WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL	WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET - 16 MARCH 2022
Report Number	Agenda Item 8
Subject	COVID 19: OXFORDSHIRE SYSTEM RECOVERY AND RENEWAL FRAMEWORK
Wards affected	All Wards
Accountable member	Cllr Michele Mead , Leader Email: Michele.mead@westoxon.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Giles Hughes Chief Executive Email: giles.hughes@westoxon.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	To approve the Oxfordshire System Recovery and Renewal Framework, as set out in Annex 1, as the key partnership document guiding joint programme planning beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic period.
Annexes	Annex A – Oxfordshire System Recovery and Renewal Framework
Recommendation/s	That Cabinet is recommended to:- a) Adopt the Oxfordshire System Recovery and Renewal Framework, as set out in Annex 1, as the key partnership document guiding joint programme planning beyond the COVID-19 Pandemic period; b) Delegate final revisions to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, as partnership organisations complete their engagement and decision-making processes.
Corporate priorities	
Key Decision	YES
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	Oxfordshire System Leaders Health Protection Board

1. BACKGROUND

1.1. Effective partnership working across Oxfordshire has been at the heart of the local system response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the national and local picture improves, system partners have developed a shared framework for Recovery and Renewal (see Annex 1). This document sets overarching common ambitions for the issues and themes that will be worked on together as organisations and the community learn from the pandemic. It aims to ensure that Oxfordshire is best placed to recover from the immediate impacts of the pandemic, to support the long-term renewal of communities and places, and enhance our joint impact on national and international challenges.

1.2. System partners have worked closely together since early in 2020 to deliver a joined-up response across the board spectrum of COVID-19 impact. Partners have developed joint structures to support those required to stay at home, to encourage and enforce adherence to COVID restrictions, to monitor and contain the spread of the virus and to maintain the continuity of essential services. Joint responses have managed the impact on health and social care services and worked closely with education providers. From later in 2020 and into 2021, joint activity delivered community testing and laterally the successful role out of the vaccination programme. Partnership interventions have also sought to address the secondary impacts of the pandemic for individuals, communities and businesses through joint work on community engagement, business support, financial hardship and economic recovery.

1.3. Throughout 2021 and early 2022, Oxfordshire's system-wide COVID-19 response has continued to focus on the immediate health impacts of the pandemic, containing outbreaks and minimising the transmission of the virus in the community. In line with the easing of most legal restrictions during the summer of 2021, system-partners revisited the long-term impact of COVID-19 and reviewed the shared focus of planning for recovery and renewal.

1.4. The pandemic has led to economic, community and service impact that has yet to be fully understood at the system level. However, it can clearly be seen that existing inequalities and service and community pressures have been amplified, with likely long-term impacts. As with many pre-existing challenges, the impact and effective responses will often lie across several agencies and sectors.

1.5. To coordinate and prioritise COVID and post-COVID activity, and prioritise resource allocation, partners agreed to develop a set of joint themes for the next phase in the pandemic period and to bring together shared system priorities and joint ambitions for recovery and renewal in an overarching framework.

1.6. This framework was initially drafted during late 2021 through engagement with system partners, drawing on priorities, impact analysis and community insight held within individual organisations and thematic partnerships. Progress was paused during December to allow partners to focus on the enhanced response to the Omicron variant and the framework is now being brought forward for formal adoption and incorporation into partnership planning for the new business year.

2. INTRODUCING THE FRAMEWORK

2.1. The intention of agreeing a joint framework is to provide a mechanism for driving systems working on renewal and an ongoing structure for collaboration. It will enable us to better coordinate how we recover from the impacts of COVID and implement changes in the light of what we have learnt for our communities, organisations and partnerships.

2.2. At the time of writing, the significant increase in infection rates related to the Omicron variant is waning. While service pressure in health and social care remains significant and the impact on educational settings remains high, system partners are stepping back from the period of most concern. Nevertheless, the potential for changes in the nature of the pandemic and for service disruption generated by the cumulative risks associated with COVID's direct and indirect impact remains, Therefore, while planning for the future, a level of COVID readiness will need to be maintained. Reflecting this position, the framework for recovery and renewal is arranged around three key aims:

- **Consolidating recovery and building resilience:**
  Protecting key services and keeping social life and the economy open by sustaining our system response to COVID-19 and working together on addressing new pressures. This includes changes to service delivery as well as ways of working eg. engagement with Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), businesses and key partners.

- **Addressing the unequal impact of COVID-19:**
  Proactively using qualitative and quantitative data and insight to identify the groups most impacted across a range of cross-cutting issues, beyond the immediate impact on health, and tackling impact with a focus on the total strengths and needs of individuals and families

- **Supporting renewal:**
  Identifying new approaches and activities underpinned by the lessons we have learnt to date, building Oxfordshire's resilience, not only against future waves of the pandemic but also in terms of economic and community resilience to wider societal challenges including climate change and ecological impacts.

2.3. Across the three themes, two cross cutting priorities are recognised as needing to inform recovery and renewal thinking across the county:

- **Climate change action**
  Championing climate action across the County as we work together to address climate change, build climate resilience and support nature recovery.

- **Tackling inequality**
  Driving equal access and delivery of support across all local communities, narrowing health, social and educational inequalities and tackling poverty.

2.4. The full framework document is available at Annex 1.

2.5.   This document is necessarily a start point for longer term planning. Its aim is to act as a bridge between current partnership COVID response, delivery and planning, and future longer-term planning across the partnership agenda. It seeks to bring together, rather than replace, existing county-wide plans and strategies and ensure that recovery and renewal activities are incorporated into the wider partnership context.

Next Steps

2.6.   The Oxfordshire COVID response system comprises health, local authority, education and community safety participants alongside representatives of strategic partnerships, including OxLEP. These partners connect to a broader network of key deliverers including schools, business, town and parish councils and the voluntary and community sector. Core system partners have agreed to adopt the joint Recovery and Renewal framework starting with local authorities, where recommendations to adopt the framework will be made to the relevant decision makers during March, 2022. Significant engagement with system partners has already taken place. However, where additions and revisions are requested through the decision-making process, this report recommends that agreement to a final published version is delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

3.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1.   Development of the Recovery and Renewal Framework was met within existing resource designated for COVID-19 programme management and funded from dedicated government grant.

3.2.   The Recovery and Renewal Framework does not in itself direct resources and so while organisations are asked to adopt the framework as a strategic document within their policy making frameworks, there is no direct financial impact.

4.   EQUALITY & INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

4.1.   The Recovery and Renewal framework outlines the unequal impact of COVID and notes the need for detailed analysis to fully understand the direct and indirect impacts in the short, medium and long term. Activity already underway under system structures, for example on health inequality, vaccine outreach and support to homeless individuals, is directly addressing equality and inclusion as it relates to COVID-19. In the development and delivery of the ambitions set out within the framework and the progression of new partnership planning and activity, detailed equality impact will be required building on the new learning and impact from the COVID-19 period supported through re-analysis of data and information, for example within the updated Joint Strategy Needs Assessment and in the annual report of the Director of Public Health.

5.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

This framework sets out priorities for action across the Oxfordshire system but does not commit the Council to any specific actions at this stage. The legal implications will be considered when decisions are made in line with this framework.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

This framework sets out priorities for action across the Oxfordshire system but does not commit the Council to any specific actions at this stage. Risks associated with any decisions will be considered when decisions are made in line with this framework. The framework is a very close fit to the Councils own recovery strategy approved in October 2020.

7. ECOLOGICAL AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS

This framework puts climate change at the heart of the recovery strategy.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The Council could choose to continue to approve the framework.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.