

DATE: June 29, 2020
FROM: Bev Hendry, CAO
REPORT NO: RFD-CAO-06-2020
SUBJECT: **West Lincoln COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Plan**

OVERVIEW:

- The threat posed by COVID-19 to both the community and to the Corporation is significant. This report focuses upon the Township of West Lincoln's Recovery efforts and transition to what will be the new normal operating environment for the delivery of municipal services post-COVID-19. Protection of the health and safety of staff and our community is paramount, and guides the matters discussed in the body of this report.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That Report RFD-CAO-06-2020 – West Lincoln COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Plan dated June 29, 2020, be received for information; and,
2. That Council hereby approve the Working from Home Policy as found in Appendix B.

ALIGNMENT TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

Theme 5:

- Efficient, Fiscally Responsible Operations

BACKGROUND:

The Province of Ontario has released a Framework for Reopening our Province. As a result, the government has begun easing restrictions on workplaces that can operate safely by following public health and safety guidelines.

Following the lead of the provincial government, the EOC group and the Senior Management Team have struck a Recovery Team of staff from all departments to provide advice in the development of the Recovery Plan.

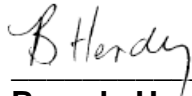
Further to the update presented to Council in May through report RFI-CAO-04-2020, our staff Recovery Team has prepared the following attached Recovery Plan as Appendix A. Staff are also seeking Council Approval of the Working from Home Policy as Appendix B.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:


The Municipality will continue to track costs associated with COVID-19 response and recovery and this is reported in RFD-T-12-20.

CONCLUSION:

This report was prepared June 24, 2020 and is based on the information available at the time. As new actions are taken by other levels of government and new information surfaces, this plan will be modified accordingly. The protection and the health and safety of staff and our community is paramount and has guided all the decisions we have made in this incremental phased approach to the municipality's COVID-19 recovery plan.

Prepared and Submitted by:

Beverly Hendry, CAO

 Framework		Effective Date: June 24, 2020	
Title:	Internal Pandemic Recovery		
Responsibility:	Township of West Lincoln	Review Dates:	
Applies To:	COVID-19 Recovery		
In Consultation With:	Township EOC Control Group	Approval Level:	SMT

Purpose

This Internal Pandemic Recovery Framework is intended to provide guidelines for Township Management to recover post pandemic. The guiding principles in establishing recovery plans are:

- Maintaining the health and safety of staff, their families and the public, following Public Health guidance where applicable
- Address fairness to staff
- Prepare staff and the workplace for phased in return to normal operations
- Address change management scenarios related to social and environmental sustainability going forward
- Align recovery processes with Niagara Region

During any period of a Township recovery post pandemic response, the Township must endeavour to maintain its ability to:

- Continue performance of its critical functions with minimal disruption to Township service
- Begin reintegration of day-to-day operations
- Develop recovery plans in a fiscally responsible manner
- Incorporate innovative process change management practices established in the response phase
- Continue focusing on robust hygiene and physical distancing practices

Pandemic Recovery Planning Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made to assist with recovery planning:

- The Province will guide Township decision making related to recovery via the state of Emergency Declaration and Orders in Council;

INTERNAL PANDEMIC RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

- Recovery plans must take into consideration the possibility of a cycle of lifting and re-imposing restrictions. The steps we take to rebuild our economy or restore some degree of normality must recognize the possibility of restrictions being re-imposed quickly;
- Services may need to be phased in and/or altered due to these directives;
- We will still be operating in a state of emergency, with continued activation of our EOC Pandemic Response Plan until further notice;
- We will continue to maintain critical and essential services and infrastructure ;
- Anticipate physical distancing measures and proper handwashing protocols will be in effect until appropriate precautions or a vaccine is widely available;
- Amend service delivery to minimize the number of customer to staff and staff to staff interactions;
- Anticipate Township staff may be impacted by the virus;
- Trending seasonal extreme weather events may add known and unknown impacts and considerations for service delivery and impose further emergency response measures
- Regular service delivery will continue to be affected in some areas;
- Some services cannot be delivered from home and any work performed from home will contribute to continued meaningful productivity and delivery of Township services.

