

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	City Growth and Resources Committee
DATE	28 October 2020
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Socio-Economic Rescue Plan Update
REPORT NUMBER	COM/20/179
DIRECTOR	
CHIEF OFFICER	Richard Sweetnam
REPORT AUTHOR	Ishbel Grieg
TERMS OF REFERENCE	3.3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress towards delivery of the Socio-Economic Rescue Plan 2020/21.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Notes that the Socio-Economic Rescue Plan is in implementation phase and the updates on progress provided via the progress tracker (Appendix 1);
- 2.2 Notes the additional three interventions added to the Plan to support Actions 1.5, 2.4 and 2.5 (Business Theme) and Action 3.1 (Place Theme) to support the tourism, leisure and hospitality sector which will be met from the existing approved budget; and
- 2.3 Notes the proposed closing date for the Hospitality Business Support Fund.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Socio-Economic Rescue Plan 2020/2021 was approved by Urgent Business Committee (COM/20/098) on 30 June 2020 and by the Community Planning Aberdeen Board on 01 July 2020.
- 3.2 An Implementation Group was formed to oversee the delivery of actions across the Business, People and Place themes. The Implementation Group met on 24 July, 17 August, 14 September and 12 October and will continue to meet monthly.
- 3.3 The Implementation Group is attended by officers of ACC and representatives of CFINE, FSB, AGCC, VisitAberdeenshire, Scottish Enterprise, Business

Gateway, Skills Development Scotland, ACVO, Aberdeen Inspired, NESCOL and Culture Aberdeen.

- 3.4 It was agreed that for each of the three themes, an officer of the Council would coordinate the implementation of each action across partners for each of the ‘Business’, ‘People’ and ‘Place’ themes.

4. PROGRESS

- 4.1 There are a total of 75 actions in the plan, the status of these actions as at October 2020 is:

Complete ¹	4
On track (green)	65
Being monitored (amber)	2
Needs intervention (red)	1
Closed ¹	3
	75

- 4.2 Within the business and place themes, there is a focus on measures to increase footfall and spend in the city centre and wider area. In response to demand from business as a result of the second and local lockdown in the city centre, an additional two interventions have been added to support and meet the objectives of Action 1.5 (Business Theme) and Action 3.1 (Place Theme) to support the tourism, leisure and hospitality sector:

- (i) Support to Aberdeen Inspired to extend restaurant week beyond the business improvement district (BID) area itself; and
- (ii) Support to Aberdeen Inspired and the newly formed Hospitality Group to support the development of an Aberdeen Gift Card. To support local businesses in the city centre, purchasers of the gift card would preload the cards with a value that could be redeemed in participating shops, restaurants, cultural venues or attractions.

- 4.3 The objectives of these interventions are to:

- Support the continued recovery of the sector by increasing footfall in participating businesses;
- Support promotion of the city as a safe and welcoming place to visit and reassure the public that restaurants are open and safe to visit;
- Increase turnover in participating businesses by encouraging additional use of restaurants;
- Promote the hospitality sector on a dedicated platform using mainly social media and digital channels; and
- Create a fun, engaging event for residents and visitors to Aberdeen

¹ Actions classified as complete are now included in ‘business as usual’ service offerings. Actions which are closed are not to be progressed as part of this action plan as they may be delivered under existing business plans.

