

Emerging from Crisis – Immediate Action

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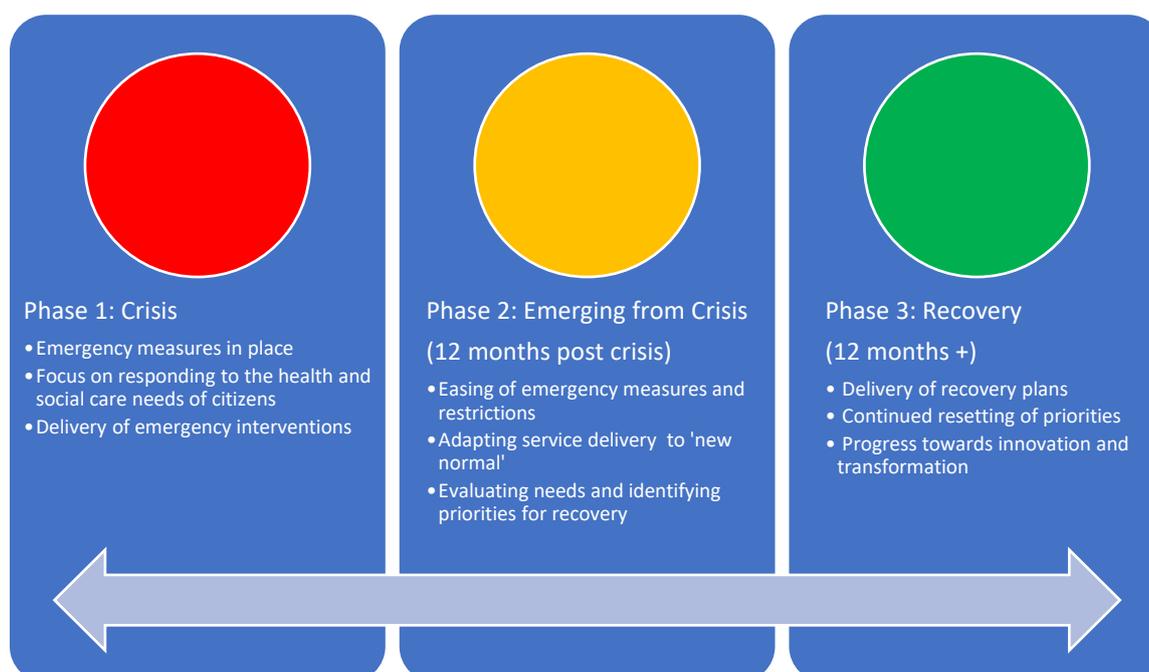
1. Introduction

The onset of the coronavirus pandemic has brought us into an unprecedented time in terms of the threat to our health, with restrictions on our daily lives which would have seemed unimaginable a few short months ago. As we begin to emerge from lockdown restrictions, we remain mindful of the toll this situation has taken on many in our society, including the tragic loss of life, as well as the potential for a second wave which would bring with it further threats, challenges and restrictions.

At this point, partners are working to adapt their service and delivery models to the new circumstances and to simultaneously put in place recovery plans alongside contingency plans taking account of the risk of a second wave.

Over the next 12 months, as a minimum, Community Planning Partners will need to identify the key priorities to be addressed as a partnership to move us towards recovery – this is referred to as the 'Emerging from Crisis' period. A key consideration is the recognition that partners may need to move back into crisis mode if the situation deteriorates.

The figure below sets out a three phase process, however, this is not a linear approach. There is potential for us to move both forwards and backwards in this process and the timelines set out are purely indicative.



As we have reflected on the crisis itself, partners have acknowledged the benefits of partnership working and more responsive decision making in terms of the crisis response. It

is important that we continue to build upon this as we work to rebuild our communities and the local economy in a sustainable manner.

2. Identification of Post-Crisis Priorities

At the May meeting of the Strategic Partnership Board, a broad range of potential priorities was identified as set out below in Table 1 at column 3.