Internal Pandemic Recovery Team

The internal pandemic recovery team members are as follows (or designated alternate):

- CAO – Bev Hendry
- Fire Chief/ CEMC – Dennis Fisher
- Deputy Fire Chief/Alt CEMC – Tim Hofsink
- Clerk – Joanne Scime
- Deputy Clerk – Jessica Dyson
- Director of Finance – Donna DeFilippis
- Director of Public Works – Mike DiPaola
- Director of Building/Planning – Brian Treble
- CEO Library – Vanessa Holm
- Recreation Manager – Wendy Beaty
- Parks/Facilities Manager – Bob Denison
- IT – Roberta Keith
- Administration – Jacquie Thrower

The team members may consult with other department representatives. In fact, one of the initial activities to assist with determining issues to be considered was a meeting of all staff group with representation from all departments.

Internal Recovery Framework

The internal Recovery Planning Framework includes 2 sections to assist in the development of recovery plans.

The Township of West Lincoln will begin a phased in approach while adhering to Federal and

INTERNAL PANDEMIC RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

Provincial guidelines for health and hygiene guidelines as well as essential service provisions outlined in the Provincial re opening plans.

Recovery phased in timelines will continue to be fluid in nature and will be amended where required. A timeline for recovery will be established from data collected in the department specific recovery plans where business services recovery timelines and plans will be documented. The Senior Management Team (SMT) will amend and approve the phased in timeline as appropriate.

Section A – Internal Regional Operations Recovery Plans

Within the internal Township operations recovery planning, there are 2 sections:

1. Corporate level recovery
2. Department specific recovery plans

Once corporate-level plans and policies are developed they are used to shape the development of service specific plans. This will ensure a consistent application of organization-wide requirements is followed and reduces the duplication of work. For example, when a corporate level approach to modifying workspaces and public areas for physical distancing measures is developed, each service area will be required to follow those directions within their own facility/work area.

Department specific recovery plans will be established using the business continuity framework. A business service recovery template will be used to address each business service within the department to ensure a strategic and corporately sound approach to service re-integration.

Section B - Governance & Finance Strategies

Township 2020 and 2021 operating budgets will be impacted by actions taken to continue to protect the health and safety of the community as we continue to do our part to limit the spread of COVID-19. This section is split into 2 sections:

1. Short and long term financial strategies to recover from the financial impacts.
2. Other governance topics.

The focus of these plans is to ensure that continued effective and efficient governance and financial leadership is restored quickly so that the Township is able to support the community.

INTERNAL PANDEMIC RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

Section A: Corporate and Department Recovery Plans

The following corporate level recovery decisions and plans should be a priority and referred to when creating service specific plans.

Recovery Area	Considerations
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre occupying deep cleaning of facilities (prior to staff re-entry) including individual office spaces in instances where a potential infection has been reported • Need to establish flow direction in the office to limit staff contact • Establish protocol for individual cleaning in offices ongoing • Demobilization of repurposed facilities • Major Systems Recertification/Inspection (i.e. HVAC, fire/life safety systems) • Building Cleaning/Sanitization/ Waste management • Screening process to take place prior to entry into facility • Building walk through to document office layout changes, path of travel, etc. based on building and program needs and repairs (if required) • Cleaning contracts and extensions of these for enhanced cleaning • Availability of hand sanitizer and wipes throughout buildings • Posting signage as approved by SMT and PH • Potential for barrier installations at Urinals • Recommendations for stairwell etiquette for day to day operations • Kitchenette Protocol for use and spacing out access in between use • Implementation of space modifications required to ensure physical distancing (barriers, screens, workstation relocations etc) • Consultation and collaboration with Corporate H&S on all Facilities requirements
Human Resources and Customer Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Count-who is returning • Existing complement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Staff working remotely ○ Staff not working ○ Staff redeployed ○ Staff on emergency leave • Lifting hiring freeze for non-critical jobs • Onboarding and training/ permitting of new staff including students • Ensure Union remains informed about employee reintegration back to on site work and redeployment of staff currently on

