



<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> October 2021</b>
<b>Part:</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>If Part II, reason:</b>	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>COVID-19 IMPACT PAPER</b>
<b>Contact:</b>	<p>Andrew Williams, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate &amp; Contracted Services</p> <p>Author/Responsible Officer:</p> <p>Claire Hamilton, Chief Executive</p> <p>James Deane, Corporate Director (Finance and Operations)</p> <p>Mark Gaynor, Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration)</p> <p>Mark Brookes, Assistant Director (Corporate &amp; Contracted Services)</p>
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To provide Cabinet with an update on the projected financial impact of Covid-19.</li> <li>2. To highlight the work and support the Council has been carrying out across service areas in relation to Covid-19.</li> </ol>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That Cabinet receives and notes:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The projected financial impact of Covid-19 for 2021/22 as set out in section 1.</li> <li>(b) The service updates provided in section 2.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>Corporate objectives:</b>	The financial impact and the Council's response to Covid-19 will impact all of the Council's Corporate Objectives.
<b>Implications:</b>	<u>Financial</u>

<p>'Value for money' implications</p>	<p>Financial Implications are covered in section 1.</p> <p><u>Value for money</u></p> <p>Covid-19 will have various value for money implications which will be assessed as proposals develop in response to the issues raised.</p> <p>The Council's initial response focused on continuity of service provision and support for key groups and organisations – the measures implemented are aimed at assisting the recovery and minimising the long terms impacts as much as possible.</p>
<p>Risk implications</p>	<p>Due to the significant impact of Covid-19, a new strategic risk has been entered into the Council's Strategic Risk Register.</p>
<p>Community Impact Assessment</p>	<p>The Council's response to date has been to ensure minimal service disruption to the community. The recovery phase of the Council's response is now being developed, as highlighted in the report, and the Council will regularly assess the impact of Covid-19 on the community to ensure there is a balanced and effective response in place.</p>
<p>Health and safety Implications</p>	<p>The Council has acted promptly and put in place appropriate measures to ensure that staff, Councillors and the community are protected from Covid-19 whilst trying to ensure minimal service disruption. This will continue to be assessed through the recovery stages.</p>
<p>Monitoring Officer/ S.151 Officer Comments</p>	<p><u>Monitoring Officer comments</u></p> <p>The Monitoring Officer continues to monitor the key issues raised by legislative changes and relevant government guidance to ensure that effective policies and procedures are in place to assist services to continue to deliver during the pandemic and subsequent recovery phase.</p> <p><u>Deputy S151 Officer comments</u></p> <p>The Financial Implications section of the report has been written by the Deputy S151 officer and will continue to be monitored as actual costs become clearer. Members will be regularly updated on the financial implications of Covid-19 as they develop.</p>
<p>Consultees:</p>	<p>Leader of the Council, Councillor Andrew Williams</p>
<p>Background papers:</p>	<p>Coronavirus Covid-19: Guidance for Local Government</p> <p>Procurement Policy Note 02/20 – Supplier Relief due to Covid-19</p>
<p>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</p>	<p>None</p>

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 1.1 This section provides an update on Covid-related financial pressures. It does not include the business-as-usual pressures that emerge over the course of the year. These will continue to be reported to Members through the scheduled Budget Monitoring reports.
- 1.2 The forecasts in this report have been updated to reflect five months' worth of current year data, as well as the most recent announcements from Government on the financial support that will be provided to councils over the course of the year.
- 1.3 As at the end of August, DBC is forecast to face a net General Fund pressure in the current financial year of around £0.7m. This is net of the additional £2.1m of approved funding from reserves for Covid related issues.

This is a net position, incorporating the following:

- £0.4m additional expenditure (see paragraph 1.13)
- £0.8m reduced income (see paragraphs 1.7 – 1.12)

Offset by:

- Government grants to offset expenditure pressure of £250k
- Income Guarantee Scheme for Quarter 1 of £250k

- 1.4 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2021 recommended by Cabinet to Council at its September meeting proposes continuing with the strategy proposed in 2020 of managing Covid-related pressures as a time-limited pressure, distinct from the underlying savings challenges the Council faces to ensure it remains sustainable over the medium-term. This strategy relies on the use of the earmarked Economic Recovery Reserve, although ensuring the continuation of Council services, will inevitably reduce the capacity of the Council to deliver the ambitions for which the reserves were originally earmarked. In light of the significant and fast-changing budgetary implications of Covid, the MTFS is being kept under constant review and will be reported back to Members.
- 1.5 Falling collection rates for both Council Tax and Business Rates could create funding issues in future years. However, the technicalities of these funding streams means that the current year's budget will not be affected.
- 1.6 The HRA is currently forecasting a break-even position. The nature of the HRA's budget, is that significant elements of the budget relate to construction and maintenance spend, a sector of the economy that at present is struggling to deliver to both time schedules and cost profiles; this is being monitored closely.