As we enter phase 2 of this crisis there is a need to focus on a limited and key set of priorities for the next 12 month period. In doing so, we must also recognise the reduced capacity of partners both in terms of available resources and the need to commit resourcing to re-establishing core service delivery.

Table 1 sets out at Column four a suggested set of key priority actions for the Partnership to focus on over the next 12 months. These are for discussion and consideration.

3. Identification of Key Customer Groups:

The following client groups have been identified as those most in need during Phase 2:

- i. **Children, young people, and families** who have been affected by school closures, including children with special educational needs are a priority. Some children are at a higher risk to exposure in the home to substance misuse, gambling, domestic violence and child maltreatment, absence of free school meals, accommodation issues and overcrowding, parental employment impact, and change and disruption of social networks.
- ii. **Older People and those with multimorbidities over 60+ and their carers** have been particularly affected by issues including isolation, loneliness, end of life care, and bereavement, which may be exacerbated by the digital divide. Note, “unwell” over 60’s are very likely to be included in the ‘shielding’ group. Carers and “Fit and active” citizens aged between 60 and 70 will not be included in the shielding group but still affected by above listed issues.
- iii. **People on low incomes** face job and financial insecurity, cramped housing, and poor access to the internet and technology. Families living in deprivation including the ‘new’ unemployed.
- iv. **Those who are shielding** (people who are classed as “clinically extremely vulnerable” – generally over 70-year olds and/or have a pre-existing medical condition) data and contact details are available through Community Hub database
- v. **People with existing mental health issues**, including those with severe mental illnesses, are particularly affected by relapse, disruptions to services, isolation, the possible exacerbation of symptoms in response to pandemic-related information and behaviours, and changes in mental health law.
- vi. **Victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence** Following the outbreak of the virus, particularly in lockdown, there is a risk that under self-isolation, perpetrators will intensify their controlling behaviour, further restrict their partners’ freedoms and

threaten their safety. Financial dependence and poverty are both primary risk factors that diminish women's and children's resilience when experiencing domestic abuse and can prevent women from leaving an abusive partner.

- vii. **Rural communities** who have been affected differently to urban communities with limited and restricted access to services. Society has experienced increased social cohesion and communitarianism, but also has been negatively affected by increased health inequalities, increased food bank use and other trauma.
- viii. **Businesses** have been severely affected with 85% of businesses in the district reporting that they have used the furlough scheme and/or made redundancies. Support to survive and reposition their business for the post COVID economic environment and also to build personal resilience of business owners will be key in recovering our economy.
- ix. **People with Disabilities and their carers** in some cases are not included in the "Those who are shielding" category. Adults with learning disabilities and children with special educational needs, including their carers must be considered.

Table 1: Identification of emerging priority actions for phase two consideration

| Theme | FO2030 Outcome | Potential 'Priority Actions' | What are our immediate Partnership Priority Actions and associated Best Ideas ? During Phase 2 (Post Crisis – 12 months) |
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| People & Communities | <p>1. Our people are healthy and well – physically, mentally and emotionally</p> <p>2. Older people lead more independent, engaged and socially connected lives</p> <p>3. Our communities are inclusive, safe, resilient and empowered</p> <p>4. Our people have the best start in life with lifelong opportunities to fulfil their potential</p> | <p>1. Enhance Physical Health</p> <p>2. Enhance Mental health and resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Isolation and Loneliness <p>3. Tackle Poverty and disadvantage and coordinate service provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optimise food security • Promote financial security (inc. benefits and debt advice) • Tackle fuel poverty • Provide digital solutions to address the divide • Tackle hidden homelessness and ensure access to adequate local temporary accommodation (KW) <p>4. Nurture the CVS to enhance capacity and resilience, including promotion of volunteering</p> | <p><u>Priority Action : Enhance Mental Health/Reduce Social Isolation & Loneliness</u></p> <p>This is an immediate priority. Client groups who are most impacted by the Covid-19 restrictions and are now suffering from loneliness and isolation are those who are shielding which includes older people aged over 70. Many 'fit and well' over 60-year olds are also suffering from loneliness and isolation. People on low incomes (including benefit claimants) and children, young people and families may also be suffering from loneliness and isolation, however, in the immediate post-crisis phase, it is proposed actions solely focus on the shielding group and other over 60's not already in that category.</p> <p>Performance Report Cards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1A: Upskilling and provision of a safe space to access technology. <i>Cusomter Group – those shielding, Older People and those with multimorbidities over 60+ , People living in low icome (including benefit</i> |