- 4.4 To deliver these interventions, the Rescue Plan Implementation Group has allocated £9,000 from the budget to support the extension to Restaurant Week; and a further £15,000 for the implementation of the Aberdeen Gift Card.
- 4.5 An additional intervention has also been added to support the delivery of Actions 2.4 and 2.5 (Business Theme) and Action 3.1 (Place Theme) to support the tourism, leisure and hospitality sector:
- (i) Support to Aberdeen Inspired and the newly formed Hospitality Group with the development of a Check-In System App, adapted specifically for Covid-19 Test and Protect.
- 4.6 The objectives of this intervention are:
- Guaranteed genuine check in details of everyone entering a premises;
 - Instant access for NHS Test and Protect in the event of an outbreak;
 - Fast track customer entry to a premises;
 - Ability to set restrictions in line with local and national guidelines, including limiting the number of premises visited;
 - Allows health and safety messages or rule changes to be regularly sent out; and
 - Allows easy, real time reporting
- 4.7 The cost of this intervention is £25,000, of which £15,000 has been allocated from the socio-economic rescue plan budget to support this app development, on the condition that Aberdeen Inspired provides the other £10,000.
- 4.8 Separate to the delivery of the Rescue Plan, officers have been supporting the delivery of a new business support fund in response to the second local lockdown. This £1m fund provides grants of between £1,000 - £1,500 (tiered to rateable value) to hospitality businesses forced to close due to the regulations enforced on the 5th August. Alongside the support for the hospitality sector, a Discretionary Fund has been providing support to business premises that remained open but have seen a downturn in trade due to restrictions impacting footfall and customer ability to travel to attend appointments or bookings.
- 4.9 Following the announcement of the new Coronavirus Business Closure Fund to provide support between £2,000 - £3,000 for businesses forced to close in the 5 affected health board areas as off the 9th October, officers reached an agreement with Scottish Government officials to increase the general fund grants to the same level, back dating payments to those grant recipients who are eligible. This uplift is resourced through the existing £1m commitment from Scottish Government.
- 4.10 As of 5pm 15th October, there has been 420 applications to the Fund, 324 grants approved to a value of £362,000 across the two schemes. A further £193,000 will be allocated to General Fund recipients to bring their grants up to £2,000-£3,000 as applicable. A condition of the increase is bringing the general fund to a close to new applications at 5pm 19th October. It is advisable at this juncture, as the number of applications submitted is in decline, that a closing date of Monday 2nd November is set for the Discretionary Fund. This

closing date will be promoted through a press release and social media channels.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 At the 30 June meeting, Urgent Business Committee approved a budget of £141,000 that would be available to support the pump priming of any actions.
- 5.2 The three additional interventions outlined in 4.2 and 4.5 will be met from the £141,000 budget approved by Urgent Business Committee.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Strategic Risk	Covid-19, oil and gas downturn, and the impact of Brexit could last longer than anticipated Further local or national lockdown measures need to be re-introduced depending on the success of progressing across the Four Phased Approach	M M	The formation of the Implementation Group and certain actions within the Plan may mitigate against these risks. UK and Scottish Government support in progressing strategic actions.
Compliance	The Council is not complying with physical distancing and hygiene measures	L	Information, advice and guidance and staff training will be given when Beach Ballroom and AAGM tourism assets are safe to open Advance information and guidance for event attendees and plan for visits.

Category	Risk	Low (L) Medium (M) High (H)	Mitigation
Operational	Resources within the City Growth and supporting clusters are not sufficient to respond Health and Safety of staff, users and the public; Council premises and social distancing	M	Information, advice and guidance and staff training will be given when Beach Ballroom and AAGM assets are safe to open Home working for staff wherever possible, changes to offices to accommodate physical distancing
Financial	Budget pressures - costs of developing/ implementing actions. Lack of funding mechanisms to implement actions.	M	Repurposing of existing budgets Most actions have been designed to be delivered within existing staffing resources Budget allocated to support the implementation of the Socio-Economic Rescue Plan
Reputational	Failure to respond to the crisis and delaying a response	L	This Plan and Governance provides the Council with an opportunity to lead a coordinated city-wide response

8. OUTCOMES

<u>COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN</u>	
	Impact of Report
Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement	The proposals within this report support the delivery of following Policy Statement objectives – economy; people and place in support of the Regional Economic Strategy and the LOIP. The employability responses in particular align to existing priorities around Developing the Young Workforce. The Place actions are all contributing to active travel and transport plans.
Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan	

Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes	The proposals aim to provide as much support to businesses in the immediate response to Covid-19 and to mitigate where possible against permanent job losses in the city. They are therefore unlikely to generate increased employment in support of the LOIP target to grow jobs by 10% in priority sectors.
Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes	The proposals aim to support health and wellbeing outcomes in the Children & Young people and Adult stretch outcomes.
Prosperous Place Stretch Outcomes	The proposals support the poverty and active travel stretch outcomes
Regional and City Strategies	The Socio-Economic Action Plan supports activities to support business and inclusive economic growth in the Regional Economic Strategy and Regional Skills Strategy, and the Local Development Plan ‘triple aims’ of economic sustainability, public health priorities and the LOIP.
UK and Scottish Legislative and Policy Programmes	The report aligns to the Scottish Government’s Covid-19 emergency legislation and the Phased Approach to post-lockdown.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Impact Assessment	Not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Council Urgent Business Committee – Socio-Economic Rescue Plan 2020/2021 - COM/20/098, 30 June 2020

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – Socio-Economic Rescue Plan Tracker

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