### **Pressure on General Fund income streams**

- 1.7 The most significant financial threat in the medium term continues to be lost income for Council services. The table below shows the latest year-end forecasts for key affected income streams. It should be noted that these projections could alter dramatically over the remainder of the year depending on wider economic factors that cannot be estimated within any certainty and are beyond the Council's control, e.g. the impact of the end of furlough and government-led business support and any potential for future national or local restrictions/lockdowns linked to Covid.

1.8 The table below provides an update on the Council's key income streams that are still impacted by Covid in 21/22.

Income stream	Budget	August Forecast	Budgeted Pressure	Commentary
Investment Property	£4.4m	£4.7m	-£0.3m	There is still uncertainty over the commercial portfolio as the economy re opens and the retail sector looks to recover. At P5 billing levels are close to "normal" but businesses are still being uncertain as to future trading levels, especially in and around town centres. As at the end of Period 5 income collection rates are at 76%, this is 5% up year on year and circa 10% down on pre Covid levels. At present the projection is to achieve a surplus of circa 300k, 6% better than budget.
Car Parking	£2.8m	£2.3m	£0.5m	Car parking income is still being affected by restrictions and lower footfall numbers. April was 27% down on budget, May -20%, June -22% and July 20% down. This projection assumes that there is a steady improvement as the year goes on to be 10% down by year-end.
Commercial Waste	£900k	£800km	£0.1m	Commercial waste is projected to be circa 22% down on budgeted levels. Businesses closed at the start of the year, and unsettled trading patterns have reduced demand, but this is slowly beginning to pick up.
Temporary Accommodation	£950k	£900k	£0.05m	Temporary Accommodation income - Covid Restrictions on occupancy of the Council's hostels due to Covid has reduced projected rental income by £50k.
Waste (General and Recyclables)	£940k	£820k	£0.12m	A reduction in AFM income of £260k offset by an increase in recycling credits of £140k, see para 1.10-1.12
Civic/Sports/APG hire	£0.3m	£0.25	£0.05m	Income continues to be hit by social distancing. In 20/21 these services were 50% down on budget and in 21/22 this has improved to circa 30% down on budget.
Investment Income	£0.25m	£0	£0.25m	The Council invests cash balances as part of standard treasury management practices, the return on these investments is averaging circa 0.1% in 21/22 as opposed to 0.8% prior to Covid.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£12.8m</b>	<b>£12.0m</b>	<b>£0.8m</b>	

1.9 The income streams most exposed to potentially significant changes are; Investment Property and Car parking which together comprise £7.2m of the Council's overall income. The commercial rental income is under significant scrutiny at present with the commercial property sector under continued strain as the economy re-opens and the retail sector re-assesses its future strategy. As at period 5, performance is strong, up 6% on budgeted levels. This budget is supported by a £1m contribution from the ERR in year to compensate for the impact of Covid, so although in year budgetary

performance is strong compared to pre Covid levels the service is still £0.7m down on 'normal' trading levels. The car parking income is supported by the government's income protection scheme for the 1st quarter of 21/22, but demand at present is circa 20% down on budgeted expectations. The risk of significant swings within the current year reduces with each month that passes where the expected recession has not taken effect.

- 1.10 One effect of lockdown has been the increased waste generated across the entire county, which has increased HCC's disposal costs and therefore reduced AFM payments.
- 1.11 As a result of this, the Council now faces a further £260k income pressure. Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) has advised that its forecast Alternative Financial model (AFM) payment to DBC of c£260k is now likely to reduce to almost £0. The AFM is used by HCC to reward district councils for reducing its landfill disposal costs: effectively, the fewer tonnes of landfill waste that HCC needs to dispose of, the more it avoids disposal costs, and the greater the AFM payments it makes to districts. The final payment amount will be determined at year-end, and the current forecast must be considered highly vulnerable.
- 1.12 This loss of AFM income is slightly offset by a £140k increase in recycling credits due to the increased tonnage of recyclable material the Council is collecting and selling.