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| | | <p>5. Reduce severity of the rise in domestic and sexual violence during lockdown</p> <p>6. Reduce the impact that Covid-19 restrictions have had on Children and Young People</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lost learning and widening disadvantage gap during school closure period | <p><i>claimants), Children, young people and families, people with disabilities and their carers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1B: Support membership groups with virtual and physical activities to support ‘keeping well at home’ and enhance community volunteering ie. ‘neighbourliness’ <i>Customer Group: Older People and those with multimorbidities over 60+ and their carers</i> • 1C: Develop and Deliver a Positive Ageing Communications campaign. <i>Customer Group: Older People and those with multimorbidities over 60+ and their carers</i> <p><u>Priority Action: Tackling Poverty and Disadvantage</u></p> <p>The COVID 19 pandemic has shone a very bright light on low income families (including benefit claimants). Prior to the pandemic, almost two-thirds of food-insecure households in Fermanagh and Omagh District were reliant on income from employment. Many were in low-wage, short-term, part-time, zero hour contracts or self-employed. Any loss of income or rise in expenses for these workers and their families make their situations worse and financial insecurity have plunged more people into financial insecurity, as those with limited resources are unable to shield this income shock. The high percentage of furloughed staff in the FO district poses a real risk that more people</p> |
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| | | | <p>will be made redundant if business is not resumed to the same levels.</p> <p>Food bank use has increased significantly during the pandemic. Reasons associated with this including closing schools, furloughing, job loss and benefit failure. 1 in 5 families were already struggling to afford enough food for their households before lockdown so this is extremely worrying.</p> <p>Client groups include People in low incomes (includes benefit claimants), Children, young people and families, and those shielding due to pre-existing conditions and people aged over 60 (mostly in shielding group). It is b by tackling poverty and disadvantage, actions will simultaneously improve mental health (priority 2) and physical health (priority 1) of our most vulnerable. It will, at the same time mitigate the impact Covid-19 has had on children, young people and families (priority 6) and it will nurture community capacity and resilience including promoting volunteering (priority 4).</p> <p>Performance Report Cards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2A: Tackle food poverty and enhance food security for people in financial stress and low incomes (i.e. Join-up voluntary sector and statutory services with food banks to ensure that people who find themselves in |
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| | | | <p><i>immediate need of food have access to all other help they need to improve their situation).</i> Customer Groups: People on low incomes (including benefit claimants) i.e. including those dependant on foodbank support. Children, young people and families i.e. where access to FSME has ceased and holiday hunger exists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>2B: Support for Advice Services - Ensure people in financial stress can access benefit advice, support and legal representation to challenge decisions, and manage their debts effectively</i> Customer Groups: People in low income (including benefit claimants) • <i>2C: Improve energy efficiency across social housing stock and the private rented sector to reduce the impact of fuel poverty</i> • <i>2D: Reduce the digital divide through enhanced promotion of digital solutions ; bridging the digital gap in education with appropriate adjustments to resources.</i> Customer groups: Children, young people and families; Those shielding; and Older People and those with multimorbidities over 60+ and their carers . |
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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2E: Tackle hidden homelessness and ensure access to adequate local temporary accommodation Customer groups: People on low income (benefit claimants); Victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence, Children and Young People (at risk of homelessness). <u>Priority: Nurture the CVS to enhance capacity and resilience, including promotion of volunteering</u> <p>The need for the CVS has definitely increased. They need new guidelines for when, where, and how to open communities– and for when and how to react if infections recur.</p> <p>Performance Report Cards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3A: Equip the community and voluntary sector to support vulnerable people during this time, including those shielding. Customer Groups: Those who are shielding, Older People and those with multimorbidities over 60+ and their carers, Children , young people and families. • 3B: Increase frequency and access to community transport, specifically for rural residents Customer Groups: Customer Groups: Those who are shielding, Older People and those with multimorbidities over 60+ and their carers, Children, young people and families, Rural communities. |
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| <p>Economy, Infrastructure & Skills</p> | <p>5. Our economy is thriving, expanding and outward looking</p> | <p>7 Develop Town Centre Recovery Plans</p> <p>8 Improve opportunities for Tourism Businesses through a programme of support and capacity building around business innovation, development, customer care and marketing</p> <p>9 Provide mentoring and training to support SME's including social enterprise to return to trading so that employment opportunities can be sustained and encourage growth</p> <p>10 Supporting Businesses through Brexit</p> <p>11 Ensure continued apprenticeship opportunities to develop and grow the talent pipeline for economic growth</p> <p>12 Lobby for increased and improved broadband coverage across the districts;</p> | <p>Priority: Develop and deliver “<u>Tourism and Economic Recovery Plans</u>”</p> <p>Client groups include business owners – town centre businesses, tourism businesses, SME & social enterprise business owners. It is believed, by providing a package of support, including mentoring and training, we can reduce the adverse impacts of this crisis on business and employment opportunities. Progression of actions will simultaneously improve the mental health of business owners and employees (priority 2). The Recovery Plan will include actions that focus on town centre recovery (priority 7), provide opportunities for tourism (priority 8) and work to ensure continued apprenticeship opportunities to develop and grow the talent pipeline for economic growth (priority 11). The Plan will also include actions to support Brexit preparedness.</p> <p>It is identified that, if broadband coverage was provided across the district, this would have a profound positive effect on economic development and growth in Fermanagh and Omagh. For this reason, it is very important that priority 12 (lobby for increased and improved broadband coverage across the district) is continued.</p> |

