 5 to Policy and Resources Committee for adoption (minute CRSC 19/20 refers).
- 2.6 At the same meeting, the amended recommendation was declared by the Chair of the meeting, the voting being unanimous. 'That external face to face meetings take place with officers and members of the public, with officers being encouraged to wear face coverings where appropriate, that face to face meetings at Three Rivers House be postponed at this time (other than CAB appointments only) and that external face to face meetings requiring home entry be postponed. All to be reviewed at the end of October' (minute CRSC 20/20 refers).
- 2.7 At the meeting on 16 November 2020, the Covid-19 sub-committee agreed and recommended the Service Restoration General Update report and the Watersmeet Reopening report to Policy & Resources Committee for adaption (minute CRSC 25/20 and minute CRCS 26/20 refers).

3 General Service Update

- 3.1 Since the last report to the 16 November Covid-19 sub-committee the Government confirmed the local restrictions Tier system. Initially following the end of the second national lockdown, on 3 December Three Rivers District entered Tier 2 local

restrictions which allowed the majority of the Council's services to operate albeit with some restrictions.

- 3.2 Following an increase in Covid cases, on the 16 December, Three Rivers was raised the Tier 3, and then, following the introduction of a new Tier 4 level, Three Rivers was raised to Tier 4 on 20 December 2020.
- 3.3 On 5 January 2021 England entered a National Lockdown, which has resulted in further impact on the Council's services.
- 3.4 Three Rivers House remains closed apart from essential attendance only, with staff working from home wherever possible.
- 3.5 The Depot remains open in order that Environmental Protection can continue to operate with appropriate Covid measures in place.
- 3.6 The impact of Covid-19 and the national and local restrictions have been reported via the Reset strand, one of the three strands (Reset, Reassure and Renew) set up as part of the Council's Covid-19 Recovery Plan, and managed and monitored by the Recovery Leads Group including the Chief Executive, Directors and Acting Head of Community Partnerships.
- 3.7 The Covid-19 Action Group was formed in response to the second national lockdown in November 2020. The group comprises of Officers from Community Partnerships, Leisure, Watersmeet, Regulatory Services, Communications and the Customer Service Centre. Officers will be coordinating tasks across the different services, utilising specific skillsets of team members in response to the needs of the local community.
- 3.8 Work continues with Hertfordshire County Council, Herts Help and Watford and Three Rivers Trust to support those most vulnerable, isolated and clinically extremely vulnerable to access food, prescriptions and wellbeing support throughout the tiers and now in lockdown.
- 3.9 Four Covid Marshals have been employed to engage with, and encourage general public compliance with Covid rules and restrictions focusing on parks, open spaces and supermarkets across the district.
- 3.10 Appendix 1 - Impact of Restrictions on Services sets out in greater detail the impact each Tier level and the latest National Lockdown have on the Council's services. Several services have no change and are listed as BAU (business as usual), with the exception that the majority of Officers are working from home.

4 Leisure & Landscapes

- 4.1 In line with current government guidance, play areas, parks and open spaces, carparks and public toilets within our parks remain open during the lockdown. However tennis courts, mutli-use games areas (MUGAS) and outdoor gyms had to close.
- 4.2 Skate parks were closed on 8 January following clarification on the government guidance.
- 4.3 Arts on Prescription can continue under current restrictions as is classified as a support group. The next programme is planned to start in March 2021.

- 4.4 All other organised leisure activities remains on hold during lockdown, with the intention of restarting these once restrictions allow.
- 4.5 Countryside Management Service have suspended their county-wide volunteering programmes and Hertfordshire Health Walks. Volunteering and friends of working groups' activities are also suspended across the district through the lockdown.
- 4.6 Site tree inspections are continuing particularly around potential issues such as dangerous trees.

5 Leisure Management Contract (SLM)

- 5.1 During Tier 2 the Leisure Centres and Golf course were open with social distancing measures in place. On entering Tier 3 on 16 December group adult activity and classes were stopped, and on entering Tier 4 the Leisure Centres were closed. Rickmansworth Golf Course remained open for '2 ball' rounds and subsequently closed on entering the National Lockdown on 5 January 2021. The Leisure Centres and Golf course intend to reopen when restrictions allow. The Council will continue to work closely with Sports and Leisure Management (SLM).

6 Watersmeet

- 6.1 During Tier 2 Watersmeet reopened on 7 December until 16 December with 'Covid Secure' measures in place and presented 2 films, 2 event cinema, one live show and one hire. Since entering Tier 3 on 16 December Watersmeet has remained closed. In line with the conditions of the Culture Recovery Fund grant, Watersmeet will reopen to the public as soon as restrictions allow. Watersmeet management will be submitting an application for a grant from the second round of the Culture Recovery Fund, which if successful will support the venue during the period 1 April-30 June 2021. Successful applicants will be notified by 31 March 2021.