## Pressure on General Fund expenditure

- 1.13 The areas forecasting significant expenditure pressure remain the same as those reported in 20/21. The overall expenditure pressure is c.£430k, and at present, the total remains in excess of the £250k of Government grant funding received. The updated figures are as below:

Expenditure Type	Pressure	Commentary
Waste Services	£300k	A combination of factors created by the Covid response have impacted on the cost of delivering the Waste Service these include; Requirement for additional rural rounds to meet social distancing requirements, congested streets from increased home working resulting in demand for additional mop up rounds, increased agency requirements due to isolation and social distancing restrictions, additional trucks being hired to cope with increased tonnages.
Temporary Accommodation	£130k	A combination of reduced capacity due to social distancing and increased demand/turnover for those properties being used due to the Covid Bill. This has resulted in increased maintenance costs and increased vacant property hostel costs.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£430k</b>	

## Pressure on Council Tax collection

- 1.14 At the end of August, year-on-year collection rates were up 0.9% but down 0.9% on pre pandemic levels (19/20), with 47.1% of the annual total having been collected, compared to 46.2% at the same stage last year. This has been a consistent performance throughout 21/22, with each period in 21/22 performing between 0.8 and 1% better year on year. The final year-end position will depend on several items including the extent of the impact of the move from 10 to 12 monthly payments and the impact of the end of furlough and government business support on household incomes.
- 1.15 The mechanics of the Council Tax Collection Fund mean that a short-fall in the current year collection rate will not result in a budgetary pressure for the Council until next financial year.

## Pressure on Business Rates collection

- 1.16 From a budgetary perspective, DBC will not be impacted in the current financial year by falling collection rates. This is because the grant DBC receives from Government is based on 'assessment of need', with a maximum of 7.5% of the grant at risk if Business Rates collection falls below a baseline level. The at-risk element is based on the previous year, so any contraction of the local economy won't impact DBC until next financial year. Members will be kept updated on the emerging position.

## Summary of General Fund budgetary position and potential mitigations

- 1.17 Based on the forecasts in this report, DBC faces a potential in-year Covid-related budgetary pressure of:
- |                       |       |
|-----------------------|-------|
| Increased expenditure | £0.4m |
|-----------------------|-------|

Income pressure	£0.8m
Less additional Government grants	<u>(£0.5m)</u>
<b>Net budgetary pressure</b>	<b>£ 0.7m</b>

- 1.18 The Budget approved by Cabinet in February 2021 recommended a strategy of managing Covid-related pressures through the use of earmarked reserves. This enables the protection of Council services, but is unavoidably at the expense of the future projects the reserves were created to support, (in some cases to finance schemes which are fundamental to meeting future savings requirements).
- 1.19 As a result of this strategy the 21/22 Base budget is supported by £2.1m of Economic Recovery Reserve (ERR) draw downs, £1.5m to support 21/22 budgeted income reductions and £0.6m to support the Leisure service.
- 1.20 The ERR capacity to support in year Covid Financial Pressures in 21/22 of £0.7m has now been reached. Any further additional financial pressures related to Covid in 21/22 will need alternative financial support or funding.

### **Housing Revenue Account**

- 1.21 As at the end August, the Covid-related impact on the HRA is a balanced position. The threat to the HRA is significantly lower than the General Fund, as any delays to rental income are likely to be short term whilst tenants transfer to Universal Credit.

## **2 RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY SUPPORT**

- 2.1 Members will note that this is the fourth update report on the Council's response to Covid-19 and this part of the report will highlight some of key work and support that the Council has provided across its various services to ensure continuity of service and recovery resilience.