INTERNAL PANDEMIC RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

	<p>emergency leave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuance of work from home (Policy attached) • Evaluate the need for new and update requirements for HR Policies and SOPs related to recovery; (ie - work from home policy)
Physical Health & Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team size/physical distancing of workspaces (cubicles) • In-person meeting protocols • Business travel/conference attendance • Personal Protective Equipment (what is allowable/recommended for internal and external service provisions) • Work from home ergonomic and safety protocols • Employee illness monitoring & health screening • Washroom safety protocols • Inform JHSCs of phased on return to work-risk based approach for staff concerns-monthly inspection • Assess emergency evacuation procedures supporting physical distancing practices and possibly incorporating donning of PPE • Risk Assessment-Program based for donning required PPE as well as other safety measures to reduce exposure and spread of virus • Review hierarchy of safety measures and best practices for implementing controls which ensures limited opportunities for staff, contractors and public to be in close contact • Review of public interaction points where services are required (i.e. libraries)
Public/Visitor Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Protocols • Physical distancing measures • Access & screening • Counter service provisions
Staff mental health supports / programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing access to RWAM Employee Assistance Programs • Communications activities related to mental health and mindfulness • Team support initiatives/open dialogue
Employee culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Missed Milestones • Team Building • Maintaining employee culture, confidence and morale
Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish communications to staff returning to work and offer employee supports for confidence building approaches related to reintegration of on-site return and what the new “normal” will look like • Regular Corporate, Departmental communications

INTERNAL PANDEMIC RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updates to the COVID webpage to incorporate recovery information
--	--

Department Recovery Plans-Business Continuity Framework

It is the responsibility of individual departments to ensure their business continuity plans that have been activated are reviewed and processes for deactivation of these plans are established following corporate guidelines and protocols.

Recovery guidelines are established by each department for returning staff and services. It is assumed that all services will need to follow and integrate the corporate level plans. Plans should also include how the service will address backlogs in their areas where necessary.

Workplace Recovery: Suggested Social/Physical Distancing Measures

Once pandemic recovery phases have been established internally and in the community, people should continue to use physical distancing as a way to reduce the risk of being exposed as part of a second wave of illness. A physical distancing plan to decrease density and office traffic are essential for reintegration of staff on site. PH will provide advice based on Provincial standards if applicable. Some strategies to consider include:

- Staggering arrival/departure times
- Office layout considerations (cubicle occupant distance) as well as foot travel traffic flows should be considered to minimize staff cross path contact and avoid close contact
- Encourage clients to call in or limit contact
- Cancel gatherings/training/mass meetings - only on priority basis and training numbers to be reduced to ensure physical distancing
- Minimize contact at work by teleconferencing and/or using ZOOM technology
- If face-to-face meetings with people are unavoidable, minimize the meeting time, choose a large meeting room and sit at least two metres away from each other if possible; wear a mask where two metres distance cannot be maintained; do not shake hands or hug. Consider holding meetings in the open air if weather permits.

Communications

During pandemic recovery it is vital that the Township maintains clear and consistent communications from a single source. All communications for staff will be delivered by CAO and Department Heads. To best articulate the circumstances surrounding recovery, the following subjects should be appropriately addressed during each phase of recovery:

- Operational status of the Township (CAO)
- Recovery Guidelines (Provincial, PH)

INTERNAL PANDEMIC RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

- Implementation of work place social/physical distancing practices (SMT/PH)
- Explanation of phased in recovery and instructions (SMT/CAO/EOC)
- Ongoing Health Bulletins and travel advisories (PH)
- Recommendations for workplace infection control measures (PH)
- Workplace staffing reintegration, compensation and benefits, change management, health and safety (SMT/CAO)
- Program related communications (departments) (consistent with corporate messaging)

Method of Communications

For internal staff, the main methods for information dissemination will be through the CAO and all Department Heads. As staff are reintegrated back to work at various Township locations, signage with health and hygiene reminders will be posted throughout the location.

HR Policies

Some of the recommended HR Policies/Procedures to be developed may include the following with additional items being added as required:

- Social/Physical Distancing Policy
- Work at Home Policy
- HR Pandemic Response Policy
- Standard Operating Procedure Guidelines for Visitor, Contractor, expectations
- Development of Pandemic Recovery Policy

Public Health Suggested Measures

Recovery Process for Screening and Vaccinations: Public Health may recommend continuance of screening of staff and/or visiting public for clinical services, as per pandemic response protocols and regular seasonal flu requirements. Changes may apply as per Provincial guidance. All staff are also requested to self-screen.