7 Environmental Protection

- 7.1 On 6 January 2021 due to an increase in Covid cases within the workforce, depot sorting of litter bins was suspended and an operative moved to waste loading. A street cleanser driver has also been moved to be a waste collection driver and the number of agency waste loaders has been increased from 4 to 6. Budget implications are being reported via the Council's Budget Monitoring process.
- 7.2 Should the cases of Covid within the workforce increase further the following contingency plans are outlined below:
 - 7.2.1 Street Cleansing – we would intend to continue with the following services: Emptying all street bins, clean shop fronts and collecting textiles. The street cleansing department has two HGV drivers which could be utilised within the waste department if required.
 - 7.2.2 Grounds Maintenance – we would intend to continue with litter picking parks, emptying dog and litter bins, safety checking play equipment. The Grounds crew could collect the bulky waste collections if there is staff available.
 - 7.2.3 Waste Collection - at present we have 23 HGV drivers 2 Non HGV drivers and 34 loaders employed. To cover recycling / food, refuse / Garden waste collections we require a minimum of 20 HGV drivers, 1 non HGV driver and 30 loaders so falling below these numbers would require agency staff if available.

- 7.3 Falling below the numbers set out above would require a reduction in service. The priorities below sets out a stepped approach:
- 7.3.1 Step 1 - Stop collecting Garden waste and do alternative collections with recycling / food and refuse. Minimum Staff required: 12 HGV Drivers, 1 non HGV driver, 19 Loaders, 13 Vehicles.
- 7.3.2 Step 2 - Stop collecting Garden waste and do alternative collections with recycling and refuse with food going in to refuse. Minimum Staff required: 8 Drivers, 1 non HGV driver, 17 Loaders, 9 Vehicles.
- 7.3.3 Step 3 - All waste collected weekly as refuse using 240lt recycling bin. Minimum Staff required: 8 Drivers, 1 non HGV driver, 17 Loaders, 9 vehicles.
- 7.4 Other potential issues include vehicle maintenance, as we require 21 lorries per day. With 4 vehicle maintenance contractors, Plantec (the Council's maintenance contractor) are presently operating a two on two off rota and any loss of fitters would put a big strain on the service.
- 7.5 Consideration would need to be made to the charging of garden waste if we had to temporarily stop the service.
- 7.6 If there were staffing or vehicle maintenance issues that were limited to 1 or 2 days we would look to stop trade collections temporarily (and catch up via overtime) to assist on the main domestic rounds.
- 7.7 In Tier 4 adult football was suspended, although youth football could continue. In line with government guidance all football has been suspended during the third lockdown. The season can be extended, for a limited time only, and therefore there may be pitch fee financial implications, which would be reported via the Council's Budget Monitoring process.

8 Community Partnerships

- 8.1 Anti-Social Behaviour – whilst Three Rivers was in Tier 2, 3 and 4, doorstep visits took place as required but no indoor visits took place unless required due to high risk and accompanied by the police. Since the start of the National Lockdown on 5 January doorstep visits have stopped.
- 8.2 Family Intervention – during Tiers 2-4, visits took place in emergencies only. Since 5 January no visits taking place and utilising Zoom and Facetime for sessions. In emergencies IFST and Herts County Council will do doorstep visits. The majority of children continue to be in school as are classed as vulnerable.
- 8.3 Community Support Service/Domestic Abuse – during Tiers 2-4, support was being provided online where appropriate and face to face if necessary. During the current National Lockdown all indoor visits in centres and homes has stopped, with essential face to face contact taking place outside e.g. to deliver medication.

9 Regulatory Services

- 9.1 The majority of services continued business as usual during Tiers 2-4, with the exception of non-essential site visits which ceased when Three Rivers entered Tier 4 on 20 December 2020.

- 9.2 Since the start of the National Lockdown on 5 January 2021 only urgent and essential site visits (including priority enforcement visits) are continuing providing the site is risk assessed.
- 9.3 There is continued cessation of knowledge tests for new taxi drivers with ongoing review of the online provision.
- 9.4 Suspension of parking enforcement is continuing throughout the National lockdown.
- 9.5 Environmental Health Officers, provided by WBC on behalf of TRDC, continue to engage with businesses across the District with a current focus on supermarkets. Four Covid marshals, funded from Central Government resources, continue to cover the District (7 days a week/12 hours a day) engaging and educating the public and assisting with the monitoring of businesses. A current focus is on TRDCs parks and open spaces. Additional marshal resources are to be employed to assist in the management of the closure of the Croxley Green skate park. Funding has also been provided for Covid response Officers to support enhanced contact tracing across the County. TRDC will have 3 Officers, these are currently being recruited.

10 Housing Services

- 10.1 The majority of the service continues business as usual including rough sleeper visits. Home visits have stopped with doorstep visits taking place only when essential.

11 Electoral Services

- 11.1 The majority of Electoral Services continue business as usual, although it is currently unknown what impact the National Lockdown will have on May 2021 elections.