### **Managing the pandemic**

#### ***Linkages to Wider Local Resilience Forum Recovery Structure***

- 2.2 In respect of the current pandemic, a Hertfordshire wide Recovery Coordinating Group (RCG) has been established. The RCG is a multi-agency officer group with clear linkages and reporting lines to the Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG). The Covid-19 Health Protection Board also meets weekly to work on implementation of the Covid-19 Outbreak Plan, this has representation from the SCG, RCG, County, Public Health England, Police, CCG and Health Service. There are a number of specific cells coordinating operational activity and supporting these Groups and Boards.
- 2.3 The Dacorum incident and recovery continues to be managed by the Incident Management Team (IMT) which has been managing the pandemic to date and meets at least once a week to review all key issues. Dacorum has also instigated a Covid Recovery Group to focus on recovery work for the Council's activities, as well as the wider borough.
- 2.4 There is continued and effective liaison between work streams at county and borough levels and daily updates are received from the Health Protection Board including infection rates for the county and borough, which enables targeted and coordinated work to be undertaken to manage any local outbreaks.

- 2.5 The Environmental and Community Protection team continues to be engaged in local Track and Trace, and dealing with complaints and requests for advice surrounding businesses' Covid Secure Status. From 1st December 2020, a local Dacorum Track and Trace call centre and contact tracing service was operated from within the Environmental and Community Protection Team with initial numbers of 50 cases per week linking into the County and National schemes. Case numbers have been around 115 per week, which has put extreme pressure on the wider team. The Local Zero system of contact tracing had to be suspended mid-July and the national test and trace system had to carry out some of the initial investigations. In practice this has not relieved much pressure on the team due to a decrease in co-operation with Test and Trace generally.
- 2.6 The Team has visited 28 workplaces with multiple cases, to check Covid compliance and ensure close workplace contacts of the cases have also been isolating, in a bid to halt the spread of the disease in the Dacorum area. Cases have been located across the Borough. The cases are predominantly with younger adults, although cases now appear to have reached a plateau.
- 2.7 The Team has also been involved in the health, safety and resilience plans of the Council, through the work around risk assessments and controls, as well as operationally leading on the setting up of a quarantine hotel within the Borough.

## Recovery

- 2.8 With the planning of lifting of lockdown restrictions imminent, the Council's IMT was clear that it was essential to have the right approach to Recovery in place and, as a result, it was proposed that the Covid Recovery Management Team (CRMT) would be established and led by Group Managers for Strategic Housing and Strategic Planning & Regeneration. CRMT recognised the importance of ensuring that Recovery in the borough was aligned with the approach across the county and that it was not about regeneration or renewal activity, but a co-ordination and focus of activity across the organisation and borough to enable a return to business as usual.
- 2.9 On 5 August, CRMT held a workshop to draft the terms of reference for the Recovery group and to identify key activity to formulate the Council's action plan. CRMT's identified vision for Recovery is outlined below and in the terms of reference at **Appendix 1**.
- We work collectively to maximise health, economic and social outcomes and enable Dacorum to return to business as usual.
  - We must have the right approach to recovery in place and align to the work being carried out at County level.
  - The Council needs to continue to protect the residents and support community partners and businesses of Dacorum through provision of dedicated Covid19 Recovery communications and support.
  - The Council will ensure long term support and development of initiatives are implemented to reduce impact on the community and businesses

- 2.10 A further session was held with Group Managers on 12 August to refine the action plan in advance of briefing IMT on 16 August. CRMT outlined the proposed approach to Recovery across the Dacorum borough and shared at **Appendix 2** Dacorum's Recovery Plan and approach, which was supported by IMT.

## **Support to Communities**

- 2.11 Residents in Dacorum continue to experience a number of pressures as a consequence of Covid-19. Officers continue to liaise with community and charitable organisations who are providing essential services to residents in the borough to assess the short, medium and long term impacts.
- 2.12 Organisations, such as Citizen Advice Dacorum (CAD), have compared the demand from Q1 in 2019 pre-pandemic to Q1 in 2021 to demonstrate the impact of the pandemic on the community's advice needs.
- 125% increase in relationship advice – including child maintenance queries and separation and divorce.
  - 160% increase in housing advice – including private sector, local authority and environmental and neighbour issues.
  - 270% increase in employment advice - including furlough, unemployment and welfare benefits.

The additional income provided by the Council and other funding streams has provided support to recruit new staff and to increase the size and skills sets of the volunteer team and increase the capacity of the Centre.