Public Health may also implement a staff vaccination program (if relevant) for identified (critical) staff-In accordance with collective agreements and applicable legislation.

Health and Safety

Personal Protective Equipment:

- Advice will be provided by Health & Safety, informed by PH recommendations related to issuance of personal protective equipment.
- A risk assessment will be completed on a case by case basis in collaboration with the work area
- All PPE will be acquired and issued to staff via the Township

INTERNAL PANDEMIC RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

Facilities – Cleaning and Sanitization (personal and building)

Departmental staff should ensure hand sanitizing stations at all of the Township facilities are full and will order replacement as needed.

Building cleaning-enhanced cleaning measures for high touch/high traffic surfaces and location should be considered. Facilities contracts to provide details.

Section B: Governance and Finance Strategy (To be built into Departmental Recovery Plans)

Corporate Services can provide guidance and best practices support to departments as cost recovery initiatives related to pandemic response cost and public service revenue are being submitted.

Short & Long Term Financial Strategies

Goal

The goal for Municipal Finance Recovery is to ensure financial sustainability of the Municipality through controlling costs to the greatest extent possible and to offset lost revenues due to COVID-19.

Principles

- The Township will take proactive measures to mitigate the overall impact through a Cost Containment Plan.
- Control costs through the management of discretionary spending items.
- Recover costs where possible through grants and other forms of financial assistance.
- Minimize any potential deficit in the Municipality's operating fund at end of year.
- Mitigate the impact on the Township reserves.

Assumptions

- Initial estimates will likely increase over time based on the overall duration of the event and the response efforts that are required.
- With lower than anticipated cash-flows due to lost revenues, as well as likely delayed payments on various Township services, it is expected that the Municipality's investment income will be impacted.

Governance

Goal

The goal is to ensure continuity of leadership and government through providing guidance, governance and control over operations.

INTERNAL PANDEMIC RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

Example Strategies:

Strategy Name	Inclusions
Strategic Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direction and adjustments• New community expectations
Business Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direction and adjustments• New community expectations
2021 Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direction• Connection with financial plans above
Council engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Resumption of Council / Committee meetings❖ Outreach
Debriefing of Pandemic Response / Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Immediate lessons learned from the previous wave when planning for multiple pandemic waves;❖ The effectiveness of plans, procedures, equipment, and facilities, and the training of personnel;
Stimulus Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Identifying projects and services for Provincial/Federal Grant opportunities
Innovation/Opportunity Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ Identifying Opportunities for significant shifts based on lessons learned from the Pandemic and future 'Municipal-Building' opportunities

INTERNAL PANDEMIC RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

Appendix Potential Phases of Return to Normal – Considerations – TO BE REFINED

- ❖ **The Corporation intends to make their plans to be consistent with provincial plans.**

Phase 1: Province initiates stage 1

- All work continues remotely where possible.
- Only employees who are in a role that requires them to work at the office should plan on returning to work.
- Screening protocols in place upon entrance.
- Public Health guidelines will be followed.
- No work-related travel.
- Critical services reinstated/continued where possible.
- Social distancing measures for operational services.
- Council meetings remain virtual

Phase 2:

These actions will be refined as we get closer to Phase 2. Please consider the actions listed below as suggested possible actions.

- Anyone can continue to work from home where possible.
- Determine maximum number of staff by building.
- Screening protocols in place upon entrance.
- All Township buildings will remain closed to all visitors, unless direction is provided by the Province regarding specific buildings
- All job interviews will be completed remotely where possible, if conducted in person COVID-19 rules will followed
- Implement social distancing measures for those who choose to work in the office.
- Enhance office cleaning schedules to be more frequent, especially around areas of high traffic (lunch room, meeting rooms, bathrooms) spacing
- Council meetings remain virtual

Phase 3:

These actions will be refined as we get closer to Phase 3. Please consider the actions listed below as suggested possible actions.

- Regard for employees that are part of a vulnerable population
- Maintain social distancing measures for those who work in the office.
- Township buildings open to the public with screening and proper health and safety precautions.

