Mayor's spotlight

Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting
26 April 2021

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A rapidly changing borough:

The borough continues to face significant change:

- Covid-19

- Rapid demographic growth and change

- Local Government financial uncertainty

This increasingly means new ways of working for the council:

- Greater prioritisation of reducing capacity and resources

- More partnership working – e.g. ICPs in health, working closely with partners to delivery

- Bigger role for place leadership and empowering our community

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Our response to Covid-19

- A partnership approach to supporting our community;
  - Closer practical working with major organisations like the NHS, businesses etc.

- New ways of working and delivering entirely services as needed;
  - Remote working, digital access to services, Covid-19 helpline and support hub.

- Targeted support focused on protecting the most vulnerable in our community;
  - Grants, food parcel support, community vaccine clinics, test and trace.

- Empowering and enabling local people to get involved
  - Support for VCS organisations, mutual aid groups and volunteering.

- Developed new structures and agile business plans to meet local needs.
  - Updated Strategic Plan, rapid redeployment of staff.

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Delivery

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2,687 volunteers recruited through Covid-19 hub

6,000 food parcels directly delivered

£200m+ in grants and rate relief for businesses

Over **18,000** children received support with food

Over **20,000** residents supported through council's Covid-19 helpline

516 self-isolation grants paid totalling **£258,000**

7,174 books delivered to support learning

Over **250 tonnes** of food distributed

355 Covid-19 champions recruited

£98,210 in rent relief for community organisations

5,738 laptops handed out to support remote learning

9,100 clinically extremely vulnerable residents supported

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Continuing to deliver non-Covid priorities

- **BAME Inequality Commission & Review of equality in Public Realm**
  - Detailed public commitment to tackle inherent racism and inequalities in our community

- **Responding to climate emergency**
  - Over 70 organizations attended our Climate Engagement event to plan for becoming a zero carbon Council by 2025 and a net zero carbon borough by 2050 or sooner.

- **Kickstart job placements for 16-24 year olds**
  - 573 placements created through the 'Kickstart' programme

- **1,676 new affordable homes for the 12-month to October**
  - The highest number in the country and hundreds of new council homes in progress.

- **'Every Child Online' launched**
  - Almost £200,000 raised to fund new laptops for school pupils

- **New support service for those affected by domestic abuse**
  - New Solace Advocacy and Support Service providing specialist one-to-one support to victims of domestic abuse

- **Operation Continuum**
  - Tackling drug dealing and organised crime

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Moving from Pandemic to Recovery

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AIM

We will

- ensure the council, residents and partners recover from the impact of the pandemic whilst continuing to respond to it

- deliver Council priorities - including a sustainable future budget - and better outcomes for residents

- grasp the opportunities from new ways of working, efficiency and effectiveness learnt during this period

APPROACH

- Apply the Four tests and Four steps to recovery

- Collaborate with partners on recovery

- Offer clear advice and guidance in particular public health protection

- Embed testing and vaccinations programmes

- Ensure services are safe and disruption is minimised

- Encourage civic society, participation and cohesion

- Review and manage budget implications

Considerations

Our approach to recovery will continue to evolve as we begin to control and manage outbreaks of the virus

Different aspects of recovery are almost all interdependent.

Exit strategies remain uncertain, related plans and possible funding support are likely to be conditional and subject to change.

The timings of recovery are a key part of our immediate

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Opportunities from the Covid-19 recovery

- More joint- working across the council, partners and communities

- Increased engagement with businesses, voluntary sector, faith sector, schools etc

- Strengthening community networks and resilience to support shared priorities

- Increase in flexible working- most of our staff have learned to work successfully away from the office, many of them supported by improved IT

- More flexibility in the way staff are deployed to meet changing priorities

- Use of virtual meetings with resident and partners as well as for council committees and other meetings

- Increased channel shift with more customer interactions happening online or by phone e.g. customer contact, homelessness and housing advice.

What should we be considering going forward?

- How to harness the rise in volunteering, mutual aid groups & activism to tackle inequality.

- Opportunities to galvanise and act on community spirit.

- Long-term change resulting from increased support to rough sleepers via Everyone In scheme, increased referrals for substance misuse treatment and innovations from partnership working.

- Residents interacting with the council in different ways – possible to engage new audiences.

- Increased awareness of healthy lifestyles and public health

- Improve and embed online working across the workforce and customer facing services.

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Challenges in the Covid-19 recovery

- Continued risk of further waves or variants returning the community to lock-down.

- Economic impact on our residents and businesses including strategic locations like Canary Wharf.

- Potential for unseen demand pressures for ASC and other services.

- Increased risk of burnout/exhaustion amongst some staff

- Financial impact of ongoing impact of Covid-19 support and reduced income.

- Potential negative impacts of extended homeworking and lack of social contact e.g. mental and physical health.

- Reduced opportunity for collaborative face to face working.

- Impact on planned non-Covid activity

- Over reliance on virtual meetings, with occasional ICT issues

What should we consider going forward?

- Increased risk of digital exclusion for residents without ICT equipment or broadband

- Withdrawal of government financial support of the CVS, self employed, small businesses.

- Increase in need, demand and expectation across a range of sectors

- Impact on our income base - business rates/income generation

- Burnout and exhaustion of partners as we emerge from lockdown and towards recovery

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Recovery and Priorities

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Health

Economy

Education and Lost Learning

Supporting our most vulnerable

Civic society and Cohesion

Green Recovery

Dependencies

- Response to national policy, material, and sectoral change

- Expectation, demand and increased need

- Using our assets (land/built environment, partnerships, staff, finance/savings)

- Inequalities

- Finances and funding

Developing a Covid-19 Recovery fund to delivery a range of projects to support the community to recover and thrive after the pandemic.

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Non-Covid challenges

- Continuing culture change and service improvement

- Transforming the council while protecting residents

- Managing impact of demographic change

- Ongoing financial strain

- Municipal vs. enabling and empowering

- Political stability and entrenching good practice

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Questions