- 2.13 It is expected that demand for advice with employment issues will increase again next quarter as the Furlough Scheme is phased out over the coming months and employers are expected to make larger contributions to employee pay. This may also increase demand on advice on housing as a result of increased debts and ultimately, housing issues for these clients.
- 2.14 The new mandatory scheme “breathing space” which was implemented in May 2021, gives people temporary protection from most types of debt collection whilst they take action to get on top of their debts and this support can be applied for once in a 12 month period. CAD and DBC officers have worked with DWP colleagues and the Insolvency Service to implement this system and to ensure that all teams are trained to assist clients.
- 2.15 There continues to be a need to support residents' physical and mental health needs. In particular, there is a need to address isolation and loneliness, physical health issues from reluctance to access GP services and increased waiting lists for non-urgent treatment. Additionally, there is an increased need for mental health support for anxiety, depression and grief/bereavement. Over 1000 people have now been assisted to gain access to health and wellbeing support through the Healthy Hub and programs like The Virtual Wellness Festival as well as other activities developed through our sports and physical activities action plan, have been developed by DBC and partners to assist in this area.
- 2.16 In acknowledgement of the support provided to residents by the Voluntary and Community sector, DBC were successful in a bid for funding of £1,035,000 from the

Health Protection Board (HPB) on behalf of all Hertfordshire districts. DBC received £110,000 of this fund to provide support to local community groups to enable them to re-open and to cover bills and costs that would normally be funded through fundraising initiatives. The Covid Community Grant has so far allocated £34,375.00 to local partners and a further round is currently open, closing at the end of October 2021.

- 2.17 Covid-19 has increased health inequalities across our communities so partnerships between DBC, HCC and health colleagues have been created to focus on promoting access to covid vaccines. Following a successful grant application to the Health Protection Board, 3 x COVID Engagement Officers, who work with the GP Federation, and a COVID and Community Engagement Officer who works in the Community Partnership and Wellbeing Team were recruited.
- 2.18 These roles are working together with individual residents, community groups and leaders to encourage the uptake of vaccines. This is a relatively new project within Herts and is being closely monitored by other Local Authorities in Herts and across the Country, taking learning and best practice. A number of pop-up clinics have been planned through this project and a local delivery plan and strategy will set out the approach in Dacorum to targeting groups and areas where there is vaccine hesitancy. These roles may well result in being key for the COVID recovery process as health inequalities highlighted by the pandemic continue to be seen.

## **Leisure**

- 2.19 Members will be aware from previous reports that the pandemic has had a significant impact of the Leisure sector and its ability to generate revenue whilst it is incurring costs associated with staff and maintenance when they have been closed.
- 2.20 The Council's contract management team have worked closely with Everyone Active to ensure that the centres operate in a Covid secure manner whenever they have been able to open. The member base and weekly user numbers have seen a positive increase since re-opening in April 2021. Weekly user unique visits increased from 7,573 in the first week of April to 12,253 in the first week of August, although this is still some way short of the pre-covid number of circa 20,000 per week. Membership numbers have also been increasing but they are still 1255 less than the pre-covid membership levels (5,585 March 2020 to 4,330 August 2021).
- 2.21 Officers continue to meet Everyone Active on a monthly basis to review actual income and projections for the rest of this financial year and ahead into 2022/23. Further updates will be given to members as they become available through quarterly performance reports.

## **Support to Individuals**

- 2.22 Supported Housing Officers completed another round of face to face visits to all tenants following the last easing of lockdown measures on top of the regular contacts and only a handful of tenants wanted phone call contacts the majority now prefer face to face communication. Since then the officers are now based in schemes / onsite providing doorstep visits, actual visits and responding to emergencies as well as completing other compliance duties. Since the first lockdown, Supported Housing Officers have completed over 111,507 contacts and completed 1337 internal and external referrals to different support agencies. These have included social services, Age UK Dacorum, Community Mental Health Team, Hertfordshire Independent leaving

Services, GP surgeries etc.