INTERNAL PANDEMIC RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

- Enhance office cleaning schedules to be more frequent/in-depth, especially around areas of high traffic (elevators, meeting rooms, bathrooms).
- Modify interviews to allow for candidates who do not want to travel to complete the process remotely.
- Work related travel resumes, but only if safe.
- Council meetings remain virtual with possibly allowing some members present with physical distancing maintained.

Phase 4: Normal operations resume – Vaccination program completed

- All programs resumed
- Buildings open to the public without screening
- All staff back in office with individual arrangements (e.g. work from home)



WORKING FROM HOME POLICY

TITLE: Working from Home Policy
POLICY NO: POL-ADMIN-01-2020
APPROVAL DATE: June 29, 2020
EFFECTIVE DATE:

PURPOSE:

This Guideline references “designated employees”, who have been asked to work at home as directed by senior management.

Managers/Supervisors are expected to monitor the work of an employee who is working at home as they would with other employees. Should performance issues become a problem, Managers/Supervisors should deal with those issues as they would with any other productivity concern.

It is recognized that not all work at home arrangements will involve employees using equipment supplied by the Township and some arrangements may involve the use of personal computers. Equipment supplied by the Corporation will be owned by the Township and would revert back to the Township when the employee is no longer working at home.

All confidentiality requirements, both legislative and corporate driven, shall continue to apply.

Regular communication amongst all affected persons shall be maintained to the extent possible given the nature of the circumstances. The frequency and scheduling of communications will be determined by the responsible Manager/Supervisor.

An employee and employer have an obligation and responsibility to adhere to the reporting requirements of the Workplace Safety & Insurance Act (WSIA) in the event of a work related accident sustained by a person who works at home as a result of the implementation of this Guideline.

The Township will not be responsible for any operating costs that are associated with the employee using his or her home as an alternative worksite, including home maintenance, insurance or utilities. Costs for furniture necessary to work from home such as chairs, desks, filing cabinets, etc., will not be reimbursed by the Township and are the employee’s responsibility.

Employees should be mindful to keep work-related expenses at a minimum. Reasonable expenses incurred on behalf of the Township (e.g. printing, long distance phone calls on personal phone, etc.) will be reimbursed upon providing the necessary proof of expense.

SCOPE:

This Policy shall apply to members of Staff.

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGERS/SUPERVISORS:

- Be sure your staff understand their responsibilities regarding if and when they may be required to return to the workplace (i.e.: key and essential meetings that cannot happen from home/alternate work location; redeployment to other work; etc.)
- It should ultimately also be understood that staff who may have been approved to work from home need to be available should they be required to physically return back to the workplace.
- Outline what tools or resources are needed. Remind employees how they can access email remotely from their computer using their regular login and password.
- Clearly articulate the following guidelines for working outside of the normal workplace:
 - Staff are expected to work in compliance with all relevant legislation (i.e. Occupational Health and Safety Act, Employment Standards Act, Personal Health Information Protection Act, and Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, etc.),
 - All Corporate policies and procedures, and provisions under the collective agreement/Terms and Conditions of Employment, apply in the home environment.
- Supervisors will ensure that staff are provided with appropriate orientation to do the work that has been assigned, either over the telephone or electronically, and will discuss and address any equipment needs and coordinate system access with staff as needed.
- While working at home remind staff that they must keep their direct supervisor apprised of their hours of work, location, and contact information and be accessible by telephone and email during these hours.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**Staff working from home shall:**

- Adhere to all corporate policies and procedures regardless of the work location. Ensure they work in a safe manner in compliance with the OHSA and all agency health and safety policies. Failure to comply with any aspect of these policies or related policies or legislation may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- Ensure that equipment and files, both electronic and paper, shall be accessible only to the employee and shall be safeguarded from access by other members of the household and visitors.
- Ensure that any records kept in the home (e.g. paper, thumb drives) shall be stored in a locked filing cabinet or desk drawer when they are not being used.
- Ensure that the Township shall have reasonable access in a timely manner to equipment and any records kept in the home.

- Be diligent in taking the appropriate measures in protecting confidential information, and maintain your cyber-resilience during this time.

POLICY MANAGEMENT:

Staff are authorized and directed to take the necessary actions to give effect to this policy.

The Township Clerk is delegated the authority to make administrative changes to this policy that may be required from time to time due to legislative changes.