12 Revenues & Benefits

- 12.1 The majority of the service delivery continues business as usual, with the additional workload of processing grants.

13 Legal & Democratic Services

- 13.1 There continues to be increased legislation to interpret and courts remain open through all Tiers and the National Lockdown.

14 Finance

- 14.1 The majority of the Finance service has continued business as usual throughout. However the Fraud team are unable to conduct face to face interviews impacting on the recovery of fraudulent payments. A number of staff have continued to support the Revenue & Benefits team with grant payments.

15 Customer Services Centre, Economic & Sustainable Development, Corporate Services, Human Resources, Facilities, Property Services & ICT

- 15.1 The above services have had no additional impact on service delivery as a result of the Tier system and current National Lockdown.

16 Three Rivers House & CAB

16.1 Three Rivers House is only open for staff where the work cannot be done at home. Hours are limited to 8.30am to 4pm weekdays only. Face to face meetings are currently not taking place.

16.2 The building remains open for Police, enforcement officers, Covid Marshalls and CAB access.

16.3 Basing House is still in use by Rivertech, however the Museum remains closed.

17 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

17.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy.

17.2 There may be budget implications and these are being assessed via Budget Monitoring and reported to Policy and Resources Committee.

18 Financial Implications

18.1 (See paragraph 17.2 above).

19 Legal Implications

19.1 The Council has acted and continues to act in accordance with Covid-19 related Legislation and guidance in the suspension and restoration of its various services.

20 Equal Opportunities Implications

20.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	No
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	No

21 Staffing Implications

21.1 Staff resources are being monitored regularly with several secondments and redeployments in place to support priority services. The Covid-19 Action Group (see section 3.7 above) has been set up to allocate specific tasks to individuals based on skillset as part of the Council's response to local and national restrictions.

22 Environmental Implications

22.1 None Specific

23 Community Safety Implications

23.1 None Specific

24 Public Health Implications

- 24.1 The higher Tiers restrictions and National Lockdown has put a number of restrictions in place, which means that the priority 4 and 5 activities (predominantly Leisure activities) continue to remain on hold.
- 24.2 The higher levels of the Tier system (i.e. Tiers 3 and 4) and the current National Lockdown is likely to have a number of adverse effects on the local community, including those suffering with mental health issues, a potential rise in Domestic Abuse and those on low incomes or who may have been made redundant recently as well as a negative effect on physical health and wellbeing.
- 24.3 The Covid-19 Action Group and Designated Safeguarding Leads will continue to work with partners to support those most in need and make any referrals into key services.
- 24.4 Arts on Prescription will continue to be delivered to support those suffering from mental health issues and the Three Rivers Leisure Website will be updated with advice and guidance on how people can stay both mentally and physically active during the lock down period.

25 Customer Services Centre Implications

- 25.1 None Specific

26 Communications and Website Implications

- 26.1 Website updates and communications will take place accordingly as the Council's service delivery is impacted.

27 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 27.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/service/risk-management>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.
- 27.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Corporate Framework. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
Description of the risk	What happens if the risk was to occur	List control measures that are, or could be put in place	How will the risk be dealt with *	Enter the residual risk score
Services are not fully or	Three Rivers residents do not receive full or partial	Priorities agreed and service restoration	Risk Assessments and Government	4

partially restored.	services following the covid-19 pandemic.	takes place as soon as possible.	guidance will be followed and services restored.	
Negative Public Perception on Council Services	Satisfaction ratings within the Council will reduce and the number of complaints may increase	Priorities agreed and service restoration takes place as soon as possible.	Risk Assessments and Government guidance will be followed and services restored.	4
Spread of COVID-19 within services restored	Negative publicity and further spread of the illness	Risk assessments completed and procedures implemented in line with Government guidance.	Responsible officers will complete risk assessments and procedures and ensure compliance.	4

Likelihood Very Likely ----- Remote	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
	Impact Low -----> Unacceptable			

Impact Score

- 4 (Catastrophic)
- 3 (Critical)
- 2 (Significant)
- 1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

- 4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
- 3 (Likely (21-79%))
- 2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
- 1 (Remote (≤5%))

28 Recommendation

28.1 That Policy & Resources Committee agrees the approach set out in the Covid-19 Restrictions Impact on Services Update Report for adoption.

Report prepared by:

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Data Quality

Data checked by: Rebecca Young, Acting Head of Community Partnerships

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	✓
3	High	

Background Papers

1. *Service Restoration Report* – 21 July 2020 Covid-19 Response Sub-committee
2. *Service Restoration Priorities Report* – 3 September 2020 Covid-19 Response Sub-committee
3. *Service Restoration Priority Ratings 4 and 5 Report* – 5 October 2020 Covid-19 Response Sub-committee
4. *Service Priority General Update Report & Watersmeet Reopen Report* – 16 November 2020 Covid-19 Response Sub-committee

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

1. Impact of Covid-19 Restrictions on Services