- 2.23 The Supported Housing team recognises the impact Covid19 has had on vulnerable tenants and has prioritised working with local charities such as Age UK Dacorum, Community Action Dacorum and Let's Dance to provide organised activities and events in some of the communal lounges geared to enable the tenants the opportunity to get out and socialise in a safe environment and working to extend the variety of activities during out of hours and weekends. - at the moment the communal lounges are only opening for 2 days a week due to the shortage of staff in the cleaning team and the subsequent inability to maintain the twice a day minimum wipe down in key contact areas, but Housing Services is looking at alternative ways to mitigate the ongoing issue.
- 2.24 The Supported Housing team also had their annual Erosh accreditation review meeting last month where tenants and staff were interviewed and questioned on a number of issues including the support they have received during lockdown and the assessor has rated the service as outstanding.
- 2.25 Possession hearings are being heard again in court with the risk of eviction for a minority of those not engaging with the process. Judges are reviewing the impact of the pandemic on finances and wellbeing and are looking at the support offered to tenants prior to making any decisions. Evictions warrants will only be applied for in the most extreme cases where tenants have not engaged despite all efforts and where they have not adhered to a court judgement.
- 2.26 At the time of writing this report, there are currently 142 households in temporary accommodation and, whilst numbers occupying temporary accommodation have reduced due to proactive prevention and gaining access to suitable move on accommodation to relieve homelessness, approach numbers remain high. Below is the comparison of approaches to the service during 2021 for the last 3 months, compared with the same period in 2020 – this is a strong indication as to the impact that the pandemic has had in relation to the varying factors which impact housing status, the most common being: relationship breakdown, affordability/arrears, fleeing domestic abuse and loss of private sector accommodation.
- June 2021 - 349  
June 2020 – 275
- July 2021 - 278  
July 2020 – 180
- August 2021 – 282  
August 2020 - 172
- 2.27 The Council was successful in securing funding from three different sources via the MHCLG, the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP), Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) and Accommodation for Ex-Offenders Scheme (AEO).
- 2.28 Through NSAP funding, the Council has been able to work jointly with Hightown to repurpose an existing property into five units of shared accommodation. These placements come with tenancy sustainment support attached for up to two years and a move on plan into settled accommodation. Funding was awarded via the RSAP programme in August 2021 and the Strategic Housing Service is in liaison with the

Housing Development team to finalise proposals for the scheme, which is due to be submitted for planning consideration shortly. The proposal is for properties to be utilised for rough sleepers with low to medium support needs as move on accommodation, clients will be identified after undertaking a successful period of accommodation at the Elms Hostel. Funding via AEO has enabled the council to collaborate Emerging Futures to provide a Housing Navigator service for ex-offenders who have difficulty in obtaining accommodation. The above-mentioned projects are in addition to the council's statutory responsibilities and existing provision for homeless people, which supports our commitment to prevent and relieve homelessness in line with our Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.

- 2.29 The Tenancy Sustainment Team continues to give advice and support to tenants/applicants with additional or complex needs. In relation to Covid specifically the team is working on recovery phase and next steps, for some this will be around getting back out into the community for others it will be working towards financial stability. Case loads remain high but are more stable than in the last reporting period. Currently there are 483 open cases, with a further 12 on a waiting list.
- 2.30 The number of new cases remains steady and counterbalanced by the number of cases closed per month. The average number of live cases on any particular month stands at 65. Common complaints are still in relation to noise nuisance and cannabis use i.e. noxious smells. Both types of nuisance complaints could be attributed to the prolonged lockdown and/or isolation periods sanctioned on the general public earlier this year. As "normality" returns and children return to school, we would envisage that the number of noise complaints received will likely drop.

Since March for this year, the Tenancy Enforcement Officers have completed the following actions:

- Issued 24 Community Protection Notice Warnings
- Issued 5 x Community Protection Notices
- Issued 1 x Fixed Penalty Notice
- Served 6 X Notices of Seeking Possession
- Obtained 1 full closure order
- Obtained 1 outright possession order

In addition to this, there are four cases with Legal Services for possession proceedings.

### **Forum/staff occupied buildings**

- 2.31 Officers have been working on a New Ways of Working (NWOW) project to redesign the Forum office space to provide for a hybrid office/remote work solution for all staff. This will provide space and zones for officers who need to work in the Forum on a regular basis, together with flexible space for staff who need to choose the right location for the task in hand. Collaborative work zones will also be designed to provide space for staff and their teams to meet in a more informal setting for regular one to ones, team meetings or other forms of collaborative working. NWOW is planned to come into effect in the Forum at the end of October and to be rolled out across all Council office buildings in the coming months.

## **3 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 Members will note that this report comprehensively sets out the actions taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic during the last quarter. The report also summarises the financial impact on the Council as currently forecast.
- 3.2 Officers will keep under review any impact on service delivery and associated financial implications arising from the pandemic, particularly leading into the period of preparation for any impact resulting from winter pressures. Officers will continue to provide appropriate briefings and reports to Portfolio Holders and elected members on a regular basis.