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4A: Provide mentoring and training to support SME's, including social enterprise, to return to trading so that employment opportunities can be sustained and to encourage growth – Client group – SME & Social Enterprise business owners • 4B: Town Centre Recovery Plans – Client group – Town Centre business owners. • 4C: Ensure continued apprenticeship opportunities to develop and grow the talent pipeline to support Economic Growth – Client group – Business owners; young people • 4D: Support for Tourism business – Client Group - Tourism business owners. • 4E: Brexit Preparedness – Client Group – business owners |
| <p>Environment</p> | <p>6. Our outstanding and culturally rich environment is cherished, sustainably managed and appropriately accessible</p> | <p>13. Climate change mitigation (i) A Green Recovery Plan</p> <p>14. Leave No Trace ie. Littering</p> <p>15. Promoting a circular economy</p> | <p><u>Priority: Green Recovery</u></p> <p>The pandemic has also identified a number of opportunities for change and the positive impact the restrictions have had on the environment have been clear to see together with, for many people, a renewed appreciation of our local environment. There must be an importance placed on sustaining the benefits that have been realised and in</p> |

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| | | | <p>particular, capturing the enthusiasm within our community to care for and enjoy our local environment.</p> <p>It is proposed that the priorities are explored further to identify potential actions so that an impact can be made to improve outcomes for the most vulnerable people in our society and also to ignite our economy and sustain employment in the short to medium term. Potential areas might be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5A: Partnership working with communities to build environmental awareness and activities alongside promotion of the ‘leave no trace’ ethos. Customer group: Children, young people and families, businesses. • 5B: Commitments to support climate change mitigations by building on the reduction in travel and use of online working in workplaces: Customer Group: Businesses. |
| Cross-cutting priority | 16. Strong Partnership Working | | <p><u>Priority: Continue to build on the strong foundations in place for partnership working</u></p> <p>Performnace Report Card :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6A. Partnership Data and evidence – associated to COVID-19 response |

